

Title of report: Thematic Review: Premature Deaths

Meeting: Health and Wellbeing Board

Meeting date: 13 March 2023

Report by: Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose:

- For the Board to receive and comment on the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board Thematic Review: Premature Deaths

Recommendation(s)

- That the Board considers and comments on the Thematic Review.

Alternative options

- 1: The Board could choose not to consider this report. This is not recommended as the HWBB will provide its opinion, as appropriate, to Herefordshire Council, the Integrated Care Board or NHS England, as to whether they are discharging their duty to have regard to any assessment of relevant needs prepared by the Council, the ICB or NHS England in the exercise of their functions.

Key considerations

- Herefordshire County Council referred six deaths of individuals, their deaths occurring between January 2019 and August 2020. The information received from partners indicated a high level of substance abuse and physical and mental health issues. All were known to the police as victims and offenders. Concerns surrounded some of the individuals relating to self-harm, homelessness, self-neglect and suicidal ideation.
- Four were accommodated at the time of their death in accommodation for single homeless people with support needs. No inquest was held with respect to the deaths of three individuals, their deaths being either expected or from natural causes. An open verdict was recorded in one case. Cause of death was given as pneumonia in one instance, liver failure in a second and as substance-related in a third.
- The referral was prompted by the pattern of deaths over a two-year period. Similarities had been observed, namely individuals presenting with complex needs including substance misuse, offending, mental health, underlying physical health issues, and challenging behaviours. Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) accepted that the criteria for a discretionary safeguarding adult review (SAR) were met¹.
- This report was commissioned to consider learning from the individual cases within scope of the review, with an additional focus on repetitive learning across the cases that would indicate system-wide concerns and challenges.
- The focus of this report is on the issues professionals encountered in working with the six individuals. Examples of good practice have been included alongside analysis of gaps in provision and shortfalls in practice. Throughout there has been a clear commitment from practitioners, operational managers and strategic managers to appraise current service provision and to identify priorities for service improvement and enhancement.
- Appendix 1 HSAB-Thematic-review-Premature-Deaths-Adults
- Appendix 2 Thematic review exc videos

Community Impact

In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory and practical interventions. Determining the right mix of these is an important strategic choice to make sure outcomes are achieved. The council needs robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure its outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best use of resources whilst still enabling efficient and effective operations and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review

Environmental Impact

There are no general implications for the environment arising from this report.

Equality duty

- Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) Facilitate good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

Resource implications

- There are no resource implications associated with this report. However, the resource implications of any recommendations made by the HWB will need to be considered by the responsible party in response to those recommendations or subsequent decisions

Legal implications

- Health and wellbeing boards are responsible for encouraging integrated working between health and social care commissioners, including partnership arrangements such as pooled budgets, lead commissioning and integrated provision.
- Their purpose is to establish collaborative decision making, planning and commissioning across councils and the NHS, informed by the views of patients, people who use services and other partners.
- The functions of the Health and Wellbeing Board are set out in paragraph 3.5.24 of the constitution.

Risk management

There are no risk implications identified emerging from the recommendations in this report

Consultees

Matt Pearce (Director of Public Health), Hilary Hall (Corporate Director Community Wellbeing), Ivan Powell (Independent Chair – Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board).

Appendices

Appendix 1 – HSAB-Thematic-review-Premature-Deaths-Adults

Appendix 2 - Thematic review exc videos

Background papers

None