

Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Adults Board - Professionals Briefing

How do we know we are working together well to safeguard vulnerable adults?

This short briefing is aimed at professionals who work with adults with care and support needs in Brighton & Hove. It presents the key findings and recommendations from a recent multi agency audit. A full report is also available for professionals working in partner agencies in Brighton & Hove upon request. If you would like a copy of this report please contact us at SAB@Brighton-hove.gov.uk

Domestic Violence and Abuse

The Care Act 2014 marked a shift in how adults are safeguarded and required a change of approach to ensure service users choice is at the centre of all services delivered. This included explicitly considering how to protect adults with care & support needs experiencing, or at risk of, abuse and neglect as a consequence of domestic violence & abuse (DVA).

DVA is “any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality” and can include (but is not limited to) psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse

Victims often experience *controlling behaviour* (acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour) and *coercion* (an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim)

Recently the SAB undertook an audit to seek assurance on the following areas of enquiry:

- Adults affected by DVA are identified at the earliest opportunity
- Adults affected by DVA have safe and appropriate contact arrangements that are informed by a robust risk assessment
- Effective interventions are being provided which are based on good quality risk assessments
- Adults affected by DVA are listened to and provided with appropriate support.

The audit was led by Michelle Jenkins, Head of Safeguarding & Professional Standards for Adult Social Care (Brighton & Hove City Council) and James Rowlands, Strategic Commissioner from the Partnership Community Safety Team (Brighton & Hove City Council)

Methodology: Five cases were selected for the audit from a sample of cases where DVA had been identified from Section 42 Enquiries between April 15 and December 15

The auditing team comprised of representatives from Brighton & Hove City Council Adult Social Care (Social Work/Assessment), Sussex Police, Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, RISE (the specialist domestic abuse service, which now delivers ‘The Portal’ service), Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust and the MARAC Support Team

An audit tool was developed, based on the based on the ‘Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working’ guidance produced by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)¹. Agencies completed audit tools separately, before coming together in a moderation session.

¹ <https://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/PH50>

Summary of findings: Strengths

- Completion of Vulnerable Adult forms by Police
- Examples of consideration of DVA, either during assessment or subsequently in the community as part of ongoing case management
- Example of agencies identifying and responding to language barriers
- Example of a referral to the local Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) being undertaken correctly
- Examples of consideration of safeguarding issues in relation to children

Recommendations to improve practice

- Review the current Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures to ensure there is sufficient consideration of the needs of adults who are experiencing DVA
- Review single and multi-agency data regarding the prevalence, identification and flagging of DVA
- Review training for all staff working with adults at risk of DVA to ensure training opportunities are accessible and equip professionals to respond to DVA – *there is a wide range of training available locally, see below for information on the local training offer*
- Review training with regard to the Mental Capacity Act and consider whether it is sufficiently robust with regards to issues of capacity where there may be coercion as a result of DVA
- Liaise with the relevant national bodies regarding whether the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and 'Honour'-Based Violence Risk Identification Checklist (DASH- RIC) is fit for purpose and able to identify issues relevant to Safeguarding Adults at Risk - *in November 2016, the local version of the DASH RIC was amended to include additional questions to help professionals identify whether any adults with care and support needs are at risk of abuse or neglect*
- Explore the suitability of the carer assessment as a tool to identify and respond to DVA.

Reflection points

- Up to 10% of people subject to a safeguarding adults enquiry will be experiencing DVA.
- Signs of abuse can often be difficult to detect. Professionals should be able to identify abuse and recognise possible indicators
- Professional need to think about how the experience of controlling behaviour and coercion can impact on someone's decision making. Are they truly free and informed decisions? Are they made because of fear of their (ex) partner?
- Professionals also need to recognise the fears that people may which can present barriers to making a disclosure or seeking help – make sure you respond to a disclosure of violence or abuse sensitively
- Use the [DASH Risk Identification Checklist](#) to assess someone's immediate safety and take action, which could include a referral to the local MARAC
- Recognise that many types of abuse are also criminal offences and should be treated as such, but there are also other tools available like the [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#) (which aims to help potential victims to make an informed choice about whether to continue with a relationship if a new or current partner has a history of violence or abuse)
- Closer multiagency working is key – be able to direct people to specialist services

Local Support

Access Point (Brighton & Hove City Council) provides information, advice and assessments for vulnerable people in Brighton & Hove so they can have more independence and control over their lives. The service works in partnership with health organisations, the police, private and voluntary agencies, community groups and others. Use the online tool to get information and advice and ask for an assessment or a review of your care and support

Go to the [adult social care - get help and support](#) tool.

[The Portal](#) is a partnership of leading Sussex Domestic and Sexual Abuse Charities – including RISE, Survivors' Network and CGL – and helps survivors of domestic and sexual violence and abuse to find advice and support in Brighton & Hove and East Sussex.

For more information go to theportal.org.uk or Freephone 0300 323 9985

[SAFE:SPACE Sussex](#) was set up by the Police & Crime Commissioner to help local citizens deal with the before and after effects of crime and includes information on other local support organisation including Victim Support.

For more information go to www.safespacesussex.org.uk



What's next

The final report has been approved by the Safeguarding Adult Board and members of the Quality Assurance Subgroup will oversee the action plan.

Further reading

- LGA (2015) 'Adult safeguarding and domestic abuse: a guide to support practitioners and managers' : [click here](#)
- SafeLives (2016) 'Spotlight #1: Older people and domestic abuse': [click here](#)
- SafeLives (2016) 'Spotlight #2: Disabled people and domestic abuse': [click here](#)
- SCIE (2015) 'At a glance 69: Adult safeguarding: Types and indicators of abuse': [click here](#)

Training

The city has a Domestic Violence Abuse, Sexual Violence and Violence against Women & Girls Training Prospectus, which describes the training available in the city relating to these forms of violence and abuse. The prospectus brings together a range of multi-agency training offered by the Partnership Community Safety Team, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, Safeguarding Adults Board and Brighton & Hove City Council's Workforce Development Team

Book through the Brighton & Hove Learning Gateway at <https://learning.brighton-hove.gov.uk/cpd/portal.asp> or visit the Safe in the City website to view the full training offer: <http://www.safeinthecity.info/training>

Feedback

As staff and frontline managers you will know about the quality and impact of your own services, and those of the partner agencies you work with. It is important to the Safeguarding Adult Board to have a constant feedback loop from the frontline to keep senior management and those with governance responsibilities 'reality-based'; not just in terms of what is or is not working, but to assist with ideas for improvement so that changes can be made systematically.

We would like to hear your thoughts, feedback and comments on findings presented to you in this briefing and any feedback on the style of the briefing itself, please do contact us at SAB@Brighton-hove.gov.uk to ensure your voice is heard.