



Case Study – Protection

The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust (SaTH) is the main provider of acute hospital services for Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and parts of Mid Wales.

“Joan” is in her 80’s and arrived in the emergency department with vertigo and anxiety having phoned for an ambulance. She is the carer for her husband who has a diagnosis of vascular dementia.

During a series of tests at SaTH Joan disclosed that as the carer for her husband:

- she felt unable to cope as he was becoming increasingly difficult to live with
- she experienced verbal abuse, as he was verbally aggressive towards her
- he followed her around the house with his fists clenched threatening to punch her
- Joan had not been hit but was afraid of him as he could become bad tempered and swore at her a lot
- Joan was fed up, tired and felt overwhelmed
- Joan had thought of moving out and getting her own flat but was anxious about what would happen
- since his diagnosis of dementia his behaviour was getting worse

Joan consented to a safeguarding adults concern being raised with First Point of Contact and a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) referral made. As Joan was now medically fit she felt she needed to return home as soon as possible as neighbours were keeping an eye on her husband. She therefore left the department despite the staff suggesting that she remain. Joan felt she had to go back home now but agreed to allow staff to work with her some more.

Actions:

- The Emergency Department (ED) Consultant contacted the SaTH Safeguarding Lead to discuss the situation and the immediate concern that the patient was at risk of domestic abuse and her husband needed more help with his dementia.
- The ED Consultant agreed to share information to potentially prevent further distress or harm to the patient by speaking to the GP.
- The Community Mental Health Team were contacted and an assessment arranged on the same day for the Joan’s husband as his condition was getting worse
- A decision was made that the husband’s dementia meant he was vulnerable and he needed further assessment and treatment in Hospital using the Mental Health Act. This would allow all staff to make plans for more care and support when he went home.