

Press Release



Title: Charity welcomes coroner's comments
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The comments made by the coroner at the inquest of Anthony Brennan have been welcomed by SignHealth, the national charity specialising in health issues for Deaf people.

Mr Brennan committed suicide last year. However, SignHealth felt Mr Brennan had **been let down by Manchester social services**. Mr Brennan had received a lot of support, first in a specialist psychiatric unit for Deaf people in Prestwich. He then lived in a care home in Chorlton run by SignHealth. His levels of independence increased, and he was able to cook and manage most daily tasks.

When Mr Brennan left to live independently, SignHealth staff felt it important that he continued to have regular contact with someone who could sign (in British Sign Language) and recognize any signs of mental distress. This was to make sure Mr Brennan did not relapse and that services could respond if there was a deteriorating. Such support would also reduce the isolation which Mr Brennan was bound to feel.

When Mr Brennan left the care home he received outreach support from Blackburn & Darwin social services. However, when he moved to Manchester, local social services decided he no longer needed any specialist support.

SignHealth believe this was a serious mistake, and are pleased the Coroner, Mr Nigel Meadows, has reaching the same conclusion.

Steve Powell, chief executive of SignHealth, gave evidence at the inquiry, and said this following the verdict:

"I welcome the coroner's comments. Anthony's death was avoidable. For the cost of £30 per week, Anthony could have had contact with someone who would have reduced his isolation and noticed when he became unwell. Having already spent £500,000 in care home fees to prepare Anthony for independence, this small amount could have made a huge difference.

"I think Manchester Social Services need to take a serious look at their treatment of Anthony. Why was he abandoned with no support? How was that decision made? This is not the first time I have had concerns about the council's social services department. I sincerely hope this tragic death will now lead to an improvement for deaf people in Manchester."