

# Learning Briefing Safeguarding Adults Review Donna

**Sharing Learning**

Working together to prevent abuse and neglect is a key priority of the East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (EESAB). We do this by sharing learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) to drive improvement in safeguarding practice. All staff and managers are encouraged to discuss and share the briefing, to ensure that the learning outcomes are used to consolidate existing best practice and develop practice where required.

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**Background**

This review was commissioned to explore the circumstances that led to the death of 41-year-old women, who is referred to in this review as ‘Donna’. She was cared for by her daughter. Donna sadly died at home in 2021 from sudden unexplained death in alcohol misuse.

The SAR identified a number of themes including:

* Alcohol misuse and self-neglect
* Mental Capacity assessment in relation to alcohol misuse
* Multi-agency response to risk management and joint working
* Consideration of the needs of a young carer
* Professional curiosity about domestic abuse and neglect
* The use of family support networks
* The impact of Covid-19 on service provision and awareness of self-neglect
* The interface between physical and mental health needs and substance misuse

**Key Findings**

* Lack of co-ordinated, multi-agency response to Donna’s needs and risks
* Opportunities to initiate safeguarding enquiries were not taken
* No clinical mental health service referral for the assessment and treatment of Donna - although Donna’s Mental Capacity was correctly assumed under the Mental Capacity Act, further action could have been considered
* Lack of creativity in seeking support for Donna from family members
* Trauma-informed practice, exploring Donna’s life experiences was not evident
* Under reporting of personal consumption of alcohol

**Good Practice**

* Regular support was provided to Donna by the local Substance Misuse service and their volunteers
* Aids provided to Donna from the Sensory Impairment Team helped to support her sight loss
* The provision of fire safety advice and aids within the home by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service
* Police and Ambulance staff recognised Donna’s self-neglect and the impact it was having on her family
* Children’s Services provided counselling for Donna’s daughter and supported her beyond the age of 18 in her transition to adulthood and living independently

**Key Points for Learning and Reflection**

**Management of risk for adults misusing substances**

* ***Question:*** *Are you aware of/have you used the 11 characteristics from* [*Alcohol* Change’s Analysis](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/publication/learning-from-tragedies-an-analysis-of-alcohol-related-safeguarding-adult-reviews-published-in-2017) *to help manage risk?*

**Alcohol Misuse and self-neglect**

Alcohol misuse is a form of self-neglect when it starts to impact an individual’s health, mental health, wellbeing, family relationships and the safety of themselves and others.

If you think someone is underreporting their alcohol usage, try to talk to them about the effect of the alcohol; asking whether they can recall events and appointments? Consider providing them with a breathalyser for personal use to record an accurate measure of their alcohol intake.

* ***Question****: Have you considered* [raising a safeguarding concern](https://www.eastsussexsab.org.uk/what-is-safeguarding/raise-a-concern/) *when you believe someone is self-neglecting through alcohol misuse?*

**Alcohol dependency and mental capacity**

* ***Questions:*** *Are you familiar with the Mental Capacity act in relation to the* [*effects of alcohol on capacity*](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/fact-sheets/arbd-legal-issues-advance-decision-making)*?*
* *Are you aware of the effect of misuse of alcohol on the function of the* [*brain*](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/fact-sheets/alcohol-related-brain-damage)*?*

**Trauma informed practice**

* ***Question:*** *How do you and your agency take a* [*Trauma informed approach*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice)*?*

**Further reading and resources**

* [Mental Capacity Act Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures](https://www.eastsussexsab.org.uk/documents/east-sussex-mental-capacity-multi-agency-policy-and-procedures/)
* [Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures](https://sussexsafeguardingadults.procedures.org.uk/pkoty/sussex-safeguarding-adults-procedures/adult-safeguarding-and-sharing-information)
* [Sussex Information sharing Guide and Protocol](https://www.eastsussexsab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Sussex-Information-Sharing-Guide-and-Protocol-v2.pdf)
* Self-[Neglect Learning Briefing](https://www.eastsussexsab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Self-Neglect-Learning-Briefing.pdf)
* [Guidance on raising concerns about Abuse and Neglect](https://www.eastsussexsab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Sussex-Safeguarding-Adults-Thresholds-Guidance-Print-Version.pdf)
* [Reporting a Safeguarding Concern](https://www.eastsussexsab.org.uk/what-is-safeguarding/raise-a-concern/)
* [Sussex SAR Protocol](https://www.eastsussexsab.org.uk/documents/sussex-sar-protocol/)
* [Alcohol Related Brain damage Network](https://arbd.net/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=socialmedia&utm_content=sab_eastsussex&utm_campaign=hootsuite_default_campaign_tracking&utm_term=30cf29ef-b416-4d92-978c-159fb982eb46)
* [East Sussex Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy](https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/social-care/providers/health/research/alcohol-harm-reduction)
* A range of multi-agency safeguarding courses, including self-neglect, trauma informed practice and Mental Capacity Act training are available through the [East Sussex Learning Portal](https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/jobs/learning-portal).

If you require further information about the review, please contact:

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