

## Case Study – Mary and Graham

Mary and Graham are a married couple in their eighties living in a local authority owned property. The Housing department at the local authority have been involved with Mary and Graham over a number of years:

- Failure to pay rent
- No response to attempted communications (written and in person)
- Failure to allow access for essential works, including gas checks
- Unauthorised adaptations to property
- Accumulations of rubbish leading to complaints from neighbours
- Verbal abuse and threats e.g. of legal action
- Failure to allow access to professionals (mental health, adult social care) who were asked to see them in response to concerns raised
- Witnessed aggression towards Graham

Based on their experience of limited contact with them, housing staff regard the couple as vulnerable and are concerned about possible domestic abuse/ coercive control.

There have been referrals to mental health services and to adult social care, but the couple did not engage, and relevant professionals were unable to access them in order to make assessments of potential needs and possible risks.

The couple's former GP has identified safeguarding concerns:

- Mary blocked access to Graham in 2016 after expressing concerns about his memory.
- Mary attended all appointments with him and engaged on his behalf.
- Mary was also demonstrating some delusional beliefs and paranoid behaviours, such as:
  - sending blank audiotapes at significant expense to Leicestershire Police together with non-understandable letters
  - expressing ideas about household appliances being bugged and trashing/removing new white goods from the property
  - arranging for locks to be changed on neighbouring properties, as she felt that she also owned these properties, as well as the local authority owned bungalow where she lived.

Mary has a history of a psychotic illness that has led to an admission for assessment under Section 2 of the Mental Health Act 1983 in 2005 with a persistent delusional disorder diagnosis subsequently made. Police are called to the property after a neighbour reports not having seen Mary and Graham for a number of weeks. Upon entry, Police officers describe the premises as being dirty with no food in the property at all. There is no gas or electricity supply to the premises and candles have been used for light. There are no cooking facilities. There is a disability seat on the toilet which is damaged.

Mary and Graham are found deceased, the deaths are attributed to natural causes.

At the time of death neither Mary or Graham was registered with a GP. The bank account had not been accessed for some time and held a large sum of money.

**Questions:**

When answering, please consider factors that might impact your assessment, such as skills, knowledge and attitudes.

1.	<b>What factors would cause you concern in this case?</b>
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2.	<b>How might you engage with someone who is difficult to engage with?</b>
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3.	<b>To demonstrate 'professional curiosity', what would you be doing?</b>
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4.	<b>How might issues of mental capacity be a factor and how might these be addressed?</b>
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5.	<b>What would be the benefits of working together in a case such as this? How creative could you be?</b>
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