

# DHR 11 - 'AMY'

Died January 2021

Amy was a warm hearted and kind person and was there for other people.



## AMY'S LIFE AND FAMILY

Amy lived with her husband and only child Brian. Both Amy and her husband were retired. Prior to this, Amy had been a joint Company Director of a computer software company with her son. Both Amy and her husband had also been directors of the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Sefton until the early 2000's. Amy was married to her husband for 60 years prior to his death in 2020. Amy's son Brian suffered with mental health issues for a number of years and had been diagnosed with the long term mental health condition schizophrenia.

## AMY'S DEATH

Police officers, investigating an incident on a railway line involving Amy's son Brian, had attended Amy's home. They discovered she had been physically assaulted and had died of her injuries. The police later arrested Brian who was receiving treatment at hospital for injuries sustained in an attempt to take his own life. He was initially detained under the Mental Health Act but in September 2021 was charged with the murder of Amy. At Liverpool Crown Court in May 2022 Brian pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of Amy. Amy was 81 years old when she died.

## 1 KEY FINDING: COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SHARING BETWEEN AGENCIES COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER

The review primarily focussed upon the health and wellbeing of Brian being the perpetrator of Amy's death and, the risks to a worsening of his health condition.

The foundations of Brian's family and the health and wellbeing of Brian and Amy were impacted by two key events which began almost simultaneously at the start of 2020 and extended through to the time of Amy's murder:

- The terminal diagnosis and subsequent death of Amy's husband, Brian's father.
- The start of the Covid pandemic and national lockdowns.

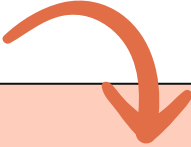
These events placed increasing levels of stress upon both Amy and Brian. Communication between services was poor.

It was never recognised the pivotal role that Brian's Social Care Support Worker could play in identifying a deterioration in a client's mental health, particularly during the periods of national Covid lockdown. Overlooking the value of the work they undertook and the information they generated was a significant opportunity missed.

Information Brian's Support Worker was entering onto agency systems was never reviewed. Therefore, the risks around some of Brian's disclosures were never considered in a more systematic way. There was no system in place for formal reviews of Brian's case within a multi disciplinary context.

Some services were unaware of the acute grief reaction that Amy was suffering following her husband's death and did not consider the impact this may have had upon Brian.

When circumstances changed due to Covid restrictions resulting in support sessions for Brian stopping, and the death of Brian's father (Amy's husband), there was no clear consideration of whether Brian or Amy's levels of risk or needs had changed as a result of these traumas.



## Learning

There are many different professionals supporting individuals with their mental health beyond those within a formal Mental Health role. They can gather important information about the person, particularly in relation to risk considerations.

A lack of regular reviews, particularly when circumstances changed, meant risks were not appropriately considered or reviewed. If a support service needs to be suspended, a review of the individual support plan should be undertaken and communicated to all involved in delivering care, the client and their families.

Front line staff supporting people with mental illness should have regular case reviews/supervision to ensure information is reviewed and can be shared across other agencies as needed.

Consideration should be given to arranging a Multi Disciplinary Team or other multi agency meeting where other views and possible interventions may be needed, particularly when circumstances in the case change.

## 2 KEY FINDING: NEED FOR TRAINING ON MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE AWARENESS

Brian's Support Worker was untrained in issues relating to mental health and risk assessment.



## Learning

Ensure training on mental health and suicide awareness is available for and is accessed by front line workers supporting people with mental health to include recognising symptoms, risk assessment, and available support services and treatment pathways.