

## **The Safeguarding Adults Review for Joe Family Statement July 2025**

Joe's tragic death on August 9th, 2023 at the Holmes Road hostel in Kentish Town, Camden, has caused a deep and everlasting grief and sadness for us as a family. We welcome the publication of the Safeguarding Adults Review, 23 months after Joe's death. As a family we have been through a long and painful process to reach this point, following the public inquest in December 2024 and a Patient Safety Incident Review by the North London Mental Health Partnership. We received a Duty of Candour letter from the North London NHS Foundation Trust in December 2024. There are a multitude of lessons to be learned from Joe's experience and death. Joe's life came to a tragic end when he was 39 years old. We can only hope that other vulnerable people with a severe and enduring mental illness who become homeless will benefit from much needed and extensive improvements in services following the findings of this Safeguarding Adults Review.

It has been clear to us throughout this ordeal that representatives of Camden Council had formed a very simplistic and negative opinion of Joe as a determined drug user who refused to listen to advice and rejected offers of help to address his addictions. This review, alongside the one from the NHS, paints the true picture. Joe had a severe and enduring mental illness which he had struggled with for many years. His self-medication and escalating drug use could not be addressed without understanding and giving him support for his debilitating symptoms. Joe said this over and over again, as we his family did, but no-one listened to him, or to us. His words, 'No-one cares mum' will echo forevermore.

Throughout the last two years of Joe's life, he did not receive the advice, help and support from staff and services that he so desperately needed. Without any doubt, Joe's self-esteem and mental and physical well-being deteriorated dramatically whilst living at the Holmes Road hostel.

Joe was placed at the Holmes Road hostel by Camden Council following a terrifying incident of cuckooing in his bedsit on the Kilburn High Road. As a family, we wrongly believed and trusted that Joe would be safe from harm and exploitation at Holmes Road. He was a gentle, highly vulnerable person. His mental illness made it difficult for him to build relationships. He was extremely lonely and easy prey. His vulnerability went unchecked and unmonitored by staff. The combination of Joe's mental illness, his self-neglect and his substance misuse combined with his prescription medication and non-attendance at appointments should have been communicated to inform his care plan and allocated level of supervision by hostel staff.

It was highlighted by the Coroner at Joe's inquest and included in a Prevention of Future Deaths report that there was inadequate availability of naloxone, the emergency antidote for overdoses caused by heroin and other opioids, at the Holmes Road hostel. Naloxone was not readily available to residents in case of emergency. On day one at the Holmes Road hostel, Joe sent a message to his mother Jude saying that it was 'hell on earth for me' there. His words 'I am going to die here mum' will haunt her forevermore.

The Safeguarding Adults Review for Joe, in line with the NHS Patient Safety Incident Review, acknowledges that family members, in particular his mother Jude, were never seen as partners in Joe's care and the monitoring of his mental and physical well-being. We were consistently blocked from having any constructive engagement with service providers and all agencies associated with Joe. Jude's deep concern for Joe was viewed as interference and was never welcomed. We are therefore pleased with the commitment of the Camden Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board to involve us in monitoring the implementation of the Safeguarding Adults Review's recommendations.

We support all seven of the recommendations made in the review and hope that other people across the country will join us in calling for oversight by an independent regulator of hostels such as Holmes Road, to ensure consistent standards of care are provided for all residents.

We sincerely hope that the recommendations of this Safeguarding Adults Review are urgently put in place in Joe's memory and that they will have a positive, lasting impact on the care and support for vulnerable adults with a complex mental illness. We remain devastated by Joe's death and do not want any other family to endure such a tragic loss and the deepest grief.