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Introduction

In April 2023, the Safeguarding Effectiveness Group ('SEG'), a subgroup of the Salford Safeguarding Adults Board, held their second Multi-Agency Audit to develop understanding and assurance of how effectively agencies work together to protect adults in Salford. This audit had a theme of 'Self-Neglect'.

We invited agencies to nominate adults for audit who had been safeguarded recently and where multiple agencies were involved, self-neglect was identified and where it was felt learning could be had, through either good practice or aspects of the process that could have gone better. Agencies self-assessment forms were completed, pen pictures written and adults involved were asked to provide feedback on their safeguarding experience.

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Self-Assessment Forms

Agencies involved with safeguarding each adult were asked to respond to questions about their involvement with each adult, along with broader questions about their safeguarding-related activities. This included record-keeping, policies, processes and workforce confidence in applying these in practice.

Most smaller agencies involved responded within the deadline set, however there were some key large agencies who did not return their assessments at all. This affected the depth of assurance and understanding achieved in this audit.

Following feedback from Audit 1, self-assessment forms were created in consultation with the GP Safeguarding Lead to ensure questions were as relevant to Health agencies as to those with Care and Support focus.

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Pen Pictures

Information from agencies nominating adults, plus from Adult Social Care's Liquid Logic system, was collated to form Pen Pictures, giving the background of adults involved and creating context for each safeguarding case.

These Pen Pictures were read out and presented on-screen in the multi-agency audit session. Stock photos of adults of a similar demographic were also included to help 'Make Safeguarding Personal'.

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Adult Feedback

Our Engagement Officer sought to interview all of the adults involved in the audit, or their representatives, to gain insight into their safeguarding experiences.

Three of the seven adults (or their representatives) included the audit agreed to be interviewed by our Engagement Officer. Their feedback offered valuable insight into how those receiving safeguarding perceived its effectiveness.

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The Audit Session

Pen pictures, feedback and self-assessments for all seven adults were collated into a presentation. The session ran for three hours, with three adults being audited in this time. Attendees were shown assessment responses and asked if and how, in each area, safeguarding could have been improved to provide excellence in safeguarding practice.

Engagement from all parties present was welcomed, and experienced safeguarding professionals offered positive suggestions to further improve various aspects of protecting Salford adults.



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Key Initial Considerations

- Assurance of Advanced Directives, Advanced Care Planning and End of Life Care professional confidence and public awareness.
- Develop understanding as to why most adults do not attend own safeguarding meetings, as it is known this often has a positive effect.
- Lead agency being one with most expertise in specialism of each safeguarding case.
- Sharing of information, including mental capacity assessments, to be encouraged between agencies, particularly for adults at risk who are not in a safeguarding process.
- Increased training and support for practitioners working with abusive adults and those who do not wish to live any longer.
- Improved communication with carers and next of kin of safeguarded adults during process.

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Key Themes

- Confidence around Mental capacity / executive functioning for those who self-neglect could be improved.
- Building trust with those who self-neglect takes time, and agencies need to allow for this.
- Gaining early understanding of barriers to adults accepting help or treatment, to try and overcome these before crisis point, makes a real difference.
- Professional confidence in Advanced Directives, and Advanced Care Planning could be improved.
- Communication of safeguarding / MDT outcomes and case closures to agencies involved could be improved.
- Increase awareness and confidence of using Escalation Policies if safeguarding progress stalls.
- Agencies should be encouraged to raise concerns early when spotting self-neglect at home visits.