

# Lessons Learned



**Jack's Story....** Jack is a young teenager who sadly took his own life. In the time leading up to Jack's death the UK was in lockdown due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Just prior to the lockdown the process had begun for Jack to move to a new school following a number of fixed term exclusions. Jack's parents were divorced, and Jack had recently moved from living with his father and siblings to living with his mother.

Jack was experiencing some difficulties in his life and was displaying some behaviours at home and at school. There was minimal multi-agency involvement with Jack in the year preceding his death, although there were four referrals for the family to children's social care and one single assessment was completed; none of which resulted in intervention or support.

Apart from school there were no other agencies involved with Jack at the time of his death. No school staff had any contact with Jack during the lockdown period prior to their death and there is no recorded information about them during this period.

## What we have learned....

- There is evidence that there were several occasions that Jack used alcohol to excess, however this was not considered to be a concerning factor or indicator by practitioners. **Learning for practice:** *Practitioners to consider that excessive drinking by teenagers aged under 14 is an indicator of vulnerability or adverse childhood experience, and ensure children get the support that they need.*
- In addition to the known experiences for Jack at home, they were also displaying behaviours at school that indicated possible signs of trauma, however these were not fully explored and plans for support were not developed. **Learning for practice:** *practitioners need to recognise the signs and symptoms of adverse childhood experience and address the causes as well as the symptoms.*
- Jack was moving to a new school shortly before the national lockdown, however very limited information was provided from the old school to the new one, which meant the new school had very little understanding of Jack's lived experience. **Learning for practice:** *all schools **are expected to** consistently collate and share safeguarding and other relevant information both internally within their own organisations and externally when students move schools to ensure that students safeguarding, and welfare needs are met*



# Lessons Learned (cont.)

## What we have learned (contd.).....

- Despite his mother being a keyworker and the fact that Jack was a vulnerable child, he was not offered a place in school following the national lockdown due to Covid-19. **Learning for Practice:** *all children and young people defined to be as vulnerable should be attending on site school provision. If a vulnerable child or young person does not attend, schools are expected to follow the guidance 'Support for Vulnerable Children from Schools During Lockdown.'*

## What do I need to do....

### **Advice for professionals**

- Read the 7 Minute Briefing in respect of [Use of Alcohol in Children and Young People](#)
- Read the resources in respect of [childhood trauma](#) and reflect on how you can ply this to your work
- Familiarise yourself with the procedures in respect of [thresholds for services](#) and dispensing of parental consent
- Schools are expected to be aware of the guidance of sharing of information when children transfer between schools
- Read the briefing '[Support for Vulnerable Children from Schools During Lockdown](#)'

### **Advice for communities**

- Read the 7 Minute briefing in respect of [Children Home Alone](#) if you are considering leaving your child unsupervised
- If you are worried about your child's use of alcohol [Warwickshire COMPASS](#) can provide dedicated advice and support
- Don't be afraid to ask your child the difficult questions about how they are feeling; read the guidance from the [NSPCC](#) for information