

Adult safeguarding for housing staff

Transcript

Reflections from:

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Narrator: Serious case reviews where vulnerable individuals have been seriously harmed, or in some cases died, have highlighted the need for a more integrated approach to interagency working. From frontline staff to executive management, the benefits of integrated working are being seen by those who provide services and crucially, people who use services.

To date, much emphasis has been placed on closer more coordinated working between social care and the NHS, but the role of housing agencies and their staff has also been identified as key.

Imogen Parry - Well there have been a number of deaths of people living in social housing which have been the subject of adult serious case reviews, and those deaths, incidents of abuse and neglect could have been prevented with a more effective safeguarding role by the housing provider.

Elaine Cass - Housing officers need to work very closely with other safeguarding partners such as the police, such as their social care partners

Narrator: Importantly, serious case reviews have identified that housing staff are especially well placed to identify people at risk, sharing information and working jointly with colleagues and other agencies to provide a properly coordinated response.

Elaine Cass - There are so many vulnerable people living in social housing, obviously there is supported housing, there is sheltered housing and all those kinds of things, but

in ordinary needs housing there are huge numbers of older people and people with disabilities who may be vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

Narrator: SCIE, the Social Care Institute for Excellence has produced a guide aimed at frontline housing staff and contractors, housing managers, as well as local authority staff with safeguarding responsibilities.

As well as highlighting opportunities for improved safeguarding in housing, the guide identifies a number of obstacles hindering progress.

Imogen Parry - A common issue is negative attitudes between different groups, between different sectors, different professionals, and sometimes behind those negative attitudes is a lack of understanding of each other's roles, each other's remits, priorities, language and terminology even.

Elaine Cass - And there are a lot of issues around sharing information, in terms of understanding the Data Protection Act, understanding the duty of confidentiality, and being able to share the information that is imperative to keeping people safe.

Imogen Parry - There has been a lot of debate about thresholds, high thresholds, low thresholds for referral, and some housing providers get really confused because the policies in a local area will say 'tell us everything, give us all your concerns' but then the reality is they keep being told 'oh no it doesn't meet our threshold', so they get confused about understanding exactly what they should do and in particular this is a problem if they've got housing stock across several local authority areas.

Narrator: But as the many practice examples referenced within the guide demonstrate, good progress is being made by housing professionals, including awareness campaigns, events and training.

Renny Wodynska - We house some of the most vulnerable adults in society in general needs housing, within the social housing sector. Everyone's got a responsibility and



that's why at Bournville Village Trust we ensure we train every single staff member in safeguarding irrespective of what their role is, it doesn't matter whether they're an electrician, a gas fitter, a carer – they are trained in safeguarding and we also actually train some of our tenants, and we train local residents as well because if communities are aware of the issues we are much more likely to be able to work together.

Narrator: Housing has a key role in safeguarding, and the guide shows how safeguarding will be more effective with collaboration across housing and its partner agencies.

To access this new guide visit the SCIE website at the address shown here.

Renny Wodynska - Because it will never be just the role of social care staff, or just the police, we're all in it together and it is important we all work together and understand the issues, the signs, the symptoms, and what to do.