**Joint Working Good Practice**

Recent case reviews have found that a lack of understanding of policy, procedure and guidance resulted in a culture of informal agreements, misunderstandings and tension between teams and agencies.

High quality procedures support good practice, providing realistic and practical guidelines and clarity about how professionals work together and across agencies. They need to be well promoted, communicated to staff and understood.

In the case of Mr I, informal agreements were in place between teams and practice was sometimes at odds with the policies, procedures and guidance that were in place.

[Mr I Safeguarding Adult Review Briefing Note.pdf](http://www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk/media/1241/mr-i-safeguarding-adult-review-briefing-note.pdf)

## [Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures](http://www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk/practitioners/berkshire-safeguarding-adults-policy-and-procedures/)

## *Information sharing*

One of the main barriers to effective joint working is misunderstandings among professionals about what information can be shared.

* Safeguarding decisions are based on coordinated, sufficient, accurate and timely intelligence.
* Effective communication and information sharing enables an accurate assessment of risk and need.
* Better understanding between professions fosters greater confidence to share information.

The [Information Sharing Protocol](http://www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk/media/1084/wob-sab-information-sharing-protocol.pdf) covers all of the agencies that form the West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board. It provides a framework for making decisions about sharing information in order to help protect adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect. See also the Government's [Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing](http://www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk/media/1139/information-sharing-posters.pdf).

## *Being open to challenge and improvement*

Frequent scrutiny can drive improvement of service and can come from a range of sources:

* Between agencies within a local area
* Between practitioners
* From the Safeguarding Adults Board
* Between different local authorities
* From external bodies.

## *Management of Mental Health Crisis Interagency Partnership Agreement*

This agreement between Thames Valley Police, Health and Social Care agencies supports joint working across organisations to ensure that people who present to the Police while experiencing a mental ill health crisis are supported and managed in the most appropriate way by the most appropriate agency.

It aims to ensure that while working in partnership for the benefit of the person at risk, each organisation is considerate and respectful of the responsibilities of the other and utilises each other‘s resources in the most appropriate way.

It encourages appropriate sharing of information and to ensure that information shared is for a justifiable purpose.

[Mental Health Crisis Interagency Joint Working Protocol](http://www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk/media/1199/mental-health-crisis-interagency-joint-working-protocol-april-2015.pdf)

## Checklist for joint working

* Identified lead worker
* Shared approach to safeguarding
* Joint policies and procedures
* Clear information sharing protocol
* Opportunities for discussion
* Transparent lines of communication
* Transparent decision-making processes
* Clearly defined structures, roles and responsibilities
* Opportunities for joint training
* Understanding the terminology used
* Recognising individual skills and expertise
* Providing feedback to the person who raised a concern
* Being open to challenge

## *Training and Development*

Joint training and development activities are designed to underpin and promote joint working between agencies and teams.

## [See the Practitioners Workforce Development page on the Board's website](http://www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk/practitioners/workforce-development/)

The [Board’s Directory](http://www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk/board-members/) gives contact details for key safeguarding personnel in the West of Berkshire.