


Voice of the Adult, Think Family & Partnership Working

Learning briefing for Safeguarding Adults Review “JED”

Date Published: 14/11/2024



Jed Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR)

Background

DSPP conducted a multi-agency learning review to consider the case of Jed. A man in his mid-thirties, Jed has a severe learning disability, ADHD, OCD and Type 3 Obesity, meaning he needs full support with all his daily activities and is unable to make decisions for himself or have insight into his needs. Following concerns for his ongoing health and well-being, Jed was removed from his home and care of his parents.

Jed's mother was known to services following a Mental Health Act assessment where she was diagnosed with Chronic Delusional Disorder. She was also recoded as having a Recurrent Delusional Disorder but refuted having a mental health problem and showed no insight into her delusions which seemed persistent and fixed.

The review found that a whole family approach was not taken by the agencies working with Jed. The review focused on specific issues identified by the Partnership but found rather than there being a lack of knowledge or recognition of these issues, there was a failure to use a partnership approach to holistically consider the facts presented and implement a joined-up plan for interventions. This meant that interconnections between specific issues, such as the link between neglect and obesity or mental ill health and hoarding, were missed.

The most important finding from the review is that Jed's voice was not heard. It was overpowered by other competing concerns.

Voice of the Adult

Jed's voice was drowned out by other competing concerns. The review wished to draw attention to the complex and nuanced decision making faced by those working with adults who are entirely dependent on others to protect their health and wellbeing.

Adults have the right to make decisions about their care and should be encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent.

Practitioners should balance professional guidance with respect for the individual's right to choice and control over their decisions.

The Care Act 2014 requires that adults who have difficulty expressing their views or understanding information have access to an advocate.

Independent advocates help ensure that the adult's voice is represented and heard in decision-making, especially in complex cases or when there are safeguarding concerns.

We believe that no decision should be made about an adult without them.

In Dudley we are all committed to supporting adults on their own terms and in a way that works for them as an individual. This is what we mean by '[Making Safeguarding Personal](#)'

Adults must be:

- actively involved in discussions about their care and have opportunities to express their views.
- provided with clear, accessible information about their options for care and support.
- supported to make informed decisions about their care and support
- encouraged to participate not just in their own care planning but also in the design, delivery, and evaluation of services.

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)

MSP means adult safeguarding must be person led, and outcome focused.

It requires engaging the person in discussion about how best to respond to their situation to increase wellbeing, empowerment and safety.

MSP must not be simply seen in the context of a formal safeguarding enquiry but also in the whole spectrum of safeguarding activity and across all agencies.

See our [Safer7 on MSP](#)



The Local Government Associations (LGA) MSP toolkit guides professionals through the best approach and effective application of safeguarding. It includes a range of helpful tools and practice based examples.

Visit the [LGA Website](#) for more information.

Think Family Approach

When assessing and planning care for an individual with care and support needs, it is widely agreed that it is beneficial to include their wider social network in the process; this is usually their family. Legal frameworks support this, and the Care Act states that “the intention of the whole family approach is for local authorities to take a holistic view of the person's needs and to identify how the adult's needs for care and support impact on family members or others in their support network”.

“Think Family” in safeguarding refers to the collaborative approach outlined in Working Together 2023 and the Care Act 2014. It emphasises the importance of considering the needs and well-being of all family members, whether it is a child or adult with care and support needs that you are providing support to. This approach encourages professionals to work collaboratively, share information and coordinate interventions to ensure that the needs of the whole family are addressed appropriately.

See the [DSPP Think Family Webpage](#) for more information

Think Family Approach

By adopting a think family approach, safeguarding efforts can be more comprehensive, person-centred and effective in promoting positive outcomes for all involved.

Step 1: Think family from the first contact

Family related questions should be used from the first contact and subsequently, such as:

- Who else lives in the house?
- Who helps with support?
- Who else is important in their life?
- Are there children and/or adults with care and support needs in the family?
- Does anyone need support with their parenting or caring role?

Establish if there are any significant potential changes in the families' lives and work with them to plan for these.

Step 2: Get the whole picture

Where possible and appropriate assessments are coordinated and combined with other agencies involved.

People providing care and support are identified and involved in the assessment, to provide their expertise, knowledge and views on what does/does not work.

Establish risks to carers of sustaining their caring role as well as their willingness to continue caring.

Always consider a carers eligibility for support in their own right, including any potential young carers.

Always, even if a person can achieve an outcome independently, consider the impact on others and whether they might adversely impact the health or wellbeing of other family members.

All a person's eligible needs should be identified at assessment, regardless of whether the needs are met by the carer.

Think Family Approach

Step 3: Make a plan that works for everyone

Support planning takes into account the wellbeing of all the family, including the impact of any services and support.

- Involve carers and consider involving other family members.
- Consider how carers can be supported to look after their own health and have a life alongside caring.
- Consider how a person's circle of support can be developed.
- Where an agency is meeting the needs of multiple people in the same family, consider producing a combined plan.
- Plans from different agencies, for any family member, should be identified, where possible consider aligning or integrating into a single plan.
- Where plans are integrated, a lead agency is established to undertake monitoring and assurance. Ensure it is clear when the plan will be reviewed and by who.

Step 4: Check it's working for the whole family

The impact of the plan and the results being achieved should be reviewed in relation to the individual and the whole family. This should include consideration of any unintended consequences for other family members.

- Consider any changes that can be made to maximise benefit to the whole family.
- Carers (including young carers) needs are routinely reviewed, with the support they are willing and able to provide, as well as the outcomes they want to achieve, re-established.
- Any anticipated changes in the family that may impact on needs and support should be identified and considered in any revised plan.
- The plan is checked to ensure it is providing adequate support to ensure children are not expected to offer inappropriate or excessive levels of care.

“Whole family approaches can be key in maximising the impact of resources and identifying opportunities to support carers, and to ease the very real risks to health and wellbeing that caring can bring.” [The Care Act and Whole-Family Approaches](#)

Partnership Working

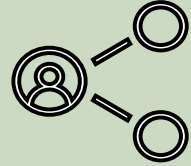
Practitioners from a wide range of agencies attempted to work together to support Jed and his family. However, the multi-agency response lacked co-ordination. Fundamentally, a structured and formalised approach to address Jed's needs was lacking. There was an absence of cohesive planning, inconsistent case management and a lack of strategic leadership and managerial oversight.

Partnership working should bring together separate organisations so that they can benefit from pooled expertise, resources and powers. The goal is to enhance the efficiency and quality of service provision.

Good practice points towards:

- A lead practitioner should co-ordinate the interventions for the adult. Ensure the assessment and support responds to all needs identified. Involve the person, their family, and carers in care planning.
- Clear roles and responsibilities within multi-agency working groups should be identified.
- Information should be shared promptly and appropriately to prevent increased risks of harm. Clear protocols are embedded for information sharing between agencies, including consent and confidentiality.
- All partners focus on achieving the best outcomes for the individual.
- Work with voluntary and community organisations to offer a preventative approach - such as carer support, falls prevention, housing adaptations, assistive technology or support to manage money.

Partnership Working



Information Sharing

Sharing information is crucial to safeguarding – information sharing between organisations should follow these 7 principles

Necessary & proportionate

Relevant

Adequate

Accurate

Timely

Secure

Robust

See our [Safer 7](#) for more information

What is Professional Curiosity?

Professional Curiosity is the capacity and communication skill to explore and understand what is happening within a family rather than making assumptions or accepting things at face value.



View our resources on Professional Curiosity [HERE](#)

Safeguarding Processes & Further Information

It is important to stress that the responsibility to safeguard adults with care and support needs who are at risk of abuse or neglect, belongs to everybody. The review has established that safeguarding processes did not bring together all partners as they should have.

[DSPP Policies and Procedures](#)

[DSPP Learning Zone](#)

[DSPP Training Offer](#)

[West Midlands Regional
Adult Safeguarding
Information Hub](#)

Professional Challenge and Resolution

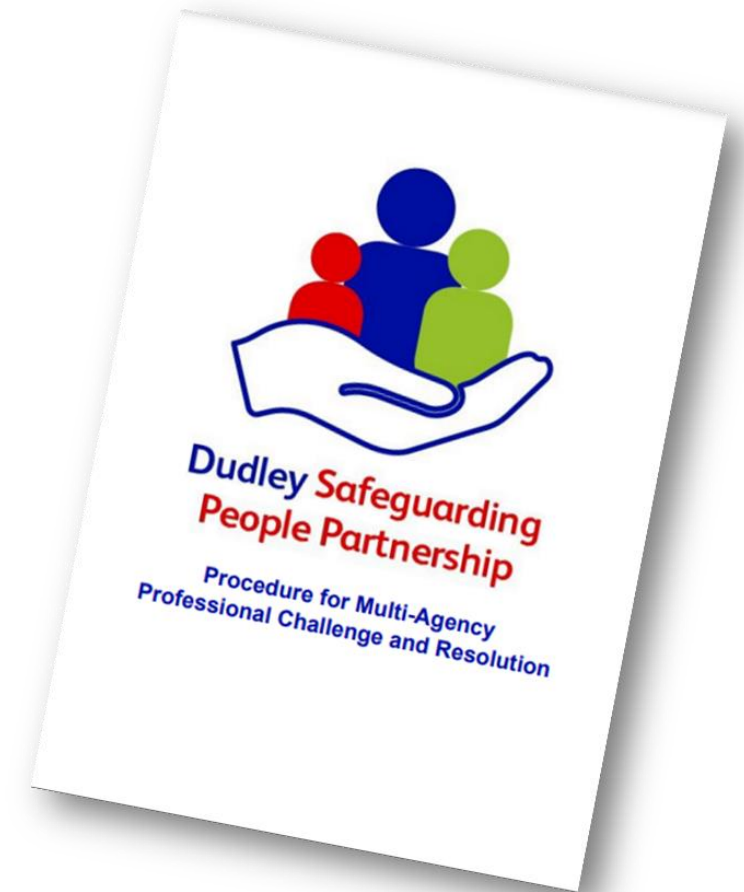
On the whole, this review found that professionals understood how to escalate concerns and established escalation processes were used. Unfortunately, this did not result in successful interventions being pulled together by the lead agency until clear leadership and co-ordination was put in place in.

Escalation is the process that professionals use to raise concerns about the safety of an individual or the progression of a complicated case. In Dudley we use the DSPP Procedure for Multi-Agency Professional Challenge and Resolution.

It is important that we try to resolve any differences of opinion around support for adults and carers with open and constructive conversations. So that we can avoid the dispute impacting on positive working relationships and also from having any impact on the ability to safeguard adults with care and support needs.

Partner agencies are responsible for ensuring professionals are supported and know how to appropriately escalate their concerns and disagreements about an adult.

For more information, please refer to the [Multi Agency Professional Challenge and Resolution policy at](#)



DSPP Professional Challenge and Resolution Policy

