

Letter From the Family of Leocardo in Response to the Publication of the Brent Safeguarding Adults Report: November 2020

Firstly, we would like to thank all agencies contributing to the development of this report and for engaging with the process on varying levels. We look forward to reading the recommendations and implementations in 6 months time from all the agencies that were involved. We believe this will enhance initiatives to support future good practice.

We have experienced an immense amount of trauma throughout the past 3 years and continue to live through the fall-out of this in regards to the events leading up to, surrounding and post the death of our beloved Father Leocardo.

By agreeing to participate in the Safeguarding Adults Report (SAR) we found solace in the belief that we were doing the best we could to ensure no family would ever have to endure the painfully, distressing journey we have suffered. When we were contacted by the Brent Adult Safeguarding team we felt that our Father's experience would be dignified with some sort of recognition that all agencies would identify the challenges that had happened in the care that was provided to our father.

The Safeguarding Adults Report for us was not about apportioning blame. We were and continue to seek a collective body of work that could create a space for future best practice to emerge. We also believed that the report could reflect our voice as well as our Father's personality and the tragic journey that ensued. We hoped that this would venerate his memory.

At the request of the Coroner an Interim Report was presented in October 2019. We felt that it went some way in reassuring us that our real concerns were being considered and that the Draft report would make a difference. The Interim Report seemed to reflect the methodology that we were informed would be contained within the Draft Report and thus correlate with our experience of these traumatic events.

Following our initial meetings with Brent Adult Safeguarding team, we came away with a sense of confidence in the process and that our valid concerns would be considered. This feeling was strengthened by the emphasis and tone of the Interim Report.

But unfortunately, the production of the Draft Report has been plagued with delays and poor communication, leaving us feeling frustrated and dissatisfied. We were expecting the Draft Report to have been a natural and organic progression from the Interim report. However, the Draft Report has turned out to be very different in character to the Interim Report. Essentially, we think it neglects to present an open minded enquiry, and in effect constitutes an example of self serving institutional avoidance.

We were disappointed, that we had to wait for so long for a document that mostly states a series of recommendations in response to the conclusions and findings of the inquest. The Draft Report bears very little resemblance to the Interim Report. We felt that the Draft Report was lacking in empathy.

Having read the Draft Report, we believe that an opportunity to learn lessons and avoid mistakes of the past is in danger of being lost. We do not feel that the risk of these events happening again are at this point any less than they were before.

One reason for this was because we felt that the Draft Report is weighted too much in favour of London Borough of Brent, with only limited contributions from the other agencies involved. Additionally, we were led to believe that the SAR Report was the only document that would be considered for publication. However, it appears that the Brent Adult Safeguarding Board granted permission for LB Brent's response to be appended to the published final report.

We don't feel we have had continuity in developing the SARs and that our views have been sufficiently represented.

The Interim Report states on page 28 *'In Safeguarding Adults Reviews, recommendations are typically developed collectively with the aim of reflecting the views of families and securing the buy-in of organisations who are party to the review'*.

However, communication with the SAR team and ourselves stopped prior to the pre inquest review with contact only being resumed in response to our queries regarding progress towards completion of the Draft Report. Therefore, the Draft Report does not live up to our expectations in this respect.

In addition, another thing that we take issue with is The Brent Council response document that states in page 3;

'... in discussion with the family and the BSAB, we agreed to defer the SAR until the Inquest was completed'. This is factually incorrect. We as the family of Leocardo were not involved in the conversation. We were actually informed that because we had sought legal representation at the inquest that the other agencies involved were now unwilling to co operate with the Safeguarding Adults Review process. There was no agreement on our part to defer the process.

In summation, we don't feel that our concerns as a family have been adequately addressed in the Draft Report. We therefore, requested that the Interim Report be published alongside the Final Report, so that the contrast between the two documents is clear.

However, we await the response from all agencies in 6 months that will demonstrate the mechanisms engaged to ensure that communication between all agencies is robust and monitored. We would suggest a platform where information regarding a high-risk adult is stored and updated regularly by all parties involved, assuring agencies can prioritise pressing concerns that require urgent attention. Furthermore, we believe that the recommendations and implementation of such procedures may go some way to reassure us that a holistic approach has been developed.

The Family of Leocardo