

Mr & Mrs L Learning for Professionals



Safeguarding Adults Review

Mr L was admitted to hospital with significant evidence of self-neglect, including dehydration, malnutrition, dirty skin, hair and clothing and multiple pressure injuries. The ambulance crew handed over that the home address was unkept, with large amounts of rubbish, animal and human excrement on the floor, no access to bathroom, fire risks due to hoarding and clutter, with reports of 8 previous deep cleans.

Mr L died in March 2025, cause of death was advanced COPD and the medical examiner recognised that self-neglect was significant although not the cause of death.

Mr L lived with his wife Mrs L, who also sadly died earlier in March 2025 whilst visiting her husband at hospital. Mrs L was also living in the same conditions as her husband.

The SAR sub group received a referral and undertook an information gathering exercise, and made a decision that the criteria for a SAR were not met according to the definition in section 44 of the Care Act, due to the cause of death, however it was agreed to undertake a learning review as there was clear evidence of learning.

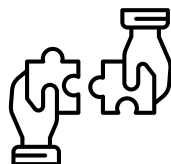
Key messages for professionals

Good practice identified



Relationship

Perseverance to be able to go inside the property and work with Mr & Mrs L



Joint visits

Joint working between housing, GP, social care, fire service



Support

Professionals made multiple offers of support for Mr & Mrs L

What were the worries?



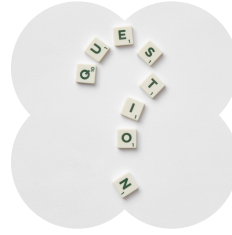
Multi-agency meetings

Some meetings took place but didn't include key professionals



Escalating Concerns

professionals were worried about responses but no-one escalated these



Curiosity

'normal for Mr & Mrs L' self neglect and hoarding was a very long standing issue



Capacity

Concerns about Mr L's capacity, but not formalised with an assessment and Mrs L's wishes were followed, Mr L's best interests not always considered

- Self Neglect was identified by all professionals involved, this review identified the challenges for professionals when an adult says no to help
- Eight deep cleans had taken place in the home, but this did not address underlying issues and were a temporary fix
- Self Neglect was exacerbated by very heavy smoking and alcohol use, key professionals not aware of this
- Delays happened following referrals and also when a worker was unwell for several weeks and Mr & Mrs L were not reallocated.
- Professionals told the review that they didn't know about the multi agency escalation route, or that they didn't feel confident to use it.
- Some professionals who saw Mr & Mrs L the most often felt they were missed out of meetings about the family, there was a lack of parity.
- Capacity of Mr L was unclear, with some recording suggesting he lacked capacity for decision making about his health and others not checking this, or believing he did. Sometimes Mrs L made decisions on Mr L's behalf and no evidence his best interests were considered
- Assumptions were made that 'someone else' was involved, or that issues were 'all in hand'.
- Assumptions were also made about family support, as Mr & Mrs L's son had his own care & support needs and was assumed to be the carer for his parents

What can we do differently?



Escalate

Use the Resolution of Professional Differences Policy



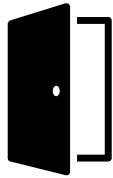
Self Neglect

Use the risk assessment in the Self Neglect Guidance



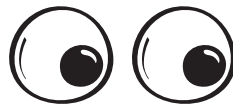
Work Together

Include all professionals when holding a multi agency meeting



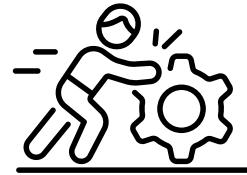
No wrong door

support referrers to share their concerns without sending forms back or closing without feedback



Fresh pair of eyes

seek views from 'new' workers, to avoid normalising what is seen every week



Persistence

Link with professionals who already have a relationship with the adult to support and sustain change

Resources you can use:

Escalation of concerns

The [Resolution of Professional Differences Policy](#) is for professionals from all organisations and should be used when there is a lack of response, or you don't agree with the decision.

Self Neglect

Use the multi agency [self neglect guidance](#).

This guidance contains a [risk assessment](#) to help identify risk when there is self neglect.

Contact Avon Fire & Rescue and make use of their [clutter rating tool](#).

Attend a [Bitesize Self Neglect](#) session

What will happen next?

The Safeguarding Adults Board will create an action plan based on the learning from Mr & Mrs L.

The SAR sub group will monitor completion of actions

Organisations should use this briefing to support professionals when working with self neglect. Including a focus on case discussion, supervision and stepping back to see the wider picture.