

'It's easier to get tickets for Glastonbury ...'

Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board Manager's Blog

September 2019

An area of work I have been trying to develop over the last few years is to create opportunities when our growing network of adult safeguarding colleagues can get together to discuss topical issues. We have benefited from high profile colleagues including Dr Adi Cooper (Care and Health Improvement Advisor for London for the Local Government Association, and lead on adult safeguarding), Kenny Gibson (Head of Safeguarding for the NHS) and recently Luke and Ryan Hart, who spoke about domestic abuse and coercive control.

These events are growing in popularity, which promoted a colleague's comment that they had more chance of getting tickets of Glastonbury than an NSAB seminar! I look forward to the day the board has to open a ticket hotline to future events.

So it is with pleasure that we have just announced details for the next series of 5 seminars on the 'hot' topic of non-engagement. These seminars will run from the end of September to early November.

Staff from many different agencies who support vulnerable adults often struggle when clients choose not to engage, even though refusing help puts their health and wellbeing at risk.

This lack of engagement can cause issues such as social isolation, homelessness, higher risk of 'grooming' and/or bullying. Some people are more difficult to engage because they may have diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health problems, cognitive impairments or other anti-social behaviours. This can cause difficulties in planning and implementing appropriate support plans for them. Also, when there is no clear diagnosis or people refuse treatment/support they often fall outside of the eligibility criteria for specific services.

Even for the most experienced staff, these cases can be a cause of stress and anxiety, and raise all sorts of questions. For example:

- have I missed something which would help the person I am concerned accept support?

- does a service user who declines help reflect poorly on me as a practitioner?
- how can I best balance conflicting requirements – duty of care, mental capacity, ethical principles, pressured caseloads, etc?
- should I raise a safeguarding concern about the risk of actual or potential harm?
- will I face criticism or challenge about my management of this case at a later date?

The material for this new seminar comes from a number of cases referred for [Safeguarding Adults Review Group](#) in 2019. While these referrals were judged not to meet the [criteria for a full review](#), they nevertheless offer useful learnings.

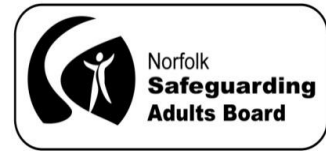
The seminar provides a unique opportunity to discuss this topic from different perspectives, and explore themes such as:

- ❖ Executive vs. functional capacity and unwise decisions
- ❖ Barriers to professional curiosity and assessing risk
- ❖ Partnership approaches to non-engagement
- ❖ Engagement and building trusting relationships
- ❖ Tools to help manage non-engaging service users

Wow ...! What a rich learning opportunity, and a fantastic chance to learn from each other. I wouldn't make claim that this is adult safeguarding equivalent of Glastonbury for festival goers (!), but I hope you will find it helpful for your safeguarding role. You will come away as what [Helen Bevan calls a change agent](#) for safeguarding – *'someone who is actively developing the skills, confidence, power, relationships and courage to make a positive difference'*.

And, taking a second idea from Helen Bevan – I want to encourage each person who comes to the seminar to use *change agency* to influence how we might better work with people who don't engage, ie:

'Change agency: *The power, individually and collectively, to make a positive difference. It is about pushing the boundaries of what is possible, mobilising others and making change happen more quickly.'*



[See Helen Bevan blog: Change begins with me: module one of The School for Change Agents.](#)

Places on the seminar are filling up *very* fast. Please don't miss this opportunity to deepen your knowledge and confidence in this area - book your place today!

[Click here to read more, the link to book a place in on the second page of the flyer.](#)

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