

1 – Introduction

In February 2024, the Safeguarding Adults Board undertook a Line of Sight to Practice event in relation to Matilda*.

As part of the event, key partners were requested to complete and submit a chronology in relation to the case for consideration by the panel. The panel is made up of key leads from the relevant SAB subgroup who come together to agree key lines of enquiry prior to a discussion with multi-agency practitioners.

The focus of the learning event is to reflect on the adult's journey and to identify any opportunities for improved collaboration between agencies and to share good practice.

*A pseudonym has been used to protect her identity

2 – Background

Matilda was a 91 year old White British female who sadly passed away after being found collapsed on the floor of her home.

6 years prior to her death, multi-agency support was provided to Matilda following a previous fall at home. There were some concerns regarding her unmet health needs and the home conditions in which she was living. It was also reported that rogue traders were targeting her.

After a period of intervention, Matilda made positive progress and was supported to regain her independence and return to her home. In the 5 years prior to her death, Matilda had no contact with any agencies.

3- Good practice

Multi-agency working

There was a proactive multi-agency response to concerns regarding the rogue traders who targeted Matilda. Professionals respected her wishes not to pursue the complaint with the police and took alternative actions to reduce future risk.

Person-centred practice and Making Safeguarding Personal

The principles of Making Safeguarding Personal and person-centred practice were evident. Matilda's goal was to regain her independence and return home, and she was supported to achieve this outcome by the multi-agency teams involved. Matilda was actively involved in her care and support plan and she was consulted when she had to temporarily stay in respite care to enable rehabilitation.

7 – Further information

Advice and guidance can be found on the [Safeguarding Adults Board website](#) including:

- A 7 minute briefing from a previous Line of Sight to Practice event on Self-Neglect
- A 7 minute briefing on professional curiosity
- Tools and resources relating to self-neglect, professional curiosity and mental capacity and executive functioning

Other resources can be found below:

- [Research in Practice – Working with people who self-neglect Practice Tool](#)
- [Research in Practice – Professional curiosity in safeguarding adults Practice Tool](#)



4- Areas for learning and improvement

Professional curiosity

Prior to the first period of intervention, little was known about Matilda and her family life. She had support from extended family members, but the dynamics of these relationships were not fully explored.

Also, Matilda engaged in care and support whilst she was in respite but when she returned home, she cancelled her health appointments. There was a lack of professional curiosity as to why she cancelled these appointments.

Importance of relationships

Although Matilda was fiercely independent, when support was offered to her she welcomed it both outside and inside her home. Upon reflection, more could potentially have been done to build up a rapport with Matilda, so that she felt able to reach out for support in future. Alternatively, it may have been beneficial to strengthen relationships with her existing support networks to ensure there was a contingency plan in place should her health needs or home conditions deteriorate in future.

6 – Recommendations

After the event, a report was developed and shared with the SAB Prevention and Proportionality subgroup and the following action was agreed:

- Develop a 7-minute briefing to share the learning from this review with frontline practitioners
- Training to be developed and delivered to support practitioners to understand executive functioning in the context of self-neglect
- Produce a bespoke briefing around decision making and mental capacity
- Continue to raise awareness of the importance of professional curiosity, particularly in relation to the exploration of family networks



7 Minute Briefing

5 – Areas for learning and improvement

Disengagement with GP surgery

Prior to intervention, Matilda was not seen by a GP for over 20 years, and it was unclear which GP, if any, she was registered with. Matilda was also not registered as a vulnerable adult throughout the COVID-19 pandemic therefore she was invisible to services.

Self-neglect

In relation to Matilda cancelling her health appointments, it was unknown whether she understood the implications of not receiving medical care as there was no formal assessment regarding Matilda's capacity. It was of note that Matilda had ongoing health issues which could have had an impact on her executive functioning. Although there was recognition of individual concerns, there was limited evidence that agencies involved in supporting Matilda considered them within the context of self-neglect.