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Background

Adult V had been receiving care & support services at home when safeguarding concerns were raised by the home care provider, due to a disclosure to care workers that a relative and their partner had physically assaulted her.

The Local Authority commenced safeguarding enquiries & a criminal investigation began. Adult V was admitted to hospital where she was found to be malnourished, underweight & had some bruising & skin pressure damage. However, she refused to eat, drink or have a nasogastric tube fitted.

Sadly, Adult V passed away 7 days after admission. The cause of death was listed as pneumonia and frailty due to poor nutritional status.



EXTENDED ADULT PRACTICE REVIEW

ADULT V



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Context

Adult V had been left with significant disabilities following 2 strokes. The provision of care & support services with additional help from extended family members had enabled her to maintain her independence & live at home for several years.

There was a significant change in her personal circumstances after a fall at home. A period in hospital, a move to a residential care home & the appearance of a thought to be estranged relative, changed the dynamic of her relationships & contact with other family members & care & support services.

The relative involved themselves in Adult V's health, care & support & moved in with her following hospital discharge.

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Developing Systems and Practice

The role of social workers in responding effectively to domestic abuse. It is important for professionals to understand what an effective response to domestic abuse is. Professionals should access appropriate training provided by agencies. Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors (IDVA's) play a key role in MARAC meetings and are able to provide advice and guidance to professionals on MARAC processes.

There is good understanding across agencies of the need to share information to safeguard adults at risk. Use of electronic records are commonplace, and have many benefits for capture and use of personal data, though not all are fit for purpose and can be a barrier to effective communication. The review highlighted that steps need to be taken to improve functionality and use of ICT systems currently in place.

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Understanding the adult in the context of their family.

Professionals involved with Adult V did not have a full picture of the family context. The use of genograms are beneficial, especially where support or care services are involved with an individual.

Professional advocacy. Access to an advocate should be available to all individuals who have difficulty in engaging with professionals or services, to assist the person with communicating their views, wishes and feelings

MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference) Where an allegation of abuse is withdrawn by a capacitated adult, professionals should be mindful of any risks of influence on decision making, due to the presence of coercive & controlling behaviour, seek advice & take appropriate actions to mitigate any risks.

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Developing Systems and Practice

Coercive Control, mental capacity and safeguarding. Adults who have care & social care needs are especially vulnerable to coercive & controlling behaviour as a form of abuse. It is important that practitioners are able to appropriately recognise & respond to it.

Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA).

LPA's are a safe way of maintaining control over decisions made on an Adult at risk's behalf. It is important for professionals to understand how an LPA works & the role of the Office of Public Guardian.

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Effective Practice

Professionals respected Adults V's choice to live at home, her needs were comprehensively assessed.

Mental capacity assessments were regularly carried out.

Domiciliary care agency staff reported concerns.

When a disclosure & safeguarding concerns were raised, agencies worked together to ensure that Adult V was safeguarded & that her care & support needs continued to be met.

Police took prompt action when the Adult at risk report was received & commenced a criminal investigation.

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Mental capacity, coercive control, and safeguarding

Where there are safeguarding concerns, a capacitated refusal to engage with services may require on-going risk management, monitoring or changes to care & support plans.

Safeguarding and Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)

Assumptions were made about who held LPA without formal confirmation sought. It was evident that there were difference levels of understanding about LPA and how it works.