



Stockport Safeguarding Partnership produces 7-minute briefings on various current safeguarding issues and learning from reviews. They are intended to be simple so that the reader can absorb the information easily and teams can use them within meetings as a team-based learning exercise.

Jo

1

Background

Jo, 34, was a young woman living alone, with her companion dog, which was Jo's protective factor. She had two siblings, and at the time of her death, was in touch with her father, possibly her sister, but not her mother. Jo was a talented artist who had struggled with mental health problems, for about 18 years. A bright, intelligent woman was regarded as a good neighbour and wanted to help others.

She regularly expressed suicidal ideation and had attempted suicide from 2018 to 2020 on eight known occasions, having made a very serious attempt in 2017, when diagnosed with bipolar disorder and Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In September 2019, she was diagnosed with Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder (EUPD). Seven safeguarding referrals had been made during this period, by various services about her suicidal intent; thoughts or actions.

As a child, Jo had been sexually abused for several years. She disclosed this to a counsellor at the age of 16, but information was not shared with Children's Services. She decided to report the historic child sexual abuse to police, which led to an investigation and was filed, twice owing to a lack of substantive evidence. Jo struggled to accept the decision, developing a rapport with the Senior Investigating Officer, and disclosed her mental health issues and the impact of the Police decision.

2

Incident

Jo attended Emergency Department (ED) on many occasions, mainly owing to her mental health issues, but was deemed to have mental capacity. She had been known to use alcohol and drugs to cope with symptoms but had been largely abstinent prior to her death.

On 10th March 2020, following a serious illness, her dog was put to sleep and Jo went into crisis, and she attempted suicide. She survived, called for an ambulance, and after ED attendance absconded; returned by police and stayed overnight.

On 26th March 2020, Jo had completed suicide.

3

Support for families post suicide

Families in Stockport would benefit from a more proactive approach to post suicide family support, given that suicidal death causes severe, family distress, and carries a very traumatising and long-lasting impact.

The confidential **Greater Manchester Bereavement Service** is there to listen and help find the right support for anyone bereaved. The service includes dedicated suicide bereavement practitioners (phone 0161 983 0902 weekdays or see [here](#)). Staff should share this with anyone they know who is bereaved. Families bereaved by suicide should also be given the booklet '[Help is at Hand](#)'.

4

Key learning – Training all staff in suicide awareness

All frontline staff should be aware of how to support someone in distress. At times staff may encounter people expressing suicidal thoughts. [Suicide awareness training](#) may help them support clients, and signpost them to appropriate further support. Stockport has a Suicide Prevention Training Matrix for all organisations to consider and ensure staff have received training appropriate for their role.

[SUICIDE AWARENESS FOR PROFESSIONALS BOOKING FORM](#) - If you require any further information please email info@wellbeing@stockport.gov.uk

Please look at the recommendations made to the SAB - All partner agencies will implement the actions and report assurances back to the SAB on impact made from learning.

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5

Learning Points

- Stockport Adult Social Care will promote the Team Around the Adult (TAA) model and are to review current guidance and develop outcomes to support embedding practice.
- An increased understanding and awareness of assessment tools is necessary, when engaging with, and trying to empathically understand a vulnerable adult's needs, in the context of child sexual abuse.
- A GP masterclass in the Autumn was dedicated to promoting the familiarity and use of these in Primary Care. This was well received and is part of the ongoing offer of training in Suicide Prevention to Primary Care colleagues.
- Agencies acknowledged that when Jo's dog became ill, it should have triggered a review of her risk assessment and risk management plan.
- There was an over-reliance on the use of Jo's personal email to maintain contact, which should not have been relied on.
- PCFT has since set up a 24-hour phone-line for patients known to their service.
- Stockport without Abuse will adapt their Trauma Informed Counselling offer to ensure that there is a more co-ordinated response with other agencies.
- Guinness Housing have recognised the importance of how adverse child experience (ACEs) can impact on people in their adult lives and will include Trauma Informed Practice into their training programmes.
- A weekly Mental Health Forum exists for the voluntary sector, where the group is used to share learning.
- The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Mental Health commissioning team is working closely with the police to support and pilot new ways of working.
- There is a suicide awareness & response training package on the CCG virtual college system which has been circulated several times. GPs have also had some sessions on Masterclasses on suicide awareness.

6

Signposting for emotional and mental health support

All staff will want to be familiar with key sources of support and be able to signpost clients to them – both in the statutory as well as voluntary sector. The Stockport leaflet '[Are you feeling anxious, stressed, or low at this time? Helping you find the right support in Stockport](#)' is a key signposting resource for all staff and residents.

Everyone in Stockport should know the [Open Door](#) 24/7 helpline (0800 138 7276), as well as the Open Door safe haven drop-in, which is open 10am-8pm Monday-Friday and 12pm-8pm at weekends (72-74 Prince's Street, SK1 1RJ) for Stockport residents in need of emotional and mental health support.

For suicide prevention in particular, the Greater Manchester '[Shining a Light on Suicides' website](#)' provides key resources, including a) help for anyone feeling suicidal, b) anyone concerned about someone else, and c) anyone bereaved by suicide.

Production and dissemination of a comprehensive directory of mental health services is [available here](#).

Production of a paper and electronic 'leaflet' sharing the mental health offer, has been widely distributed across the partnership (to include pharmacies, shops etc.) with a 'door to door' leaflet drop in Autumn 2020; and again with council tax bills earlier this year. Signposting of mental health services in Emergency Department is to be put into place.

Safety Plans are a way to help someone plan steps to keep them safe from suicidal thoughts. Staff can help someone make a Safety Plan and can ask whether someone already has a Safety Plan, to help guide their actions and responses. More on safety planning can be found [here](#), or learnt in the Suicide Awareness for Professional Course available to anyone working in Stockport. The [Stay Alive App](#) also includes a safety plan and other resources, e.g. safety contacts, reasons to stay alive, local services etc..'

7

Next Steps – we ask that you:

1. Circulate and discuss the issues of this briefing within your teams.
2. Attend the Stockport Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) workshops in relation to the learning from this and other Learning Reviews.
3. Find the [Executive summary here and share wider](#).

Please look at the recommendations made to the SAB - All partner agencies will implement the actions and report assurances back to the SAB on impact made from learning.

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