

## 7-minute briefing on Safeguarding Adult Review - Adult S



### 1. Background to the review

Adult S was a 72-year-old male, who lived alone in a two-bedroom flat in Norwich. He had no known family network and younger adult acquaintances used his flat as a place to meet, leading to concerns that he was being exploited. Several agencies collaborated to address his drug taking, physical and mental health needs. Adult S frequently expressed concerns about drug-related activities near his flat, which made him anxious and fearful. He requested relocation to sheltered accommodation, but he was considered low priority for a move. Sadly, after being discharged from hospital following a second suicide attempt, Adult S was discovered deceased in his home by his neighbour in March 2022.

### 2. Multi-agency support for Adult S

It is evident that many professionals worked diligently and in partnership to support Adult S and there are many examples of good multi-agency practice. This view was corroborated by Adult S's neighbour during conversations with the reviewer. There were some missed opportunities, particularly the need for an earlier multi-disciplinary meeting.

### 3. The Care Act Assessment for complex cases

With hindsight, it might have been more appropriate to allocate this complex case to a more experienced social worker. The online Care Act assessment had not been completed but replaced by detailed case notes. Also, professionals could have used the **Managing Professional Difficulties** guidance, if they felt that progress with assessments was slow. The Care Act assessment in December 2021 did not recognise or include risks of possible exploitation of Adult S, despite three previous referrals for this reason.

### 4. Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings

A concern was the lack of a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) or professionals' meetings, prior to February 2022, with no single agency assuming a 'lead professional' role. This meant that important information was not shared and there was no evidence of an outcome focused plan. Practitioners are reminded that in complex cases, they are encouraged, at an early stage, to convene multi-disciplinary meetings. This process is underpinned by the NSAB **Complex Case Management** guidance.

### 5. Cuckooing and exploitative friendships

Adult S's social connections were intricate and complex. Individuals would stay at his flat, and some of them were characterised as exploiting his vulnerability and loneliness. The threats to Adult S were predominantly non-physical in nature, with acquaintances taking advantage of his vulnerability and loneliness, often for their financial gain. There was a lack of professional curiosity regarding financial exploitation of Adult S which subsequently didn't identify him as a victim of **exploitative friendships**, or 'cuckooing'.

### 6. Mental Capacity Assessments

There was no evidence to indicate that Adult S's mental capacity was formally assessed, despite concerns that he 'lacked capacity'. Evidence demonstrates that social isolation and drug dependency can have an impact on mental capacity and decision making. Where there are indicators of the above, practitioners should be cognisant of their effect and demonstrate that the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) has been considered and applied when relevant.

### 7. Requests for a move to sheltered or more secure accommodation

Adult S requested a move so he would feel safer. There was no documented evidence of anti-social behavior or cuckooing at Adult S's address. Adult S was allocated the lowest banding level because he was deemed to be 'adequately housed.' Norwich is an area of extremely high demand for social housing with 4,350 applicants (as of October 2023) waiting to be re-housed. Norwich City Council Housing were not invited to the professionals meeting in February 2022, despite being identified as one of the partners who could effect change, this was an important missed opportunity.