

Complex case file audit and staff survey outcomes



Why did we carry out the case file audit?

- To evaluate and reflect on practice
- To learn from experience
- To inform multi-agency practice development and strengthen multi-agency working

Criteria for the audit

The audit was carried out for a total of 10 individuals:

- 7 of which were discussed at the Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM) subgroup
- 3 who had been referred but were not appropriate for MARM.

For our audit, complex cases were defined as:

"Cases where adults with care and support needs have a high level of support with many aspects of their daily life and rely on a range of health and social care services. This may be as a result of a combination of two or more of the following: illness, disability, and broader life circumstances, including multiple disadvantages."

About the 10 Adults audited

- 7 were male and 1 one was female
- 1 was aged 20-30, 2 were aged 40-50, 2 were aged 60-70, 2 were aged 70-80, 3 were aged 80-90.
- 8 Adults identified as White and the ethnicities for 2 Adults was 'not stated' or 'not known'.
- Support needs were; social support for 4 Adults, physical support for 3, lifelong services for 1, not recorded for 1, and mental health support for 1.

Key themes: top 3 issues

- Non-engagement
- Self-neglect
- Mental health issues

Top 3 barriers

- Difficulties in establishing and maintaining contact
- Mental Capacity Act Assessments/Best Interest Decisions
- Multi-agency working and coordination of support

Other areas of improvement/development

- Improved Mental Capacity Act assessments
- If the person lacked capacity for a decision(s), the need for support from a representative/advocate
- Effective multi-agency working being evidenced
- Addressing issues impacting on the ability to manage risk

Staff survey: why we did this?

This survey looked to understand the following when working with complex cases:

- Issues
- Barriers
- Positive factors
- The support offered by the Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM) subgroup

Key themes: top 3 issues

- Mental health issues
- Non-engagement
- Self-neglect

Top 3 barriers

- Operational pressures/resource shortages/workload pressures
- Issues with multi-agency working/coordination of support
- Difficulties in establishing and maintaining contact

Top 3 positive factors

- Support and guidance from colleagues
- Positive outcomes for the Adult
- Good quality management oversight/support

Support from MARM

- Referrals process: feedback was positive overall.
- Rating of support offered: most people rated average, good, or excellent.
- Safeguarding concerns: most people asked had referred a case for safeguarding, and most said that the process to raise concerns was good.
- Feedback after raising a concern: most people said this was good or average.
- Outcome of raising a concern: most people said that this was good or average.

Themes from Safeguarding Adults Reviews relating to complex cases

In 2022/23 we also reviewed themes from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) for complex cases. The most common themes were:

- Making Safeguarding Personal
- Improvements required to Mental Capacity Act Assessments
- Risk management
- Multi-agency working and communication
- Safeguarding and Quality

To read more about our SARs please visit our [statutory publications](#) page on our website.

Resources currently available to take forward learning

Please see our [Policy and Protocols](#) on our website which should be underpinning your practice in safeguarding complex cases. These include:

- **The Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures:** these represent the standards for good practice in adult safeguarding in Sussex
- **The Safeguarding Thresholds Guidance:** this provides professionals with examples of the different categories of abuse and neglect and the best course of action to take.
- **The Multi-Agency Self-Neglect Procedures:** this contains detailed guidance on supporting those who self-neglect this included information on the Mental Capacity Act.
- **Multi-Agency Risk Management Protocol:** this gives advice on referring to MARM for cases where an individual is putting themselves or others at significant risk by refusing services, and all options have been explored and the level of risk is still high.
- **The Sussex Information Sharing Protocol:** sets out how information between partner agencies should be shared.
- **The Sussex Safeguarding Escalation and Resolution Protocol:** this supports consistent and timely decision-making where there may be disagreements or issues between professionals.

On our [Learning and Podcasts](#) page of our website we also have a range of other learning resources which can support your practice with safeguarding complex cases. These include:

- Self-neglect
- Multi-agency working and communication
- Risk assessment
- Making Safeguarding Personal
- Person-centred approaches
- Professional curiosity
- What is Safeguarding?
- Domestic Abuse
- Shared Learning from Reviews
- Learning from other SAB audits

Please note: These resources are updated and added to regularly.

Feedback on this briefing

This briefing is designed to bring key issues to you, to support your learning, and keep your practice current and in line with policy and procedure. We constantly review what we are doing to improve what we produce to make sure it's helpful to you. So, we would very much welcome your comments please to safeguardingadultsboard@westsussex.gov.uk