

# IOWSAB Thematic Review in relation to safeguarding people with multiple needs

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

*“Local Safeguarding Adults Boards must arrange a Safeguarding Adults Review when an adult in its area dies as a result of abuse or neglect, whether known or suspected, and there is a concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult”*  
(Department of Health, 2020).

In 2021, the Isle of Wight Safeguarding Adults Board identified a number of cases referred for consideration of a statutory Safeguarding Adults Review. Although they did not meet statutory criteria for Safeguarding Adult Reviews individually, it was considered that when looked at together they may offer valuable thematic insights into safeguarding practice on the Island for people with multiple vulnerabilities including homelessness, mental health needs and substance misuse.

The themes which the IOWSAB wished to explore were:

Partnership and collaboration for people with multiple vulnerabilities: The effectiveness of partnership collaboration to support people with multiple needs, and evidence of a combined approach to negating further risk of harm.

The Interface between different services; their aim and purpose, thresholds, and criteria. The suffering of people who experience rough sleeping can be overwhelming and can have a severe impact on physical and mental health, and personal safety. How do we ensure people without a safe place to call home do not fall between the gaps of services and systems, mindful of the legislative changes made in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Models, systems, and processes to effectively support and to safeguard: How effectively does the system work with individuals with multiple needs and risk factors? What potential models, systems, and processes exist to support people with mental capacity who repeatedly are perceived to make choices not to engage with services and continually put themselves at risk of harm and/or abuse?

Mental capacity – culture, practice, and legal frameworks: The implementation and operation of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and contribution of mental capacity work in complex case management within the context of contextual safeguarding. This is a key workstream of the IOWSAB business plan 2022-2024.

### Thematic review methodology

In order to better understand the practice of the multi-agency health and social care system on the Island in supporting people with multiple vulnerabilities, the Safeguarding Adults Board commissioned a thematic review from an Independent Reviewer.

This included a systematic review of five cases using a Safeguarding Adult Review methodology. The review report generated system-applicable learning from each case and

highlighted themes from practice. Findings were based upon a structured analysis of data and evidence available, including but not limited to:

- Documentary evidence
- Parallel investigations and single-agency learning
- Service users and families
- Input and experiences of practitioners and agencies involved in each case
- Relevant policy and procedure
- National and local learning
- Research and best practice

Practitioner events for this review took place at a time when public health measures to contain the Covid-19 pandemic prevented traditional face to face workshop events. Online practitioner events were used to bring practitioners together from across agencies.

The findings from the Thematic Review included a headline theme, its impact on practice, and questions for the Board to consider.

The Thematic Review report was presented to the Safeguarding Adults Board and Safeguarding Adult Review Panel in May 2022. The learning from the review aimed to enable the Safeguarding Adults Board to evaluate current practice against learning from historical and non-recent cases.

### **Findings and next steps**

Time has passed since the report was presented and, in the meantime, local partners have continued to consider and apply the points raised through the review in developing practice and policies. The challenge of safeguarding in a pandemic has also evidenced innovation and improvement in collaborative working.

**The area which the IOWSAB will prioritise for action over the coming year is how best to support practitioners and managers across the system to be more confident and consistent in applying the Mental Capacity Act for people with multiple vulnerabilities. Balancing considerations of personal choice, contextual safeguarding, Human Rights Act, executive and fluctuating capacity is complex.**

**The IOWSAB believe that this would be best approached in collaboration across our partner SABs in Southampton, Portsmouth and Hampshire.**

Teresa Bell  
Independent Chair  
IOWSAB  
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