

Learning from Multi-Agency Case Audit

Key findings and learning from Multi-Agency Case Audit – Homelessness – October 2021

<p>The Purpose of a Multi-Agency Case Audit (MACA) is to review specific cases/themes to identify good practice, and support professionals to adjust their working practice in light of the lessons learnt from the audit. MACA complements other activities outlined in the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB) Quality Assurance Framework, such as single agency audits. Themes for MACA are agreed by NSAB's Quality & Performance Sub Group in line with the NSAB Strategic Plan.</p> <p>MACA is carried out by way of a detailed audit where a case/cases is/are analysed in a meeting of professionals from key agencies.</p> <p>Sharing Learning</p> <p>Following the MACA, a detailed action log is developed that includes any recommendations including those for NSAB's Strategic Board. Progress is monitored via the NSAB Quality & Performance Sub Group.</p> <p>This briefing summarises the key findings from the review and managers should discuss this with their teams to ensure that the learning is used to enhance existing good practice and to make improvements where necessary. Feedback will be sought from partner agencies via the NSAB Learning & Development Sub Group to ensure that the learning has been cascaded.</p>	<p>Multi-Agency Case Audit</p> <p>The audit reviewed six cases where homelessness, or risk of homelessness, was a factor following a recommendation from the recently published SAR 019 Jonathan. Four of the cases involved men and two involved women.</p> <p>Of the cases reviewed, only two met the criteria for a section 42 enquiry, so the scope was widened to include those where 'no further action' was taken.</p> <p>Agencies were asked to provide details of their involvement in each case between 1st April 2020 to 30th June 2021 including a summary of significant events prior to this timeline.</p> <p>The following agencies provided audits for this MACA: Accommodation Concern, Kettering General Hospital, Keystage Housing, Maple Access Surgery, North Northamptonshire Council Adult Social Care, Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (NHFT), Northamptonshire Police, Substance to Solution (S2S), and West Northamptonshire Council Adult Social Care.</p> <p>The initial review of the audits highlighted that four individuals had a dependency on alcohol, one case mentioned domestic abuse, and one individual was made homeless due to their bail conditions.</p> <p>Since the period of review, two individuals have moved away from Northamptonshire and reassurance was provided that they are safe.</p>
--	--

Findings and Key Points for Learning

- 1. Mental Capacity Act 2005**
 - Agencies had considered the individuals' mental capacity, but there was no evidence of the two stage test being adopted or assessments being undertaken in five of the six cases audited. NHFT undertook an assessment for case 2. Stage 1 of the Mental Capacity Act requires proof that the person has an impairment of the mind or brain which may include symptoms from alcohol or drug use. Stage 2 seeks to determine if the person is unable to make a specific decision when they need to. Therefore, individuals who mis-use drugs and alcohol may lack capacity to make appropriate decisions and the two stage test may need to be applied. If there is doubt, about the ability of the person to make specific decisions, then refer to the [Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice sections 4.12 and 4.13](#).
- 2. Information sharing**
 - There was a lack of information sharing between agencies.
 - Adult Social Care should make better use of GPs for key lines of enquiry.
 - The prospect of an Adult MASH was discussed to support a multi-agency information sharing pathway.
- 3. Multi-agency / Adult Risk Management (ARM) Meetings**
 - There was a lack of evidence of any multi-agency / ARM meetings taking place for all 6 cases, despite a number of agencies being involved with the individuals and a considerable amount of communication across email and the telephone.

4. Advocacy

- There was no suggestion of advocacy being offered to support the individuals for those with no support from close family or friends. Where an individual lacks capacity to make appropriate decisions, an advocate should be considered to support them, particularly when the person has no-one to take an interest in their welfare. In the cases explored in the MACA, a referral for Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA) may have been helpful¹ [Refer to VoiceAbility – Care Act Advocacy](#).

5. Support for trauma and bereavement

- Trauma, domestic and sexual abuse and bereavement were mentioned in 3 of the 6 cases, but it was not clear that these matters were considered or whether specialist support was provided to the individuals.

Case Observations

Case 1

- There were safeguarding concerns regarding self-neglect and mental capacity, but no mental capacity assessment was undertaken.
- The gentleman wanted support for his mental health (MH), but he was not known to MH services, other than a visit to the crisis café following support from Adult Social Care.
- The gentleman was mis-using alcohol but there was a refusal to engage with Substance to Solution² (S2S).
- There was no evidence that advocacy was offered which may have helped the gentleman to engage with services.
- The gentleman has since accepted support for his physical health and with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Case 2

- There were safeguarding concerns regarding self-neglect, homelessness and mental health (expressed suicidal ideation), and it was noted that the gentleman was an alcoholic.
- The gentleman's outcome was recorded as 'he wanted a home'.
- Despite concerns for the gentleman's mental health, he was not known to MH services, so we are unclear whether the gentleman was referred.
- Adult Social Care said the case recording could have been better.

Case 3

- There were safeguarding concerns raised from housing and a welfare officer regarding the gentleman sleeping rough in a back garden and living on a very poor diet.
- A welfare visit was undertaken by the police and a referral made to the Hope Centre for food and shower facilities.
- There was a lot of support by the GP regarding the gentleman's physical health, and he had a positive relationship with a Substance to Solution (S2S) support worker and through this he engaged with the service.
- The case was closed to safeguarding very quickly because the gentleman engaged with services. It was suggested that Adult Social Care may want to check that support was still in place for this gentleman.
- It was unclear what the gentleman's outcomes were as these were not noted in any of the agency audits.

Case 4

- The young woman was living in her mother's back garden. She had previously been housed but lost her tenancy due to anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- The safeguarding concern states that the woman had been sexually assaulted where she was living previously, but this doesn't appear to have been explored by agencies.
- The main concerns were regarding homelessness and mental health, but as she was living with her mother (evidenced by visits late at night) she wasn't eligible for housing.

¹ An advocate helps individuals to understand their rights under the Care Act and to be fully involved in a local authority assessment, care review, care and support planning or safeguarding process where there are no family or friends able to assist. They also provide Independent Mental Health Advocates (IMHAs) to support people with issues relating to their mental health care and treatment, and to help understand their rights under the Mental Health Act. [Contact VoiceAbility](#) for further information.

² Change Grow Live - [Substance to Solution](#) provides free and confidential treatment and support for people experiencing difficulties with drugs and alcohol.

Case Observations

- Bereavement was mentioned by one agency, but unclear whether she received counselling or support for this. However, she did engage with mental health services, but she didn't attend consistently, and the case was closed.
- There was good contact from relatives regarding the woman's access to support with mental health services.
- No consideration as to whether mum was considered as a carer under section 10 of the care act (carers assessment).
- The woman is now living out of county and assurance was sought that she was safe. According to Adult Social Care, she is now settled and flourishing.

Case 5

- EMAS made a safeguarding referral following admission to hospital following abuse from her partner. However, the case was closed to safeguarding as domestic abuse had not been mentioned. Had domestic abuse been mentioned in the referral, this would have supported her housing application. The woman was known to mental health services previously.
- The audit identified that the woman wasn't actually homeless but needed support regarding her tenancy.
- The social worker went on holiday and didn't leave a support plan in place for this lady.
- The woman has since moved back to London and is receiving support from local agencies.

Case 6

- A number of safeguarding referrals and Police Protection Notices were made regarding the gentleman's mental health and his behaviour. He was also detained under the mental health act due to self-harm.
- Advocacy was in place from a relative, who acted as a key contact with agencies.
- Bail conditions were in place which made it difficult for agencies to make contact.
- From the audits, there appeared to be no concerns about the gentleman's capacity and therefore no assessments were undertaken.
- Sadly, this gentleman passed away in early 2021.

Good Practice

- Workers showed real dedication and perseverance to reach positive outcomes for the individuals.
- There was a lot of communication and discussion between agencies.
- There was a good use of NSAB's multi-agency policy and procedures recorded by Adult Social Care in their audit.
- Immediate support regarding food and a shower was provided to a gentleman living in a tent in a back garden.

Recommendations

1. Multi-Agency Case Audit

It was agreed to add new sections to the MACA template to include: use of advocacy, consideration of ARM, specific MSP outcomes, and consideration of support for trauma/bereavement. Business Office to update. *March update. This action is complete.*

2. Use of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) and the Testing of Capacity to make Decisions

North and West Northants Councils to consider what additional support can be given to raising further awareness of the importance of mental capacity assessment. *March update - Adult Social Care in West Northamptonshire Council has designed a training pack which has been delivered in the West and shared with Adult Social Care, North Northamptonshire Council. A session on the Mental Capacity Act 2005 is scheduled during the NSAB Week of Learning in June 2022 to help raise further awareness. This action is complete.*

3. Use of Advocacy

NSAB Quality & Performance Sub Group to discuss agency use of advocacy as a substantive item at Quality & Performance. *March update – a task and finish group will be convened to explore the use of advocacy in the county.*

Recommendations

4. Embedding of the ARM process within the county

NSAB Independent Scrutineer to discuss the embedding of the ARM process with the strategic leads for ARM in North & West Northamptonshire Councils and whether a dedicated Rough Sleeping Task Force should be considered to support those impacted by Multiple Exclusion Homelessness. *March update - each local authority is developing a bespoke response which will consider dedicated support for this cohort. A session on Multiple Exclusion Homelessness and Safeguarding is scheduled during the NSAB Week of Learning in June 2022 to help raise further awareness.*

5. Trauma and Bereavement Counselling/Support

NSAB Quality & Performance Sub Group to discuss what the pathway is for agencies signposting for trauma and bereavement counselling at the Quality & Performance meeting.

Useful Links

[Advocacy - Voiceability](#)

[Change Grow Live – Substance to Solution](#)

[Mental Capacity Act 2005 – Code of Practice](#)

[Mental Health Pathway – Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Trust](#)

[NSAB Policies & Procedures - ARM Toolkit](#)

[SAR 019 'Jonathan' - Executive Summary](#)

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board

One Angel Square, Northampton, NN1 1ED

T: 01604 365681 E: NSAB.NCC@northamptonshire.gov.uk W: [Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board](#)