**Learning from Reviews**

**The importance of multi-agency meetings**

# **Sharing learning**

This briefing summarises the findings and learning outcomes of Safeguarding Adult Review [(SAR) Anna](https://www.eastsussexsab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/SAR-Anna-Overview-Report.pdf), published in May 2022.

All practitioners who work with adults with care and support needs are encouraged to read the briefing and discuss it with their managers and colleagues.

# **Background**

Safeguarding Adults Reviews frequently highlight learning between safeguarding partners in terms of effective communication, recording and sharing information and collaborative working.

In May 2022the East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) published the findings of SAR Anna, following the death of an 85-year-old woman who died of natural causes. There were concerns about her presentation on admission to hospital when it was noted that she had multiple bruising and skin tears over several parts of her body. There were historical concerns regarding abuse by her daughter whom she had returned to live with five months prior to her death.

One of the key findings was the absence of formal planning meetings involving front line staff, such as the care home which led to assumptions about what action was being taken to safeguard Anna.

# **The purpose of a Multi-Agency Meeting**

Whilst the flexible approach to safeguarding under the Care Act means that a formal meeting may not always be required, meetings are often the best way to ensure effective co-ordination across all agencies.

The purpose a multi-agency meeting is to bring agencies together to discuss risks and share information. It is acknowledged that this may not resolve the risk issue but is considered best practice to manage risk.

# **When should a Multi-Agency Meeting be considered?**

A meeting should be considered in the following situations:

* Responding to self-neglect
* Risk sharing and safety planning
* Co-ordinating the response to safeguarding concerns and the quality-of-care provision
* Co-ordinating criminal investigations and safeguarding enquiries
* Reviewing outcomes and agreeing a safeguarding plan
* Managing multiple safeguarding enquiries such as for organisational abuse

# **Types of Multi-Agency Meeting**

**Safeguarding Meetings**

* Safeguarding planning meetings are held to decide if a [Section 42 enquiry](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/section/42/enacted) is needed.
* Safeguarding Review Meetings are convened to discuss what has happened during the enquiry and what needs to happen next.

**Professionals Meeting**

* Any agency can call a professionals meeting
* Can be called at short notice in a crisis
* To discuss specific cases, care and treatment, incident, risk, professional challenge, or disagreement.
* Called when a discussion with other professionals is needed
* Should be called because there is a legitimate reason for getting professionals together but does not have a specific framework advising when one should be called.

**Multi-disciplinary Team Meeting**

* Looks at an individual’s health needs
* In relation to a specific event e.g., discharge from hospital
* Person at risk, relative or carers may or may not be involved – each case is different

**Multi-Agency Review Meeting**

* Opportunity to revisit the original assessment and safeguarding or support plan, particularly in relation to:
  + Current functioning
  + Risk assessment
  + Known (or potential) rates of improvement or deterioration in either an adult, or in their environment, or in the capabilities of their support system

**Best interest decision meetings**

* Any actions carried out on behalf of someone who lacks the [mental capacity](https://www.eastsussexsab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/East-Sussex-Mental-Capacity-Multi-Agency-Policy-and.pdf) to make the decision for themselves must be in their best interests.

**Multi-Agency Risk Assessment conference (MARAC)**

* Meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between agencies.
* Representatives discuss options for increasing safety for the victim and turn these options into a co-ordinated action plan.
* The primary focus of the [MARAC](https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/MARAC%20FAQs%20General%20FINAL.pdf) is to safeguard the victim.
* Adults are not involved in these meetings

**Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)**

* [MAPPA](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-public-protection-arrangements-mappa-guidance) is a statutory process through which the police, probation, and prison services work together with other agencies to assess and manage violent and sexual offenders to protect the public from harm.
* A system of sharing information and combining resources to maximise the risk management in place for each individual offender.
* Adults are not involved in these meetings

**Multi-agency Risk Management (MARM) Meeting**

* [MARM](https://www.eastsussexsab.org.uk/documents/multi-agency-risk-management-marm-protocol/) aims to manage risk of adults with multiple complex needs who remain at high risk of harm despite previous interventions.
* Referrals to be made for adults where all other options have been explored within current threshold criteria and existing multi-agency functions have not reduced the level of risk and there is significant concern for the wellbeing of an individual.
* Adults are not involved in these meetings

**Self-Neglect Meeting**

* Identify the lead agency
* Lead agency co-ordinates the information gathering
* The Lead agency convenes a multi-agency meeting under the [Self Neglect procedures](https://www.sussexsafeguardingadults.org/access-the-policy-and-procedures/section-2/2-8-sussex-multi-agency-procedures-to-support-adults-who-self-neglect/) to;
  + Consider risk and issues of mental capacity
  + Shares information between agencies
  + Devise a shared action plan
* The lead agency will make arrangements to involve the adult as much as possible and/or their representative/ advocate
* Develop a comprehensive assessment of risk

# **Who should attend a multi-agency meeting?**

All relevant agencies should be involved in meetings and discussions such as the Local Authority, Police, Health, and Care Homes. Always consider sharing information and sending invitations to meetings with primary care agencies, such as the GP. All agencies invited to safeguarding meetings have a responsibility to attend. Where an agency representative cannot attend, they should inform the meeting organiser and arrange for an alternative representative to attend if possible.

# **Making Safeguarding Personal**

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) means that, where possible, meetings should be person-led and outcome-focused. Meetings should invite individuals to their meetings and engage them in a conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing, and safety.

If the meeting feels that it would not be appropriate to invite the individual to the meeting, they should clearly state *why* they should not attend.

# **Comprehensive assessment of neglect**

Following the multi-agency meeting and comprehensive assessment the risk to the adult should be evaluated. Assessments should be brought together in one place so each professional involved will understand the links between their own involvement and that of others.

If risk remains due to refusal by professionals or third parties to engage and this results in the neglect of the adult, consideration will be given to raising a safeguarding concern on the grounds of neglect.

# **What should you do if you are unhappy about a decision?**

Use our Sussex Safeguarding Escalation and Resolution Protocol, which supports consistent and timely decision making where there may be disagreements or issues arising between professionals and agencies in relation to adult safeguarding.

# **Information sharing**

All agencies have a responsibility to share any information they have which may be relevant to safeguarding the adult. Where representatives from key agencies are absent from meetings, where possible they should provide information in advance. The lead professional / Chair should ensure that agencies absent from meetings are kept informed of outcomes, and any agreed actions and timescales allocated to them.

# **Important to remember**

Practitioners can sometimes be over-cautious about sharing personal information, particularly if it is against the wishes of the individual concerned. They may also be mistaken about needing evidence or consent to share information. The risk of sharing information is often perceived to be higher than it actually is. It is important that practitioners consider the risks of not sharing information when making decisions. Such failures can lead to serious abuse and harm and in some cases, even death.

# **Links to further Information**

* [Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures](https://www.sussexsafeguardingadults.org/)
* [Sussex Information sharing Guide and Protocol](https://www.eastsussexsab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Sussex-Information-Sharing-Guide-and-Protocol-v2.pdf)
* [Reporting a Safeguarding Concern](https://www.eastsussexsab.org.uk/what-is-safeguarding/raise-a-concern/)
* [SCIE Safeguarding Adults: Sharing Information](https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/practice/sharing-information)
* [Sussex SAR Protocol](https://www.eastsussexsab.org.uk/documents/sussex-sar-protocol/)
* [Sussex Multi-agency Procedures to Support Adults who Self-neglect](https://www.sussexsafeguardingadults.org/)

A range of multi-agency safeguarding courses, including domestic violence and abuse, coercion and control, mental capacity and self-neglect are available through the [East Sussex Learning Portal](https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/jobs/learning-portal).

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