



Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board Manager's Blog

April 2017

The two things test for adult safeguarding

How can you give someone a really succinct yet complete answer to the question, 'That sounds interesting, tell me what is adult safeguarding?' Perhaps economist Glen Whitman can help us?

Whitman tells the story that one day he walked into a bar and started chatting with a stranger. During the conversation he told the stranger he was an economist. The stranger said, "Ah. So... what are the [Two Things](#) about economics?"

"Huh?" said Whitman puzzled.

"You know, the Two Things. For every subject, there are really only two things you really need to know. Everything else is the application of those two things, or just not important."

"Oh," Glen said. "Okay, here are the Two Things about economics.

One: Incentives matter.

Two: There's no such thing as a free lunch."

Ever since that evening, Glen has been playing the Two Things game. Whenever he meets someone who belongs to a different profession (ie a profession he hasn't played this game with), or who knows something about a subject he is unfamiliar with, Glen poses the Two Things question. When he blogged about it, scores of people contributed their own. Although the blog is somewhat old now, the idea is still an interesting one.

Why Whitman's Two Things comes to mind is because I was out on a ride with my cycle club a couple of Sundays ago and got chatting to someone I did not know. We talked as we cycled through the Norfolk countryside and he asked me what I did for a job. I explained I work in adult safeguarding, which led me on to the Care Act, the Safeguarding Board and all manner of things. How much sense this made to someone who worked in engineering I do not know!

The next day I thought would it be helpful to start that conversation about safeguarding adults with *Two Things you really need to know*. So here is my attempt:

One: Everyone has a right to live their live free from abuse and harm.

Two: If you see something, say something

Why I think this a really interesting idea is because it asks us to think deeply about what is the essential message you want to give. It forces you to cut away the noise of unnecessary words but it does not restrict further questions when you can expand.

I shared this idea with a very experienced adult safeguarding colleague (someone whose judgement I very much respect) and she said that risk was missing. She offered these two:

One: Everyone has a right to live their live free from abuse and harm.

Two: It is all about risk (I have added here - whether actual or perceived)

I am absolutely sure readers of this blog have their own ideas. So have a go.

Please send me walter.lloyd-smith@norfolk.gov.uk your *Two Things you really need to know about safeguarding adults* so we can build up a list.

Without giving names I will publish these on the website. It will help us hone our adult safeguarding message to reach the widest possible audience.

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