



Spotlight on...

Strengthening Our Response to Highly Vulnerable Dependent Drinkers

Learning from SAR Simon: Strengthening Our Response to Highly Vulnerable Dependent Drinkers

Following the publication of the Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) of Simon, partners are encouraged to revisit two key national resources that support more effective safeguarding responses for highly vulnerable, dependent drinkers: *The Blue Light Manual* and *How to use legal powers to safeguard highly vulnerable dependent drinkers in England and Wales (2021)*.

The SAR highlighted familiar themes seen in many reviews nationally: chronic alcohol dependency, self-neglect, repeated non-engagement with services, and assumptions about “lifestyle choice”, alongside uncertainty about when and how to intervene. These challenges are not unique – and crucially, they are not inevitable.

The Blue Light Manual, developed by Alcohol Change UK, challenges the idea that “nothing can be done” when individuals are seen as resistant or unmotivated. It promotes a multi-agency, harm-reduction and assertive outreach approach, helping professionals better understand why engagement may be difficult and how risk can still be managed, even where change is slow.

Alongside this, the Legal Powers guidance (2021) provides practical support for practitioners who are unsure how to use existing legislation lawfully, proportionately and confidently. It clarifies how the Care Act, Mental Capacity Act and Mental Health Act (among other powers) can be applied to safeguard adults whose alcohol dependency places them at serious risk – including where self-neglect is present and capacity is complex or fluctuating.

Both resources respond directly to learning from SARs, including cases like Simon’s. Together, they support a shift from passive acceptance of risk towards professional curiosity, shared responsibility and robust safeguarding practice.

SAB partners are encouraged to:

- Refresh their understanding of the Blue Light approach
- Increase confidence in using legal powers where appropriate
- Challenge assumptions about “choice” and capacity
- Embed learning into supervision, training and case discussions

Using these tools consistently can help prevent future tragedies and ensure that the most vulnerable adults receive the protection, care and dignity they deserve.

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The Health Impact of Domestic Abuse on Families

Key learning from a recent health webinar

A recent multi-agency webinar explored the significant and often hidden health impacts of domestic abuse (DA) on adults, children and families, highlighting the crucial role health services play in identification, response and prevention.

Using a *Think Family* approach, the session illustrated how domestic abuse can present through complex and repeated health needs, often without an initial disclosure. Health settings were described as a *unique window of opportunity* — trusted, confidential environments where patterns of physical and mental health presentations can signal underlying abuse.

A case study, *Lena*, demonstrated how domestic abuse may remain undisclosed for many years due to fear, shame, dependency, cultural pressures, and concern about the impact on children. Despite regular contact with health professionals, Lena only disclosed abuse during a mental health assessment, reinforcing the importance of routine enquiry, sensitive questioning and creating safe opportunities to talk.

The webinar highlighted the wide-ranging health consequences of domestic abuse for adults, including physical injuries, chronic conditions, gynaecological problems, mental ill health, substance use and increased risk during pregnancy. Particular attention was given to non-fatal strangulation, now recognised as a serious and potentially lethal form of abuse with significant short- and long-term health risks.

Clear links were also explored between domestic abuse, mental health and suicide risk. Evidence shows survivors are significantly more likely to experience depression, anxiety, PTSD and suicidal thoughts, with domestic abuse featuring in a high proportion of suicide attempts by women. Long-term trauma may persist long after the abuse has ended and may not always be recognised.

The impact on children and young people was also a central theme. Exposure to domestic abuse can affect babies from pregnancy onwards, with risks including low birth weight, developmental delay and emotional dysregulation. As children grow, this may present as anxiety, behavioural difficulties, sleep disturbance, poor school engagement, physical symptoms and self-blame. Adolescents exposed to domestic abuse may be at increased risk of self-harm, exploitation and future abusive relationships.

The session also explored how domestic abuse can affect parenting capacity, particularly where the non-abusing parent is coping with trauma, isolation and economic abuse. This reinforces the importance of whole-family responses, information sharing and partnership working.

Key messages for practice included:

- Ask routinely about domestic abuse when safe to do so
- Think family and consider cumulative harm
- Share information proportionately and appropriately
- Work in a trauma-informed, strengths-based way
- Look after practitioner wellbeing and use supervision

The webinar reinforced that domestic abuse is a safeguarding and public health issue, and that early identification, joined-up working and compassionate responses can significantly improve outcomes for adults and children alike.

Scam Alert!

Equipment Scams



We have been made aware that at least one resident has received a fraudulent telephone call from an individual impersonating a member of Provide Equipment Hub (PEH) staff. The caller requested payment in connection with equipment that had been delivered.

Provide Equipment Hub does not, and never will, request payment directly from residents for delivered equipment. Any such request should be treated as fraudulent.

We ask our partners to ensure that their clients understand that the equipment is free of charge and if anyone requests payment then they should report this immediately.



Modern Slavery

Modern slavery is often hidden in plain sight and closely linked to other vulnerabilities – it is everyone's safeguarding responsibility to spot the signs early and act.

Modern slavery and exploitation rarely occur in isolation. Evidence shows that victims – including children and young people, particularly those with insecure immigration status – often experience multiple overlapping vulnerabilities, such as mental ill-health, poverty, substance misuse and insecure housing. These factors can increase risk and make exploitation harder to identify.

Local learning highlights the importance of professional curiosity, awareness and confidence across all services to recognise indicators of modern slavery and take appropriate action. Immigration status must never be a barrier to safeguarding – it does not affect entitlement to protection or referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

The key message for partners is clear:

- Spot the signs of exploitation and modern slavery
- Act early and make timely NRM referrals where concerns are identified
- Work together across agencies, sharing information proportionately
- Ensure children and young people with immigration needs are supported to access specialist advice at the earliest opportunity

Raising awareness, strengthening training and using data to understand local risk patterns are essential to improving identification, safeguarding responses and outcomes for those most at risk.

Training and resources



Safeguarding Adolescents in London (SAIL) – SAIL is a [new digital one-stop shop](#) for professionals safeguarding adolescents in London. Developed with the London Safeguarding Children Partnership, SAIL offers guidance, tools, and best practice resources.

Join the SAIL Community of Practice to collaborate, share knowledge, and improve practice.



New guide for parents and carers on managing children's digital lives –

The Children's Commissioner has published a new guide designed to support parents and carers in navigating children's digital lives. [What I Wish My Parents or Carers Knew](#) brings together young people's own views on what helps them feel safe, respected and supported online. The guide offers practical advice on building trust, having open conversations about online experiences, and setting boundaries that prioritise children's wellbeing. It also includes up-to-date information on social media, gaming, online risks

and digital resilience, helping adults feel more confident in supporting children as they grow and explore online. The guide includes activities for children, and will be helpful to parents, carers, and professionals alike.



Consultation: Impact of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The House of Lords Committee on the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has launched a **call for evidence** to examine the impact and effectiveness of the Act since it came into force. The inquiry is seeking views on issues including how the Act is working in practice, the statutory definition of domestic abuse, recognition of children as victims, multi-agency working, the role of local authorities, and the experiences of victims and frontline services. Individuals and organisations, including those with lived experience, are encouraged to submit evidence.

The deadline for submissions is **10.00am on Monday 20 April 2026**.

[Find out more and respond to the consultation](#)

Update from SAB Executive

The SAB Executive met in January 2026 and covered updates on safeguarding adult reviews, sub-group activities, partner reports, and strategic planning including the upcoming Annual General Meeting and organisational changes' potential impact on safeguarding.

Quality and Improvement Sub-group



The Quality and Improvement Sub-group met in March 2026. It continued its focus on data, assurance and practice improvement across the partnership. Updates were provided on the performance dashboard, the Quality Assurance Framework, and partner self-assessments. The group discussed patterns in safeguarding referrals, including conversion rates from concern to enquiry, demographic trends, and differences between boroughs.

Special focus was placed on safeguarding referrals related to mental health, as partners examined how factors such as thresholds, consent, executive functioning, and frontline decision-making influence the quality of referrals.

Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) Sub-group



The SAR Sub-group met in January and March 2026. The meeting focused primarily on the review and discussion of the Hope SAR report, addressing systemic issues in safeguarding practices, alongside updates on other SAR cases and administrative matters.

You can access via the website the [Published reports](#) and [7-minute briefings](#) for all SARs.

Richmond and Wandsworth Community Forums



The Richmond and Wandsworth Community Forums continue to play a key role in strengthening links with voluntary, community and faith organisations. Recent discussions focused on scams and fraud awareness, including practical advice for residents and professionals, reporting routes, and opportunities for community-based awareness sessions delivered in partnership with police and Trading Standards.

The Forums also explored how safeguarding data can be made more meaningful for community partners, with agreement to develop clearer narrative summaries alongside dashboards. Ongoing themes included feedback to referrers, supporting confidence to raise concerns, and ensuring safeguarding remains accessible to community organisations who may be working with people below statutory thresholds but experiencing significant vulnerability.

