Please share in Supervision, 1-1,Team Meetings, Unit Meetings as a prompt for discussion and support learning and development activities

Two recent reviews concerning adults have focussed on issues of Mental Health, Alcohol Misuse, Domestic Abuse and Refusal of services. Whilst the circumstances surrounding the cases were different the following Themes have been drawn together

Theme 1 – 'Better Conversations'

Staff in all agencies to be reminded of the importance of 'Better conversations' at the point of referral so they result in:

- A shared understanding of what the concerns are (seeing, hearing, smelling)

- When we use the term 'vulnerable' or 'vulnerability' what do we mean?

- Do you really understand 'short hand' 'acronyms' e.g. detox, DoLs, What does this mean for the service user's day to day living.

- Making Safeguarding Personal – What is the service user's desired outcome?

- Use the Thresholds Guidance for Safeguarding Adults

- Why did you make a referral? What do you think another agency can offer? Are you contacting the right agency? What are you going to do?

- Conversations need to end with an understanding of next steps

- Be proactive in seeking feedback or escalating concerns

Theme 2 – 'Service users reluctant to engage'

This can be a very complex and challenging area for staff to deal with. Staff should consider the following:

- Convening a multi-agency meeting

- Making Safeguarding Personal – What is the service user's desired outcome?

- Using the VARM risk assessment tool to consider creative solutions and contingency planning

- Identifying who is actually supporting the adult, those who are able to gain access, formal or informal e.g. neighbours, shopkeeper, family and friends

Theme 3 – 'Understanding Domestic Abuse and Older People'

Staff to be reminded that in assessing Domestic abuse situations they consider:

- Vulnerability due to age related conditions

- The dynamics of parent/child relationships even if the 'child' is an adult

- The impact of coercive and controlling behaviour

- Safe contact (not writing introductory letters), speaking to 'victim' alone

- What is your evidence that this is a safe/unsafe environment?

- Use the Thresholds Guidance for Safeguarding Adults

Theme 4 - 'Understanding Mental Capacity'

Staff should have knowledge of the Mental Capacity Act relevant to their role however in practice staff are supporting decision making all the time

When discussing issues of capacity the following needs to be clear:

- Who is accessing capacity?

- Capacity to understand, retain information and consent is subject specific

- Capacity is assumed unless there are indicators to the contrary

- Shared understanding of the impact of Mental Health on daily living

Theme 5 - 'The impact of Alcohol misuse'

Supporting people who misuse drugs and alcohol can be challenging, complex and unpredictable. The issues are closely linked to **Themes 1 2 and 4.** Staff should additionally consider:

- Seeking expert advice – Turning Point Telephone : 0330 303 6000

- How are you going to access resources for the service user

Theme 6 - Self Neglect

Recognising Self Neglect – What is it ?

Reporting Self-Neglect - Concerns around Self-neglect have always been referred. What has changed under the Care Act is that self-neglect is now treated as a category of abuse/neglect.

'A decision on whether a response is required under safeguarding will depend on the adult's ability to protect themselves by controlling their own behaviour. There may come a point when they are no longer able to do this, without external support' Care Act Guidance March 2016

Use the Thresholds Guidance for Safeguarding Adults

The issues are closely linked to **Themes 1 2 and 4.**

Work is currently underway to develop a LLR Multi-Agency Vulnerable Adult Risk Management Tool (VARM) for use in complex cases where the service user has the capacity to refuse services but the self-neglect is such that puts them at risk of significant harm.