

# **‘Lilian’ SAR Statement**

**Sola Afuape, Independent Chair of Newham Safeguarding Adults Board**

**April 2024**

<sup>1</sup>Lilian Marie Modest (known to services as Lilian John-Baptiste) was a beautiful, elegant, strong, Christian woman who was fiercely independent and worked hard before she fell ill with mental illness. Her death will have deeply affected her family, friends, neighbours and people that cared for her and I extend my sincere condolences to them all. I also extend my thanks to Amanda Alexander, her daughter, who remained engaged with the review throughout during what, no doubt, was a very difficult time.

Amanda describes the harsh realities that her mother, a Caribbean woman, experienced as an immigrant trying to establish a home for herself and family:- the challenges of discrimination and inequity, that over time she feels contributed to her mother’s mental ill-health and lack of trust of services. An understanding and consideration of this would have been an important part of understanding how best to respond to Lilian and her safeguarding needs.

At the heart of our public services are staff working hard to provide the very best service they can in an environment of increasing demand which they have to manage within the constraints of limited resources. What can sometimes get lost within this daily battle are often our most vulnerable residents with the greatest care needs who have limited agency and ability to advocate for themselves. The deeply sad case of Lilian was a sobering reminder of this. Cultural competency, professional curiosity and equity of service are essential mitigations to avoid this.

Without purposeful intention Lilian’s tragic death could be a moment passed by in the busyness of service delivery. Myself and all members of the Board have considered the findings and recommendations presented in this Safeguarding Adult Review and will build on the multi-agency action plan and reflections to make long lasting change.

This will be a long term commitment with greater input from local residents to make safeguarding personal ensuring that the fullness of their lived experiences informs and shapes our work. Work is already underway to identify, understand and address disparities within safeguarding, building on the work initially started by my predecessor, Fran Pearson; Business Manager, Anne Ibezi and CB Plus CEO as the SAB resident advocate, Julie Pal.

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<sup>1</sup> Amanda has given permission for her mother to be named in the review and in my response to leave a legacy of learning and change in her mother’s name.