

Safeguarding Adults Review: 'Alison'

1. Alison was in her late fifties and lived with her civil partner. Alison had a long history of substance misuse and continued to use heroin up until the time of her death. Her drug use was considered as a significant contributory factor in her multiple health issues.

Alison was reliant on her partner, a wheelchair user, and carers to support her, and struggled to mobilise from her bed. Alison also smoked around twenty cigarettes a day.

7.

Find out more

- [Read the full review.](#)
- [A carers guide to home fire safety.](#)
- [Using legal powers when working with substance misuse](#)
- [Multi-agency panels in Hammersmith & Fulham](#)

2. There were a number of agencies who had regular contact with Alison, including the care agency and district nurses. Alison's partner Debbie also had a package of care in response to her own health issues. Others struggled to maintain engagement with Alison, who would decline offers of support. A Safeguarding Adults Review was commissioned following Alison's accidental death in December 2021 as a result of a fire in her own home.

3.

This review sought to understand how professionals are able to **balance risk with a person's right to choice and autonomy**, particularly in those cases where a person refuses support.

4.

Multi-agency communication is key to managing the risks for any case. We as professionals must ensure that we are being proactive in sharing what we know with relevant agencies; different practitioners often receive different information, and sharing these perspectives allows us to see the full picture. Having an awareness of what other partners can provide to mitigate risks also helps us to plan and share the risk.

5.

Whilst Alison was deemed to have capacity to make decisions in relation to her care and support needs, the review has led to reflection on how we understand **fluctuating capacity and executive functioning**. This is particularly pertinent when a person is known to be living with addiction.

6.

This review has highlighted gaps in our **understanding of fire risk**. This includes suitable training provision and ensuring that we have robust risk assessments, which the SAB is considering as part of its action plan. As practitioners we also need to consider what we can do to mitigate risk, including consideration of use of available technology.

How to use this document

7-minute Briefings are a learning tool developed to help us focus on the key issues around a particular theme, current issue or from a learning review (such as a Safeguarding Adults Review).

How can you use this tool?



Discuss the briefing in a team meeting and reflect on how this could influence your approach to future cases. Consider having this as a standing agenda item.



Use the briefing in supervision; can a review of briefings help identify useful links to practice?



Schedule time to look through the links to further information to expand your knowledge on the subject.



Can you incorporate the briefing into relevant training offers or share on your organisation's website/intranet?

What next?

If you have used this briefing, please take time to complete the Lessons Learnt Template.

This will help the H&F Safeguarding Adults Board gather feedback on how useful the briefings are to those using them, and how the learning has enhanced their practice.

Taking note of your reflections and action points will also give you the opportunity to reflect back on the learning at a future supervision or teams meeting to see how practice has changed or if there has been any positive changes.

Remember: Incorporating this tool into your training and reflection counts towards your Continuing Professional Development.

[Complete the short feedback form here.](#)