



# Meta-analysis of Safeguarding Adults Reviews featuring self-neglect: Learning briefing

## About the meta-analysis

West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board commissioned this analysis. East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board and Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Adults Board contributed by providing Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) for analysis. They were also part of the review panel.

This analysis includes the circumstances of two adults. Both had a history of self-neglect. You can find further details about the adults in the full analysis report.

The SAR subgroup agreed that both cases met the criteria for a SAR. However, they said that there is a need for wider learning about self-neglect in Sussex. To do this, they commissioned a thematic analysis of findings from

recent SARs involving self-neglect. The report would consider changes to practice, process, policy, and procedure.

This analysis looked at seven SARs published between 2020 and 2023. You can find details of these SARs in the full report.

## **Review findings: what we need to do better**

### **Self-neglect process and multi-disciplinary working**

- Identify and agree a lead agency to coordinate multi-agency actions.
- Identify a lead professional to maintain contact with the person who is self-neglecting.
- Recognise when you need a multi-agency meeting.
- Understand when to move from single to multi-agency work. You can do this outside of safeguarding processes.

### **Mental Capacity**

- When to question capacity.
- When to bring in expertise to support capacity decisions.
- Understand Acquired Brain Injury and how this can affect self-neglect.
- The need to distinguish between executive and decisional capacity.

### **Risk Management**

- Awareness, assessment, recording and communicating risks.
- Fire safety risk assessment.

### **Barriers to practice**

- Develop trauma-informed approaches alongside the Sussex Changing Futures programme.

### **Care homes/care agencies and self-neglect**

- Consider care providers as part of a system of care at the contracts and commissioning stage.
- Care home and care agencies need to be aware of self-neglect and the legal context of mental capacity.

### **Using adult safeguarding processes**

- Safeguarding adults processes and thresholds for self-neglect should be compliant with the Care Act 2014. They should also be informed by national guidance.
- It is essential to have management oversight of the application of processes and actions.

## Findings in relation to IL

1. There needs to be an agreed system for ensuring completion of actions. This is the case whether the actions are part of a Section 42 enquiry, or not.
2. Tasks need to be allocated to a specific person with an agreed timescale. This will ensure that actions are completed.
3. Care services may need support to recognise self-neglect. This will include knowing when self-neglect may be a safeguarding concern, and when to ask for help from other services.

## Findings in relation to TB

1. Strengths-based, relationship-focused approaches, support engagement with people who self-neglect. Finding out more about an adult's life story can help with finding opportunities to do this.
2. Assess mental capacity and, where indicated, use the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). This is particularly useful for adults who are self-neglecting in hospital. This can allow time for observation, assessment, and planning.

3. For adults who self-neglect and present a range of challenges, complete a detailed risk assessment. This will consider each risk, including the likelihood and severity, and how it could be managed. This can help to identify areas to focus interventions and resources.

## Recommendations

The meta-analysis has made the following recommendations:

- Hold practice development sessions to explore findings and change guidance.
- Integrate policies, procedures, guidance, training, systems, escalation routes, and multi-agency processes.
- Use case seminars, supervision, and appraisal targets to support safeguarding practice development.
- Develop practice aids to support with risk identification and assessment. This could include guidance notes or decision-support tools.
- Create a separate Self-Neglect and Hoarding Policy and Procedure.

The review panel concluded that practice and policy development should focus on the following:

- Multi-agency working at an earlier time in a case, with appropriate leadership.
- Attention to Mental Capacity and reasons for intervention.
- Knowing what to do: what approaches work and how long it may take.

## **West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board self-neglect survey**

Thank you to all staff across the partnership who participated in this survey. The survey looked at barriers and positive factors when working with adults who self-neglect. We will take forward the outcomes of this survey.

## **Learning resources**

To extend your learning and ensure your practice is current, please refer to the following learning resources:

- [Sussex Multi-Agency Procedures](#) for supporting adults who self-neglect
- [Self-neglect](#) learning briefing and podcast
- [Multi-agency working](#) learning briefing and podcast
- [Risk assessment](#) learning briefing and podcast
- [Mental capacity](#) learning briefing and podcast
- [Trauma-informed approaches](#) learning briefing and podcast
- [Safeguarding Thresholds: Guidance for Professionals](#)

To support your Continual Professional Development (CPD) we have created a [CPD Reflective Log](#) for your use. Use this to reflect on the professional development that you complete using our resources.