



**Bath & North East Somerset
Community Safety & Safeguarding Partnership**

Safeguarding Adult Review 'Adult C' Executive Summary

Author: Annie Ho

Background

A Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) was commissioned by the Bath & North East Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) following the admission to hospital of Adult 'C'. Concerns were raised about the potential failure of a number of organisations in their duty to prevent ongoing harm to her, resulting in long-lasting physical and mental health impairment for her. Adult C had a history of mental ill health going back to 2013 and from 2017 had become bedbound and was displaying significant self-neglect behaviour.

Although the mental health and wellbeing of Adult C has improved since rehabilitation, she is left with significant physical disability. It is acknowledged by all partners who participated in this review, that she has suffered harm and lessons need to be learned from this complex case.

A 'Pen Portrait'

Adult C describes herself as 'happy' and having a 'normal family life' and a 'successful' career prior to becoming unwell. She is educated to degree level and was employed until 2014, when she left her position due to mental ill health and a decline in her physical health. Practitioners described her as an intelligent and articulate woman who knows and speaks her mind.

Adult C is married, and both she and her husband participated in this review, along with her mother and sister-in-law.

Key Themes

This review of practice highlighted key themes including:

- Ensuring the voice of the person is central throughout single and multi-agency involvement and intervention
- Consideration of mental capacity. When a person is unwilling to engage in an assessment it could be appropriate to review surrounding evidence to draw a conclusion as to whether they are capacitous.
- Parity of esteem should be given to mental and physical health needs
- The importance of team around the person and ensuring systems and processes allow for flexibility of response
- Understanding legal options and knowing when and how to access legal advice
- Understanding the impact on the carer and ensuring careful assessments for both the carer and person they are caring for
- When there are complex dynamics of the relationship between the family carer and the cared for, it is important to reflect on who is causing harm and who is being harmed
- Consideration of independent advocacy
- Partnership working between child and adult services in relation to child protection and vulnerable adults

- Understanding of self-neglect and decision making relating to the determination of S42(2) duty and local management through the Multi-agency Risk Management process
- The importance of applying a trauma informed approach to practice
- Understanding the availability of and access to escalation pathways

Recommendations

- 1) It is recommended for the B&NES Partnership to put in place a clear SAR policy, in consultation with all partners. This is to detail the review process and clarify the roles and responsibilities of senior managers and operational managers and practitioners at different stages of the review, alongside the overarching functions of the Practice Review Group. The policy should explain the contributions and commitment of partners to sharing learning and maintaining oversight of quality assurance of the review. The scope and ToR of a SAR and the information required from agencies is to be determined following the appointment of an independent reviewer. Awareness and understanding of the SAR policy should be promoted with all levels of staff across the Partnership.
- 2) It is recommended for the B&NES Partnership to put in place accessible information for adults, families and carers, explaining the purpose and the process of a SAR. The Partnership should make attempts to engage with people with lived experience and their families.
- 3) It is recommended for relevant partners of the B&NES Partnership to review legal literacy of relevant staff in managing complex cases and commission advanced level training, as required, to include application of MCA in practice in complex cases, executive functioning, fluctuating capacity, advocacy, advance care planning, interface with MHA, consideration of legal options and case law. The learning should be facilitated at a partnership level, so as to promote discussion and dialogue across organisations. All staff are to be made aware of their organisation's operational procedures relating to seeking legal advice, supported by senior management oversight. Senior managers of partnership agencies are to consider the need for managing legal advice and agreeing on pursuing legal options at a multi-agency level.
- 4) It is recommended for all relevant partners of the B&NES Partnership to review access of frontline staff to training which provides them with a basic level of understanding of mental health issues in order to undertake the tasks which are expected of them in complex cases. This is to sit alongside promoting inter-disciplinary professional expertise and collaboration. All relevant staff are to be equipped with an understanding of the context of working with people with mental health issues and of access to mental health services in order to seek support from the relevant professionals and facilitate joint working.

- 5) It is recommended for managers of AWP, in consultation with practitioners, to agree on a strategy which enables practice and processes that facilitate clear communication, more joined up thinking and working together between the different teams of mental health to create a coordinated plan for the vulnerable adult. This is to be considered as part of the current work on transformation of the community mental health framework.
- 6) It is recommended for the B&NES Partnership to seek assurance on the effective delivery of integrated mental health services, as set out in the B&NES Adult Social Care (Mental Health) and AWP Memorandum of Understanding Agreement 2021. Where people with a primary mental health need may have a social care need, front door services of AWP are to pro-actively consider and make referral to a secondary mental health team.
- 7) It is recommended for relevant partners of the B&NES Partnership to review their policy and protocol, training and direct work relating to family (unpaid) carers, to ensure that their wellbeing needs and outcomes are integral to local services. This should be linked with the current development of a carers strategy and review of the safeguarding policy, to include the local authority's power to undertake a non-statutory enquiry, the statutory duty of independent advocacy and the understanding of domestic abuse in relation to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 8) It is recommended for the B&NES Partnership to build on the work which has been started on Think Family strategy, to strengthen and raise awareness of what is in place, in light of the learning from this review. This requires senior level and ground level commitment across adult and children's social care. This should include the review of processes of information sharing between CSC and ASC and AWP, joint training between children's and adults safeguarding partnerships, leadership and workforce development. Learning from this review should inform the pathways of communication and joint working between adult and children's social care especially for parents with mental health issues.
- 9) It is recommended for relevant partners of the B&NES Partnership to explore the potential of Family Group Conference (FGC) and other models of mediation in safeguarding work with adults and families, and to consider awareness raising and training delivery.
- 10) It is recommended for all partners of the B&NES Partnership to ensure that staff welfare in challenging cases is a separate focus from operational management. Partner organisations are to have formal processes of regular check-in, supervision, support and debriefing for staff involved in complex cases. Joint visits can be offered for staff with a team member and/or their manager. Managers are to support staff to make use of formal systems of reporting experiences of harassment or abuse by members of public.

- 11) It is recommended for the B&NES Partnership to agree on the delivery of learning events at a multi-agency and inter-disciplinary level, following the completion of this SAR. The planning and promotion of learning from this SAR is to be led by panel members, including the opportunity of reviewing similar learning from a number of SARs.
- 12) It is recommended for the B&NES Partnership to review the multi-agency self-neglect policy including the MARM process, in light of the lessons learned from this review. The pathway must be compliant with the statutory S42 duty, supported by clear governance and accountability and strong leadership. Independent chairing of multi-agency meetings should be considered, to enable effective challenge between agencies, robustness of shared risk assessment and management and shared decision making, within an agreed time frame, and escalation to effect changes. A co-ordinated and collaborative response to complex safeguarding cases should be extended to all relevant agencies including third sector organisations, including an essential element of support to the team around the person / the family and reflective space in managing practice challenges.
- 13) It is recommended for the B&NES Partnership to review the strategic and operational infrastructure for self-neglect practice, in light of the learning from this SAR. The review should facilitate a move from thresholds and an eligibility-based approach, to enable the discharge of wider responsibilities in cases of self-neglect. This should allow for flexibility towards consideration of individual circumstances and adoption of person-centred principles, supported by tools for practice, MDT reflective supervision and staff support across all relevant agencies. Strategic leadership and oversight must be in place alongside multi-agency and inter-disciplinary discussion and information sharing at the practice level between staff working with adults and their families and carers, including third sector organisations.
- 14) It is recommended for all partners of the B&NES Partnership to raise awareness of the Escalation Procedure, to ensure all staff understand single agency and multi-agency escalation pathways, including the formal process of recording escalation. This should promote constructive professional challenge and resolution of professional difficulties, as part of a learning culture to be embedded across all agencies in the Partnership.