

[personal/sensitive]

Impact statement

DAVID ROSS, born 1970, died 2010

My brother David took his own life in 2010 while living in Arnhem Road, a supported living residence in Chelmsford. He was 40 and had struggled with mental health problems since his early 20's, making several suicide attempts before he finally died. He was in the care of the Essex NHS Trust for most of this time, and spent periods in the Linden Centre.

On the day he died David told the person on duty at Arnhem Road that he was struggling and she advised him to go to A and E. The system precluded her from taking him apparently. He never went to A and E that day, and that night he took a fatal overdose in his room at the house.

I was living and working in Zambia at the time and will never forget the dreaded call from my parents. David was gone this time, really gone. My next strong memory of that period was stepping into the undertakers with my parents to view David's body and the heart-rending visceral cry that came from my Mum as she saw her son's body. His death was real. One doesn't "get-over" a suicide, it haunts a family and especially parents forever. This is certainly the case with our family.

I am writing this now and not my parents as both of them have now passed away. I am the only Ross remaining, something I feel keenly now that my parents are gone. Yes David was struggling and yes, he wasn't always easy but he was my brother and my only sibling and I loved him. He was also a bright, intelligent, conscientious guy with a wicked sense of humour who did his best to leave a positive mark on the world and was much liked by the people around him.

David had faced massive challenges in his 40 years and seemed to be in a better place at last. What happened that Sunday? How was he able to hit rock bottom and take his life while in a supported living environment? I sincerely hope that this inquiry gets to the root of the issues and makes some solid recommendations for improvements.

To those who receive the report, I ask you please to take serious heed and work to implement the recommendations. Mental health issues can plague any family at any time. Please ensure that future families are spared the loss that my family has suffered since David's death.

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