

# TIPS FOR HOUSING STAFF TO HELP ADDRESS COMMON PARTNERSHIP WORKING ISSUES

By Imogen Parry

## 1. Overcoming information sharing problems

- Know about and use all relevant multi-agency information sharing protocols
- Set up multi-agency meetings to improve these protocols and address problems
- Increase awareness and understanding of role of housing staff
- Ensure that decisions are being taken at the right level within your organisation and within Adult Social Care

## 2. Addressing issues regarding thresholds

- If told that the alert or referral cannot be accepted (as it doesn't meet their referral threshold or their definitions of abuse or vulnerable adult/adult at risk), consider:
  - checking what their policy says on referral criteria and definitions. Is their interpretation open for discussion?
  - reconsidering the facts of your referral – have you left something out and/or underestimated/downplayed the risks?
  - ask if they have a mechanism for gathering information on apparently low level cases, especially where there is an emerging pattern of referrals (quote Pilkington, Hayter)
  - asking for advice on how to handle the situation yourself or via other agencies
- If the case is not accepted and investigated, refer again if circumstances and risks change.
- Ensure that decisions are being taken at the right level within your own organisation and within ASC

## 3. Addressing problems relating to assessment, diagnosis, choice

If you are told 'it is the person's choice' (eg to refuse services/intervention/proceed with prosecution) or that 'they have capacity and the right to make unwise decisions' consider:

- Was the person coerced?
- Is anyone else at risk?
- Has there been a proper and recent capacity assessment on this issue?
- Has the person been accurately and recently diagnosed (eg learning disability or mental health issues) and risk assessed? Particular attention should be paid if:
  - their circumstances have deteriorated and/or
  - their needs have increased or are very complex and/or
  - there is a sudden change in behaviour ie 'an escalating problem'

Ensure that decisions are being taken at the right level within your own organisation and within ASC.

# TIPS FOR HOUSING STAFF IN RELATION TO THE MENTAL CAPACITY ACT 2005

By Sue Garwood

1. Be aware of capacity issues, apply the Act's principles and have regard for the Code of Practice
2. Notice clues and signs which might warrant closer scrutiny
3. Undertake a test of capacity within your remit, consulting internally or externally as necessary
4. Make referrals for safeguarding issues, capacity assessment or care and support needs and be assertive on behalf of individual if necessary
5. Have the confidence to challenge if you don't agree with what others say or do in response
6. Be aware who might have the authority to decide what for your customers
7. Keep a record of any advance decisions or LPAs if you're in a position to know
8. Have the confidence to assert your right to a voice if a best interests decision needs to be made on behalf of a customer you know well
9. Keep records of what you do and why if you have concerns about capacity, vulnerability or safeguarding