

BACKGROUND: Chris was a 53-year-old man who died from multiple traumatic injuries after exiting a third-floor window. The coroner recorded an open verdict as it was not possible to determine whether he slipped or intentionally jumped from the window ledge.

Chris had been known to a number of health services since 2000 and had a wide-ranging medical history including non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus, ex intravenous drug user, alcohol abuse and schizophrenia. He had been known to substance misuse services since 2011 with frequent spells of treatment, disengagement and subsequent re-engagement. A common feature of Chris's physical and mental health history is the challenges faced by health services in providing consistent and effective support and interventions. This was exacerbated by aggressiveness and at times physical abuse towards those attempting to work with him.

Nottinghamshire Police records show that Chris had, since 1991, 49 criminal convictions. These included public order (including racially aggravated public order), criminal damage, theft and violence. In 2019, Chris was subject to a Criminal Behaviour Order. However, he was also a victim in a number of incidents.

Concerns over Chris's property being cuckooed started to emerge in September of 2022, 3 months before he died. Chris initially disclosed that non tenants were 'banging on his door' with the communal areas 'busy with unknown people.' Chris stated that flats are being overtaken by drug dealers and 'that he is at risk.'

This information was forwarded promptly to Nottingham City's Slavery Exploitation Team. A multi-agency disciplinary team meeting was initially arranged. Chris was assessed as 'high risk' with Chris being discussed at Nottingham's City's Slavery Exploitation Risk Assessment Conference (SERAC) 8 days following the initial referral.

PRACTITIONER KEY LEARNING: This review, along with other reviews into cuckooing has identified that there are different forms of 'cuckooing', from associates (mate crime), local drug dealers/networks through to organised crime groups. An understanding of the type of cuckooing taking place, the relationship between the victim and perpetrator(s) and the specific heightened risk factors relevant to the victim is fundamental in how agencies can safeguard adults being exploited or at risk of being exploited through this form of adult exploitation.

Through resources and training, practitioners should ensure that they have an understanding of the principles of the relationship between victims and perpetrators in cuckooing, as well as the different operating models in the adult safeguarding environment.

The cluster where Chris lives was described as a 'closed area', in that there was an absence of neighbours. In the majority of cases of vulnerability or ASB, police or housing providers are notified by neighbours, enabling a clearer picture of crimes and anti-social behaviour. Where vulnerable people are being housed in such an area, without this

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community network raising their concerns to the police or other agencies, can lead to a further heightened risk factor. **This means it is even more important for professionals to be aware of the signs of exploitation and to be professionally curious – you may be the only one who can identify and raise concerns.**

AGENCY KEY LEARNING: Using the Nottingham City Council Slavery and Exploitation Team as the primary resource for training and awareness is seen as good practice. **Please ensure that you are signposting your staff to the available resources, including them within your internal training, and providing staff with the time needed to attend training.**

Nottingham City has clearly identified the risk to its communities through modern slavery and exploitation by investing in a dedicated team focusing on identification, prevention, early intervention and disruption of slavery, exploitation and trafficking. The SERAC (Slavery and Exploitation Risk Assessment Conference) model provides a regular forum for cases specifically related to exploitation to be raised and provides a multi-agency response to safeguard individuals being exploited, or at risk of being exploited. **Please ensure that your staff are aware of when and how to make a referral to SERAC.**

ACTION TO BE TAKEN: Please share this briefing and discuss the learning from it to inform future practice. If you have concerns about someone who is exhibiting signs of being cuckooed or experiencing any other kind of exploitation and are unsure how to proceed, please speak to your agency safeguarding lead and the Nottingham City Slavery and Exploitation Team, even if the individual may not meet the criteria for a referral to social care.

HOW TO USE THIS BRIEFING: As with all Safeguarding Adults Reviews, there is learning for all practitioners and services, even if they were not involved in the original case. Here are some ideas on how you can take this learning forward:

- **Include reading this briefing in your personal development time and check whether you are familiar with the policies and procedures detailed within**
- **Discuss in your supervision/ 1:1 sessions – are the themes in this case familiar with what you see in your day-to-day work?**
- **Share with your comms team to put on your own agency intranet**
- **Add it to your agency internal newsletter**
- **Use it in your weekly team meeting to start a conversation – are there themes in this case that your team may struggle with? Would they know where to seek support if they were faced with the situation within the briefing? Is there a training need to ensure staff are well informed and confident in dealing with self-neglect and raising a safeguarding concern?**
- **Do you know where to find the Safeguarding Adults Board or Slavery and Exploitation Team resources in your agency? If not, raise this with your manager**

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