



# Safeguarding Adults Review in respect of John

## About John

John was an 88-year-old man, who was partially sighted and registered blind. In his earlier life, John served in the military for a number of years, followed by a variety of farm and factory jobs before becoming a postman, a position which he cherished. John married in later life, and became his wife's main carer, before she sadly passed away from cancer after 15 years of marriage.

After fracturing his hip in 2020, John required long-term care and was placed, initially temporarily, at Rotherlea Care Home. He also had some difficulties with his mental health over the years. John passed away in June 2022 at Rotherlea, after making the decision to end his own life, through refusal of foods and fluids. In the final weeks of John's life, several safeguarding concerns were raised by the agencies involved in his care. John's mental health was also assessed, and five mental capacity assessments were undertaken by different agencies.

It was acknowledged that there was learning for agencies involved with John, including professional curiosity, the determination of capacity, end-of-life care, and the care provided prior to John's decision to end his life. This review looks at the actions of involved agencies and made recommendations to improve practice to minimise future risk.

## Findings: what we need to do better

- Professional curiosity and defensible decision-making
- Self-neglect procedures
- The voice of carers and families
- Mental capacity

The review also made a recommendation around agency resources, which is specifically being taken forward by the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB).

## Questions to ask yourself

The below key areas of recommendations will be taken forward in a multi-agency action plan. This plan will be monitored to seek assurance that actions have been completed to improve practice and minimise risk. Please consider the following questions to make sure your practice reflects the learning from this case.

### Professional curiosity and defensible decision-making

- Are you aware of the need for professional curiosity? Are you confident that you consistently practice this?
- Can your decision-making process be justified by demonstrating that you have considered all available information, including from those who are involved in supporting the adult?
- Do supervisors/senior staff members challenge gaps in knowledge or practice?
- Does your agency cover the need for professional curiosity in induction and other training courses?

### Self-neglect procedures

- When working with complex self-neglect cases, do you ensure that you follow the Sussex Multi-Agency Procedures for supporting adults who self-neglect?
- In high-risk self-neglect cases, do you take responsibility for initiating multi-agency review meetings if required?
- Do you receive self-neglect training, and does this cover the Sussex Multi-Agency Procedures?

### The voice of carers and families

- How do you make sure that the adult and their families/carers remain central to your practice?
- When undertaking assessments of an adult's capacity and mental health, do you ensure contribution from the adult's carer, family, or those who know them well?

### Mental Capacity

- Do you consider mental capacity for each specific decision, with particular attention to consideration of executive function and fluctuating capacity?
- Do you have the opportunity to strengthen your mental capacity practice through training, guidance and supervision?

## Learning resources

To extend your learning, refer to the following learning resources:

- [Sussex Multi-Agency Procedures for supporting adults who self-neglect](#)
- [Professional curiosity learning briefing and podcast](#)
- [Self-neglect learning briefing and podcast](#)
- [Mental capacity learning briefing and podcast](#)