

**Healthwatch Worcestershire**  
Public Board Meeting 10 July 2019

**Safeguarding Homeless People with Care and Support Needs**  
Briefing Note Agenda item 4 [Enc 3]

[NB The WASB Manager is attending for this agenda item]

1. Following the discovery of the death of Cardon Banfield in Worcester in July 2016 Healthwatch Worcestershire [HWW] has been enquiring into the safeguarding of homeless people with care and support needs. To date that enquiry has focused entirely on the policy and practice related to safeguarding arrangements, as opposed to service provision for homeless people.
2. The Cardon Banfield case, which had not been referred to the Worcestershire Adult Safeguarding Board (WASB) at the time of its discovery, was eventually first referred by a member of the public. The WASB found that the death has not met the criteria for a Safeguarding Adult Review [SAR]; a decision that was subsequently upheld by the current WSAB Independent Chair following representation by HWW.
3. In 2018 Worcester City Council subsequently commissioned and published an independent report into the death of Cardon Banfield. That report identified opportunities to improve services for the homeless by improving cross agency working.
4. In 2018 the Government announced a change in policy that was promoted as requiring a SAR to be carried out in circumstances where the death of a homeless person was unexplained eg Cardon Banfield's death.
5. The Board will be aware that in the winter of 2018/19 2 deaths of homeless men occurred in the Malvern Hills District Council area and those were referred to the WASB by the Council. Neither have led to a SAR but the WASB has committed to undertaking a thematic review of those deaths. The WASB is currently considering the terms of reference of that review.  
[NB One of the men was not considered to be homeless, though he had been previously.]
6. Following an interview between a member of the public and WSAB's Independent Chair HWW learnt of 2 more deaths of homeless people in Worcestershire; bringing the total to 4 deaths of homeless people since that of Cardon Banfield. Whilst HWW has not been formally informed of the 2 deaths it is understood that one of the deaths occurred in Worcester City in 2017 and the other in the north of Worcestershire. The WASB has indicated that the circumstances of those deaths will be considered in its thematic review.

It is understood that HWW will have the opportunity to contribute to/informed of the ToR for the review.

7. To date HWW has focused on enquiring into the arrangements for safeguarding homeless people with care and support needs and has not sought to consider services that are and have been available to support those needs. Therefore, at HWW's Public Board Meeting on 8 May 2019 it was envisaged that HWW would be in a position to finalise its enquiry as to safeguarding arrangements at the Board meeting on 10 July 2019.
8. However, since the Public Board Meeting on 8 May HWW has been alerted to an incident of rough sleeping that occurred in June 2019 in Worcester where the rough sleeper was potentially exposed to significant health risk because of the circumstances in which he was found to be sleeping. When the incident was first referred to WASB it appears that the initial response was to arrange a multi-agency meeting to take place several weeks after the incident had been reported.
9. This incident has prompted HWW to consider the 'crisis' services that are available in Worcestershire for the homeless who are rough sleepers. It is understood from recent informal HWW enquiries that:
  - the 'outreach' service prior to April 2016 was commissioned by Worcester City Council and provided by St Pauls Hostel
  - In April 2016 a new service, funded by Worcestershire County Council [public health ring fenced grant] but commissioned by Worcester City Council was provided by Caring and Communities and People {CCP} following a competitive tender process, and that service did not require the provision of traditional outreach for rough sleepers [Single Person and Childless Couples Homeless Prevention Support Service]
  - A transition plan was put in place by Worcester City Council to manage the effective transfer of services from St Pauls Hostel to CCP
  - In May 2018 outreach services were restored in Worcestershire when Maggs Day Centre received a Big Lottery grant to provide them.
10. HWW's interest/concern in this instance is in relation to the health and wellbeing of potentially vulnerable adults living on the streets and the adequacy of provision, as well as the even-handedness of any response to safeguarding concerns?
11. Therefore, in view of the relevance of the availability of outreach services to safeguard the immediate care and support needs of homeless people who are rough sleeping a formal request has been made to Worcester City Council for disclosure of the service specifications of both contracts referred to above and the transition plan. A response is awaited.

## **Recommendations**

- 1. HWW considers the draft terms of reference of the WASB thematic review and responds as appropriate**
- 2. HWW extends its enquiry to consider services that are commissioned to support rough sleepers immediate care and support needs [currently the Single Person and Childless Couples Homeless Prevention Support Service]**