

Hampshire Safeguarding Adult Board

Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) regarding 'Alex'

5 Step Briefing

The case

This 5-step briefing provides a summary of the key learning messages from the SAR which explores the challenges for health and social care services working together to safeguarding adults who live with a parent who may pose a risk to their adult child.

Alex is an adult with complex disabilities who lacks mental capacity in relation to managing complex needs relating to her physical and learning disabilities. Alex lived at home and was supported by her parent as her main carer, supplemented by a package of paid support commissioned by the CCG.

Safeguarding concerns were raised by the health staff and paid carers who felt that the delivery of consistently safe care to Alex was being adversely impacted by her parent. The Local Authority opened several section 42 safeguarding enquiries but did not assess the level of risk to Alex as high. The safeguarding enquiries had limited impact on the on-going challenges for the support workers trying to provide care. However, the CCG continued to feel that it was unsafe for Alex to remain in her parent's care and made an application to the Court of Protection (COP). The COP subsequently decided that Alex should be required to move into a residential unit in her best interests. Ahead of the move Alex's parent attempted to end Alex's life and their own life, fortunately both Alex and her parent survived.

The review

The HSAB commissioned a Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) under section 44 of the Care Act 2014, facilitated by an independent reviewer which commenced in March 2021, in order to draw out learning about joint working and managing risk.

Methodology - HSAB chose to use a methodology that engaged frontline practitioners and their line managers. Agencies were asked to review their single agency involvement and provide a report of their findings and learning. Those who were involved, alongside the authors of the single agency reviews were then invited to engage in a series of workshops that focussed on exploring themes and answering questions.

Key learning messages:

1. Understanding the adult in the context of their family

- Where an adult continues to remain living within his/her family, it is important to **understand the family narrative**, to provide context to your assessment.
- Promoting and **actively seeking the voice of the adult** with care and support needs leads to better understanding of their needs and impacts positively on care delivery.
- **Early preparation and open dialogue with 'older' carers** of adults with significant needs may help alleviate concerns and build trust, preparing for future changes to care arrangements.
- Conversations with families regarding the **contingency arrangements** for adults requiring care may provide indicators of future difficulties.
- Combined assessments of the adult and their unpaid carer should acknowledge any inter-dependency and take a whole family approach.
- Professionals need to be aware of the ['Whole Family Approach protocol and toolkit'](http://hampshirescp.org.uk) (hampshirescp.org.uk)

2. Responding to neglect within a family setting

- Neglect via acts of omission by a family member can cause unintentional harm and are still regarded as acts of neglect by the Care Act 2014 and associated statutory guidance, particularly where there is a failure by the carer to address the issue.
- This case highlights the need for all professionals to be professionally curious in their approach to the circumstances that they are presented with.

3. Safely managing and escalating different professional views about risk

- Where there are differences in understandings of risk between professionals or agencies which cannot be resolved promptly, it is important that the risks to the adult remain a central focus and to consider appropriate routes of escalation.
- The escalation process should continue until there is resolution rather than professionals reluctantly accepting decisions that remain a concern.
- The HSAB Escalation protocol [4LSAB Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Escalation Protocol June 2023 \(hampshiresab.org.uk\)](http://4LSAB.Multi-Agency.Safeguarding.Adults.Escalation.Protocol.June.2023.hampshiresab.org.uk) provides a useful starting point if there is a difference between agencies. *The policy will be refreshed as one of the outcomes of this SAR to provide additional guidance on conflict resolution.*

4. Support for practitioners working on complex cases involving court processes

- Where cases are complex it is important that senior managers and leaders have an overview in order to provide clarity of purpose and leadership.
- Some staff were not familiar with the COP process and felt a lack of confidence in responding to the court application process.
- Relevant agencies should provide preliminary information to frontline professionals and managers, as well as support and supervision when a case is subject to Court of Protection proceedings

5. Advocacy

- It is important to ensure that **statutory advocacy eligibility** is not overlooked as it is important in hearing the **voice of the adult** with care and support needs. Professionals need to be knowledgeable regarding matching the right advocacy service to the person's need/requirement.

Useful links to support good practice

[One Minute Guide to Advocacy \(hampshiresab.org.uk\)](http://hampshiresab.org.uk)

[4LSAB 7min Guide to Professional Curiosity \(hampshiresab.org.uk\)](http://hampshiresab.org.uk)

[Court of Protection - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[4LSAB Multi-Agency Information Sharing Guidance \(hampshiresab.org.uk\)](http://hampshiresab.org.uk)