



## Learning Report - David

### What were the circumstances that led to this Safeguarding Adults Review?

The subject of this case is David, who at the time of the review was middle aged. He is a single man living on his own. David has learning disabilities and suffers from a medical condition which can cause fits and epilepsy.

Over an extended numbers of years David was subjected to abuse (physically, sexually and financially) and suffered harassment from persons who were mainly known to him.

From 1993 to the present time David had over 100 contacts with police and there were over 50 crimes recorded where David was the victim.

During the same time period there were 4 safeguarding referrals made and several multi agency discussions.

This culminated in 2017 with David being subjected to a serious assault whilst at his home address. The assault was perpetrated by an associate of David who has subsequently been arrested and convicted of the offence, and sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

### What was the nature of the abuse?

It was clear to the review that over a period of time David was taken advantage of by a number of persons known to him. The risk that these persons presented to David was recognised by agencies at various times and reports or referrals were made.

These concerns did not lead to a coordinated plan to protect David. The action was often thwarted by David's assertion that these persons were his friends and his reluctance therefore to have them prosecuted.

It was clear that the persons had an influence over David that was very difficult for him to overcome.

The nature of the relationships was not always properly understood, and had it been there could have been more recognition that there was a relationship between David and the offender which would have constituted Domestic Abuse. This recognition could have initiated referrals for other support and protection for David.

Learning for professionals	What will help?
<p><b>Mental Capacity Assessments</b></p>	<p><b>Mental Capacity Assessments</b> – Whilst there is an assumption of capacity, professionals should complete a formal assessment of capacity when there is reason to doubt a person's capacity or they are deemed to be making unwise decisions which may pose a risk of significant harm. Any assessment would benefit from a rounded multi-agency approach and could focus on the discrete area of vulnerability causing the risk, in this case, decisions regarding relationships.</p>

<b>Historic Information</b>	All relevant history should be considered when considering referrals and safeguarding concern reports and when assessing risk. Be confident to share information with others agencies, the legal gateways are there and should be used.
<b>Access to services</b>	Where it is available, a clear and agreed diagnosis should be shared across agencies, when it is required to assist in determining the right level of service to support adults at risk.
<b>Risk management</b>	There needs to be a coordinated approach to safeguarding and managing risk with all appropriate agencies involved to ensure the most complete information is available. This should include the smaller voluntary agencies who, in some cases, have extensive case knowledge and ongoing involvement with the person.
<b>Domestic Abuse</b>	<p>Professionals should be aware of the opportunity for Domestic Abuse to take place within all forms of relationships, opposite sex, same sex and non-binary. When supporting persons with a learning disability domestic abuse should be also be considered where the lack of mental capacity is questioned by the professional.</p> <p>There also needs to be more consideration and awareness of what methods might be available to protect victims and manage the behaviour of offenders such as DVDS (Clare’s Law), Anti-social Behaviour Injunctions<sup>1</sup> and initiatives such as the DRIVE<sup>2</sup> project.</p> <p>Make sure you know what is available locally to support victims of domestic abuse particularly those with a learning disability.</p> <p>Ask yourself, if the person is being repeatedly victimised – if they are, act: involve other agencies where appropriate to get the right support and protection.</p> <p>The question at the heart of this review was discussed at the learning event <i>“was David scared of RJ, but unable to end their relationship because of this, and if so how could he have been helped by professionals to curtail this relationship on a permanent basis”</i>.</p> <p>Ask yourself, how able are they to protect themselves from the influences and abuse and what can I do to help?</p>

<sup>1</sup> Sections 1-21 of the Anti-social, Crime and Policing Act 2014

<sup>2</sup> DRIVE Project - a multi-agency response and specialist intervention programme into Domestic Abuse and will aim to target repeat offenders, many with different victims.