

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Director of the Community Health and Care Partnership

Community Health and Care Partnership Committee: 20 November 2013

Subject: Blue Triangle Multi Agency Review

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to inform the CHCP Committee of the outcome and recommendations of the Multi-Agency review into the deaths of three young women residing at the Blue Triangle Housing Accommodation between July and September 2012.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is recommended to:

2.1.1 Acknowledge that the Multi-Agency Review found no deficit in the care in any of the three tragic cases.

2.1.2 Note that there will be no Fatal Accident Inquiry into any of the three deaths.

2.2 Endorse the Action Plan (Appendix 1) approved by the Chief Officer's Public Protection Group the full implementation of which will be monitored by the Chief Officer's Public Protection Group.

3. Background

3.1 During the period between July 2012 to September 2012, three young women took their own lives whilst residing within Blue Triangle Housing Accommodation.

Miss A died aged 17 years in the Blue Triangle Supported Housing, Bonhill on 28th August 2012.

Miss B died aged 17 years in the Blue Triangle Supported Housing, Bonhill on 8th September 2012.

Miss C died aged 27 years on 16th July 2012 whilst residing in the Alexandria Blue Triangle Supported Housing.

3.2 A Multi-Agency Review was commissioned by the Chief Executive of West Dunbartonshire Council in her capacity as Chair of the West Dunbartonshire Public Protection Officers Group and the Director of the CHCP. The review engaged and critically reflected upon contributions from the range of responsible disciplines and services of West Dunbartonshire Council, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Strathclyde Police, Third Sector organisations

(including the Blue Triangle) and importantly sought the views and comments from the family members of the three young women.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** In addition to formulating the specific review recommendations, during the course of the review a number of management actions were taken to respond to ongoing heightened anxieties among housing and third sector colleagues in supporting vulnerable young people

In order to support colleagues a clear pathway on how to access mental health services was circulated.

CHCP Choose Life Team and WDC Children's Educational Psychology Service delivered sessions on suicide awareness to a number of local schools. This will be further rolled out across all schools in West Dunbartonshire.

CHCP Mental Health Staff delivered training and support to housing and third sector agencies.

- 4.2** The lives of these three young women had much in common. Similarities with the life experiences of the 'looked after' young women who died at the Erskine Bridge in October 2009 are pronounced and stark. Many of the same underlying problems are evident and many of the same questions emerge for those responsible for their care.
- 4.3** Some of the key features of their lives were the lack of a stable home and of the absence of positive parental guidance. All these young women were exposed to emotional trauma and dysfunctional family relationships. Their lives were affected by family breakdown which resulted in periods spent in the care of the local authority. All three went on to experience homelessness.
- 4.4** Following examination of each of the three cases, the Review found no evidence of any deficits in care. Appropriate information sharing and timely interventions were evident in all three cases with good evidence of planning, continuity of care and significant efforts made by services to keep all three clients engaged and supported.
- 4.5** Important questions inevitably and quite correctly arise about the preventability of these deaths, about the adequacy of the interventions made by all the services responsible for them.
- 4.6** The Multi-Agency Group has questioned the placement of these young women in accommodation provided for both sexes and all ages. While understanding the reasons for exclusion from other resources, the Review recommends that young people are not in future placed in shared accommodation with older homeless people. The Multi Agency Review had no criticism of the standard of care provided by the Blue Triangle, indeed the support was felt to be very good.
- 4.7** Across each of the three cases there is a clear pattern of the 3 young women not engaging with services, particularly in relation to the support offered by

Mental Health and Addiction Services. However there is also clear evidence within the documentation and from relatives that services attempted to keep all of the clients engaged in support using flexible approaches i.e. home visits and in some cases outreach approaches.

4.8 In each of the three cases and despite the best efforts of services to offer appropriate and timely supports, clients although vulnerable were at liberty to make lifestyle choices some of which significantly increased the risk to their emotional, physical and mental wellbeing.

4.9 The view expressed by the Multi Agency Review was that ultimately, services can only seek to minimise risk but cannot eliminate it completely.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are wide ranging traumatic and emotional implications for family members, carers, staff and other vulnerable members of the wider community as a result of these tragic events. The Multi-Agency Review has acknowledged this and as much as practicable, fully involved family members in the review as well as put in place additional supports for services and the vulnerable clients who receive support from services.

5.2 Senior Officers have met with each of the three families and provided feedback from the report on their loved one and each of the families have been provided with a redacted report and the offer of further supports if required.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Full implementation of the recommendations will incur additional costs. While existing services will be redesigned a growth bid for additional funding is being prepared for the 14/15 Budget process.

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7. Risk Analysis

7.1 Whilst the recommendations are important in minimising individual risk to vulnerable individuals, the committee is asked to note that despite endorsement of all of the recommendations, individuals are at liberty to make lifestyle choices which significantly increase the risk to their emotional, physical and mental wellbeing. The view expressed by the Multi Agency Review was that ultimately, services can only seek to minimise the risk to individuals but cannot eliminate the risk completely.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 Not required for the Report.

9. Consultation

9.1 In the Process of delivering the Multi-Agency Report consultation was taken with members of The Three Families , West Dunbartonshire CHCP Mental Health and Crisis Services , Children's Through Care , Social Work, Youth

Services , Blue Triangle Supported Housing ,Alternatives All 4 Youth ,
Strathclyde Scotland , NHS GG&C Children's and Mental Health Adolescent
and WDC Housing Services



R Keith Redpath
Director

Person to Contact: **John Russell**
 Head of Mental Health, Addictions and Learning
 Disabilities
 West Dunbartonshire CHCP
 Garshake Road, Dumbarton G82 3PU
 01389 737754
 john.russell@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Appendices: **Appendix 1 – Blue Triangle Recommendations**
 Action Plan

Background Papers: **(1) Multi-Agency Review Blue Triangle Residents**
 Report for Chief Officers Group .
 (2) Supported and Looked After Accommodated
 Children in Greater Glasgow and Clyde.
 (3) Suicide Prevention for Looked After Children and
 Young People.

Wards Affected: **All Wards**