

Learning brief

Safeguarding Adult Review - Jeff

This Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) explores the final months of Jeff's life. It considers the experience for Jeff of moving from his family home to living in a care home and then admission to hospital. The SAR reviews the responses by agencies to his needs.

Background

Jeff was 75 years of age and had lived in his family home with his brother and his sister, who cared for both Jeff and his brother, for all of his life. Jeff had a number of chronic health needs in addition to which he started to experience some changes in how he functioned, impacting on his gait/mobility and his mood in the late summer of 2019. Dementia Screening in January 2020 found 'no significant decline in cognitive function'.

When the first 'lockdown' due to the pandemic was enforced in March 2020, the Day Service which Jeff had gone to for all for his adult life closed. Jeff struggled, becoming low in mood, eating less and his mobility deteriorated with him having a number of falls and hospital admissions through the summer. Day Service staff went 'above and beyond' offering support to Jeff, his brother Trevor, and Peggy – his sister and main carer.

Further to Jeff's sister seeking support from Adult Social Care, some mobility aids were provided and a care package with daily calls. Both Jeff's sister and staff from the Day Service requested more help for and with Jeff. Following assessment of his needs, during which Jeff stated that he wanted to stay at home, in August 2020 Jeff was admitted into a local care home. Due to the pandemic restrictions Jeff's sister was only allowed to see him through the window and video call. Jeff's health and wellbeing deteriorated significantly, seeing him lose 15kg in weight in 2 months. Sadly, following admission to hospital, Jeff died in November 2020.

Key learning

Person centred planning including transition and end of life

The findings identify a missed opportunity to plan with Jeff and those who knew him well for predictable life transitions and challenges. This missed opportunity meant that there was no contingency plan in place to support Jeff to remain at home and/or have a good transition into 24-hour care when his needs changed and his sister as main carer was in crisis. Jeff was 75 years of age with multiple chronic health conditions and his sister who was his main carer was a similar age with her own health needs - a change in needs was 'predictably unpredictable'. Better joined up working and person-centred approaches would have ensured proactive planning which detailed both proactive and reactive interventions built on and incorporating what was important to and important for Jeff.

Making Safeguarding Personal - 6 Safeguarding Adult Principles: ALWAYS try to step into the person's shoes, to think holistically, considering Physical; Intellectual; Emotional and Social needs (PIES)

The restrictions imposed due to the pandemic undoubtedly had a great impact on Jeff as he saw his whole life routine altered. Not being able to get out to the Day Service, which he loved, or go for meals and play ten pin bowling impacted on his mood and wellbeing. This, along with physical and physiological changes, saw Jeff become more reliant on his sister for care and support for his personal needs. Jeff started to not sleep whilst still living at home, with the result that his sister was completely exhausted. Reaching out for help was a difficult thing for Jeff's sister to do and the outcome of assessment resulting in Jeff's admission to 24-hour care, from which he didn't return home, has understandably impacted greatly on his sister. The opportunity to embed the principles of making safeguarding personal to better plan together with people and families is a key finding from this review. See the whole person, consider all of their needs i.e. Physical, Intellectual, Emotional and Social (PIES), not just the aspect of the person that you are dealing with at the time.

Listen to and hear the person and their carers' voices

Don't make assumptions, if you ask a question, listen to and hear the reply, check out your own and the individual's and carers' understanding.

Be curious and inquisitive

Develop and encourage 'professional curiosity', use compassion and person-centred thinking to seek to understand what is happening with and for the individual and what is important to and for them, what might their actions, silence or changed interaction be telling you?

Communicate effectively, share and seek information

Whilst risk assessment and planning, sharing of information and timely escalation would not necessarily have changed the outcome for Jeff, his experience and that of his sister could have been better, more valuing, respectful and dignified. Better joined-up working/communication with a clear plan in place could have facilitated a more person-centred staff approach and holistic thinking.

Ensure electronic systems use 'flags' to identify vulnerability/multiple chronic health needs and learning disability.