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Background

Adult L was a 75-year-old woman who had multiple and complex health and social care needs. She lived in her own home with her husband who was her carer. Latterly, she was known to be alcohol dependent.

Several agencies were involved in meeting Adult L's needs. At times Adult L was assessed as lacking in mental capacity to make some care needs decisions.

There was a history of domestic abuse between Adult L and her husband.

2

Safeguarding concern

Adult L sometimes refused care which created concerns for agencies. Adult L's home environment was cluttered which made caring for her difficult.

Concerns increased around the time Covid-19 restrictions were first introduced, this impacted upon how services were operating.

Adult L spent a short time in respite care with the aim of stabilising her condition. She returned home where things deteriorated very quickly, Adult L was refusing care and medical attention. Adult L died in hospital following a positive Covid-19 test.

3

Strengths in Practice

Identification of alcohol related needs.

Specialist Substance Misuse involvement in hospital.

Domestic abuse and self-neglect risks recognised and responded to under safeguarding adults procedures.

Adult L spoken to on her own about domestic abuse.

Ambulance Service responding to Adult L's needs following a call out for her husband.

5

Recommendations

Use training and other resources to upskill the workforce who may work with adults who use alcohol problematically.

Wider use of alcohol identification and brief advice (IBA) model.

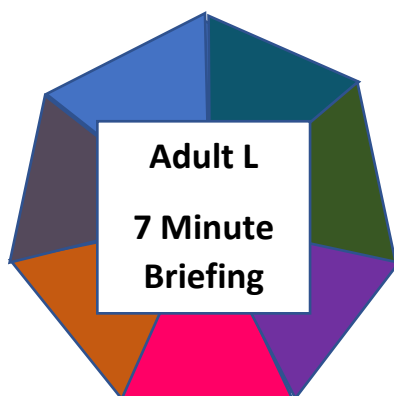
Review Safeguarding Vulnerable Dependent Drinkers guide and consider actions that require implementation.

Share learning from this SAR with the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and ensure domestic abuse training includes issues related to older couples.

Produce a briefing on domestic abuse in older couples.

Promote the role of safeguarding adults and MCA leads within organisations.

Produce a briefing on learning from the pandemic.

**6**

Recommendations

Refresh and relaunch self-neglect guidance.

Review and audit Weekly Strategy Discussion in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

Promote the existing mechanisms and frameworks that assist with ensuring Section 42 enquiries are multi-agency in nature and where required a key worker/dual co-ordination role is identified.

Adopt ASK-SHARE-RECORD-CHECKBACK tool (see over).

4

What was challenging?

The complexity of mental capacity and decision-making in those who are alcohol dependent.

Understanding the relationship dynamics, co-dependency, and carer needs.

Not all agencies were aware of, or involved in, the ongoing safeguarding processes.

Managing self-neglect risks was difficult, at times professionals felt powerless to change things.

There were some communication difficulties between professionals, often reliant on telephone conversations.

The impact of Covid-19 in delivering care, support and treatment as well as co-ordinating safeguarding adults procedures.

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Learn more

- [Full Adult L SAR Report](#)
- [Self-neglect guidance](#)
- [Safeguarding adults and coronavirus](#)
- [Resources for practice \(A-Z\)](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

Model for effective communication

