

1. Introduction

This briefing follows a SAR concerning the death of a vulnerable 59 year old woman. Following referral to the safeguarding board it was considered that the SAR criteria, set out in the Care Act 2014, had been met and that there was learning to be gained from a review in order to try and prevent similar situations in future.

The purpose of a SAR is to promote effective learning and improve action to prevent future deaths or serious harm occurring. The aim is to learn from serious incidents and improve the way agencies work together.

2. Background

The methodology used for this review was the safeguarding board's Local Learning Review (LLR) and this identified that the woman had:

- Significant physical and mental health needs and a diagnosis of terminal alcoholism
- Had multiple hospital admissions and a history of addiction to opiates
- Made allegations of domestic abuse against her husband
- Frequently cancelled appointments to address her care and support needs
- Lived in conditions considered to be unhygienic and unsafe

4. Next steps

Recommendations posed by the review will be considered by the partnership and action plans put in place to address the areas of learning.

3. Learning (iv)

For adults with longstanding complex needs the [High Risk Professionals Meeting](#) tools and guidance provides a framework for cases where, despite continuing work, serious risks are still present. Professionals should use the guidance to ensure multi-agency examination of risk and consideration of additional forms of support.

3. Learning (iii)

When working with adults who display **high risk** behaviours, professionals often face a difficult balance of seeking to respect the individual's wishes whilst being concerned by the risks of harm. It can also be difficult for professionals to find an appropriate response when high risk individuals are deemed to have **mental capacity** but are actively resistant to intervention. Professionals need to be aware that mental capacity is not a static matter and consideration should always be given to how a person's mental can fluctuate particularly when risks are associated to substance abuse or alcohol related harm.

3. Learning (i)

For adults with care and support needs, consideration should be given to any risk posed by those who care for them. Apparently unwise decisions could be the result of coercion or controlling behaviour by another person. Practitioners need to be aware of the elements of coercion and control within relationship and family contexts and be able to distinguish confidently between **domestic abuse** and safeguarding concerns that arise for other reasons. Professionals should understand how coercive and controlling behaviours may inhibit people disclosing or revealing the extent of domestic abuse.

3. Learning (ii)

Practice [guidance](#) for **self-neglect** cases emphasises the importance of a person-centred approach by respecting the views and the perspective of the individual, listening to them and working towards the outcomes they want. Professionals should be curious about the causes of neglect and the impact carers have on the levels of neglect an adult is experiencing. Friends or family members who care for an adult with care and support needs should have their suitability as a carer assessed and be offered support in that role.

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