



Dudley Safeguarding  
People Partnership

# Safeguarding Adults Review Practitioner Briefing

## Thematic review on Self-Neglect

### WHO SHOULD READ THE BRIEFING?

Any practitioner and manager whose work brings them into contact with adults. For further information on our safeguarding review visit the Dudley safeguarding website.

### HOW WE DID THE REVIEW

Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership (DSPP) reviewed five cases of individuals who were regarded to be self-neglecting prior to their death. All five people were considered difficult for agencies to engage with and either declined or cancelled support from services.

The review recognises that self neglect is not a lifestyle choice, but often the outcome of a traumatic significant life event such as (but not limited to) the death of a close relative, abuse or neglect. Substance misuse, self-harm, suicidal ideation and hoarding. These are often coping mechanisms people suffering from trauma use, whilst practitioners may see these as part of the problem to be rectified they are in fact survival strategies used by the person.

The effects of trauma and associated survival strategies, impacts upon a person's physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. By addressing trauma it creates resilience for the future. Less homelessness, less mental ill health, and reduction in physical ill health, less hoarding, less criminal activity and a solution lies in practitioners understanding a person's experiences.

### OVERVIEW OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1. A Persons Own Story.** It is important to get the person's story; connections, life events, how they have coped and what they want to stay safe and well.
- 2. Safeguarding And Wellbeing Principles.** The safeguarding and wellbeing principles might serve as checklists for all agencies to use in relation to people who self-neglect.
- 3. Eligibility Pathways & Criteria.** Eligibility criteria for statutory assessment needs to be better understood by all agencies. Pathways mapped in relation to people considered to be self-neglecting need to include consideration of critical risks when practitioners are concerned.
- 4. Safeguarding Risk Assessment and Decision Making.** Consistent safeguarding risk assessment and consideration of the safeguarding and wellbeing principles should be embedded into frontline practice. Where required, multi-agency safeguarding enquiry and support process should be undertaken in a timely manner.
- 5. Mental Capacity and Executive Functioning.** Agencies need to be aware of the importance of determining whether executive brain function is affected by a person's adverse experiences.
- 6. Think Family.** A whole family approach to assessment and co-caring responsibilities should be developed if a person is identified as meeting a need and safeguarding concerns have been raised.

7. **Trauma Informed Practice.** Consider whether the impact of trauma is affecting a person's responses and preventing them from being able to self-care. Agencies should work to support trauma intervention at an earlier stage.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To review and refresh the Multi-Agency Risk Management (MRM) Procedure.
2. Eligibility criteria for statutory assessment needs to be better understood by all agencies.
3. Pathways mapped in relation to people considered to be self-neglecting need to include consideration of critical risks when practitioners are concerned.
4. Escalation procedure when practitioners feel that concerns remain.
5. All S42 enquiries and assessments should be person centred and include planned capacity assessments, communication and support plans for the agency engaging with the person and connecting with the person (Including advice and support from other agencies regarding capacity assessment). It is important that these enquiries are not intrusive and that they are sensitively conducted by someone who can seek to understand and demonstrate compassion for the person who has experienced trauma.
6. To consider utilising the Mental Capacity Assessment paperwork for complex self-neglect cases to enable all frontline practitioners to be recording in a consistent manner to ensure they are recording with a legal framework.
7. All agencies will need to be aware of the importance of determining whether executive brain function is affected by a person's adverse experiences.
8. If referrals to the Court of Protection are required to elicit case law that provides guidance.
9. A whole family approach to assessment and co-caring responsibilities to be developed. If a person is identified as a carer is not meeting the persons care needs and safeguarding concerns have been raised.
10. All Agencies should work to support trauma informed intervention at an early stage.

## MORE INFORMATION

Further information for practitioners relating to learning from reviews is available via the [Learning Zone](#)

Please see the [Self-Neglect](#) page on our website for more information and resources.