

Death of an adult at risk

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S.A.M.: Follow the Adult Social Care “Need to Know” directive. Raise any cases currently being progressed under adult safeguarding procedures or where it is suspected that the harm, abuse or neglect of an adult at risk has caused or contributed to their death with the Police and the Coroner. This includes the following:

- Advise the Coroner at the earliest opportunity of any serious incident which may result in death. This information will be used by the coroner and their staff in the event of the death to make investigation, post mortem and inquest decisions at the time required.
- Report any death to the Coroner immediately the death is known:
 - where contributory abuse or neglect is suspected, particularly if it involves domestic violence or services in the statutory, independent or voluntary sector
 - which occurs during an adult safeguarding process
 - which occurs immediately after an adult safeguarding process has been completed within the last 30 days.

This will enable the coroner and their staff to make investigation, post mortem and inquest decisions.

- Notify the coroner:
 - when a Large Scale Investigation is started
 - of services where it is identified there appears to be a high death rate.

This will enable the coroner to be aware of providers and/or services about which there are significant concerns: they will then know if further enquires are required should a death from that provider or service come to their attention.

There is a duty to share information with the Coroner from the adult safeguarding process and investigation.

All of the above relates to self-funding individuals, individuals funded by Adult Social Care and continuing healthcare funded individuals.

The Safeguarding Adults Board considers whether the case meets the criteria for a Safeguarding Adults Review in these cases.

Domestic homicides

Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 creates an expectation for Local Authority Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) to undertake a multi-agency Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) into the deaths of people aged 18 or over resulting, or appearing to result, from violence, abuse or neglect by a current or former partner, a relative or a member of the same household.

Need to know directive

INTRODUCTION

The Executive Director of the People's Department holds the statutory functions of Director of Children's and Adult Social Services and must be informed of all major incidents, situations or controversies involving services, staff, service users and buildings.

The Director of Public Health has a statutory function around the health and wellbeing of the people of Croydon and must be informed about all major incidents, situations or issues around health protection, emergency preparedness and health and wellbeing.

These guidelines set out the sorts of issues which the two post holders need to be briefed about but is not exhaustive. The initial verbal and/or written briefing should provide a summary of the issue, and any action taken or planned.

In the absence of the Executive Director or Director of Public Health, the Chief Executive needs to receive a briefing directly.

The Executive Director or Director of Public Health will, in consultation with the relevant director or most appropriate manager, ensure that the Chief Executive, other corporate colleagues and elected members are informed as necessary and that any relevant press briefings are prepared. If this is specific Public Health issue the Director of Public Health may report directly to the Chief Executive and Executive Director at the same time.

CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRING A 'NEED TO KNOW' BRIEFING

The Executive Director and the Director of Public Health need to be briefed by the most appropriate manager concerned with the incident in the following circumstances:

Service users:

- Death, serious accidents or injuries on local authority premises or where a member of staff is present
- Death where the death is unusual or unexpected
- Death or serious injury of a child in care or subject to a child protection plan
- Death or serious injury of a child or adult who is currently receiving departmental services, including children looked after by the Council

- Death or serious injury of a child attending a school in Croydon or placed by the council in a school in another borough
- Violent incidents, in the company of local authority or school staff or where there are serious implications for the staff working with that person
- Cases of serious communicable diseases in schools, residential or day care premises, including foster homes and supported housing
- Children missing subject to a Child Protection Plan, for more than 48 hours where they are particularly vulnerable

Staff, Councillors, MPs and other prominent local people:

- Unexpected death or serious injury
- Significant accidents or injuries at work. (This is in addition to the corporate Health and Safety procedures which should be followed in all cases of accidents at work)
- Involvement in violent incidents
- Allegations, arrests or convictions for serious criminal offences
- Media coverage relating to members of staff where the publicity may impact on the council

Service premises or maintained schools – Executive Director only:

- Serious or significant damage caused by floods, accidental fire etc.
- Significant vandalism or burglary
- Any incident of arson

Controversies - Executive Director and the Director of Public Health if there are health and wellbeing, health protection, safeguarding or emergency planning issues:

- Major complaints implicating Safeguarding
- Matters likely to attract local or national interest
- Any matter which has or is likely to attract the attention of the media, elected members or Members of Parliament

Significant legal proceedings:

- Proceedings likely to attract public or media interest
- Criminal trials resulting from child protection proceedings
- Trials relating to fraud or other offences committed by staff

- Proceedings with potentially high financial or policy implications; for example threat of judicial review, civil litigation for damages, employment tribunal claims etc.
- Inquests