



# LSAB

Making safeguarding personal

## Learning Bulletin

### Safeguarding Adults Review

## A Thematic Review of Financial Exploitation

Welcome to this learning bulletin.

This bulletin is designed to share the learning from a Safeguarding Adult Review carried out in 2017. It should be used to help us improve how we work together with adults in Lincolnshire to safeguard and improve wellbeing.

You can read the full SAR report and executive summary here [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SAR](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SAR)

#### What was the review about?

In 2014, Police identified widespread financial exploitation in a Lincolnshire market town. They worked with other agencies and found out that the exploitation had been happening for many years.

The review looked in detail at the circumstances of ten of people to try and understand how agencies had worked together to safeguard them and what could be improved.

All of the ten people had extensive mental health needs. Most also had problematic drug and alcohol abuse. Their lifestyle left them in highly vulnerable situations – isolation, homelessness and associating with highly risky and violent people. Their needs left them dependent on others, less able to manage their own safety and susceptible to coercion.

The stories of the ten people detailed some disturbing accounts of abuse they experienced. Alongside financial exploitation, some of the people experienced ongoing physical, sexual, psychological and domestic abuse.

This situation was known to the agencies that were working with them. There was evidence of very dedicated practitioners working hard to try and help the person to reduce risks.

For many of the ten people, agencies found it challenging to keep them engaged with services and their care plans.

On many occasions, the individuals declined to have incidents reported to the Police. When reports were made, Police often did not have sufficient evidence to pursue charges.

The person also declined for a referral to be made through Safeguarding Adults procedures.

When referrals were made, on many occasions no further action was taken because the person was declining support under safeguarding arrangements.

For many of the ten people, they remain vulnerable to exploitation and agencies continue to work with them to reduce their risks.

#### What was the learning?

People with mental health needs and problematic drug and alcohol are often in highly vulnerable situations. They may be more isolated, have fewer supportive social networks and have greater exposure to manipulative and violent individuals.

This may lead them do what they can to keep themselves safe, acting in a way that others may view as unwise. Professionals need to be sensitive to the context of individual's lives to help them prevent abuse.

When working with people who are continually in high risk situations, professionals need to guard against becoming desensitised i.e. the risk that ongoing abusive situations become normalised.

Working with people with such complex needs is very challenging. Supervision and reflective practice is essential to support practitioners.

There were many reasons why reports to Police or through Safeguarding Adult procedures were not made or not progressed. A recurring theme related to capacity and consent. Professionals were not all confident in assessing capacity for different decisions. Where the person had capacity but declined support, professionals did not give sufficient consideration to whether there was justifiable reason to refer without consent i.e. due to coercion, Public or Vital interests.

Police efforts to pursue charges were severely hindered by lack of corroborating evidence – professionals need to improve recording of allegations including details of the alleged perpetrator.

Multi-agency working adds great value in safeguarding – bringing together information to enable risk assessment and utilising the expertise of each partner to safeguard the person. These opportunities were missed as there was an under use of multi-agency strategy meetings.

Challenging and high risk situations are when the multi-agency partnerships should be working hard together, exploring every avenue to try and reduce risks to the individual and others in the community.

The work of Safeguarding Adults Board and Community Safety Partnership have much in common. There are many different multi-agency groups in place that try and tackle issues such as financial exploitation and anti-social behaviour. Practitioners were not clear about these resources or how they could be used to help reduce risks for the person and their local community.

The LSAB is mapping out the different groups and how they can work better together to safeguard adults. The LSAB will also be reviewing procedures, tools and guidance that will support multi-agency working.

Adult Care and LSAB are revisiting the current referral pathways for safeguarding concerns and will use the learning from the SAR to inform this work.

### **How can you use the learning?**

- *Remember all of us are responsible for safeguarding adults.*
- *Recognise the vulnerabilities of people in similar situations. Be sensitive to the risks they are living with and understand the choices people make in trying to manage those risks.*
- *Always aim to work with the person to support them to manage their safety but recognise when you may have to report to the Police or act under Safeguarding Adults procedures without consent. This needs to be proportionate according to the nature and degree of risk to the person or others.*
- *Make sure you record details of safeguarding concerns including details of those implicated. This will help build a picture of risk and may help any future prosecution.*
- *Remember the value of multi-agency working. A multi-agency response will bring information together, provide a more comprehensive risk assessment and give access to wider expertise and resources to protect the person and others within the community. You are a key part in this.*
- *Recognise these are difficult and challenging situations. Use supervision and those around you with expertise. This will help you navigate through complex situations, support other agencies and constructively challenge where necessary.*
- *Read the review and share learning in your agency. Use this to improve how we safeguard people in our community.*