

Case Study B

A carer at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect and use of their power (non- statutory enquiry) and their duty to carers.

Mrs Davies lives with her husband, he had a diagnosis of dementia 2 years ago, which affects his behaviour. This has led to him shouting and hitting out at his wife, who is also his main carer.

Mrs Davies told a health professional who was involved in supporting her husband that she was becoming increasingly frightened by his physical and verbal outbursts and at times feared for her personal safety. Other family members were unaware of the extent of the harm and that Mrs Davies was exhausted and considering leaving the situation.

The situation presented significant personal risk to Mrs Davies, who was experiencing and at risk of abuse and neglect, there was also a risk of fragmenting relationships if the local authority staff were not sensitive to the needs of the whole family.

The local authority gathered information and spoke to the health professionals involved and to Mrs Davies and established that this behaviour was not usual for him, but because of his dementia. The local authority determined that Mrs Davies did not have care and support needs, but as she is a carer for her husband and is at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect, the local authority used their power (non-statutory enquiry)¹ to undertake enquiries to establish the nature of the concerns, they also they offered her S10 Care Act 2014, carers assessment²

The social care practitioner invested time in meeting with Mrs Davies to explore her preferences around managing her safety and how information about the situation would be communicated with the wider family and with her husband. This presented dilemmas around balancing the local authority's duty of care towards Mrs Davies with her wishes to remain in the situation with her husband. Placing emphasis on the latter inevitably meant that Mrs Davies would not be entirely free from the risk of harm but allowed the practitioner to explore help and support options which would enable Mrs Davies to manage and sustain her safety at a level which was acceptable to her.

The outcome for Mrs Davies was that she was able to continue to care for her husband by working in partnership with the local authority who were involved in also assessing her husband's care and support needs under S9 of the Care Act. The practitioner offered Mrs Davies advice about how to safely access help in an emergency and helped her to develop strategies to manage her own safety – this included staff building rapport with her husband, building on his strengths and desire to participate in social activities outside the family home. The effect of this was that some of the trigger points of him being at home with his wife for sustained periods during the day were reduced.

¹ [SCIE](#)

² [Care Act 2014](#)