Self Neglect
When People Refuse Help

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So what is Self Neglect Care Act

Where someone demonstrates lack of care for themselves and or their environment and refuses assistance or services. It can be long-standing or recent.
Referral

- Member of the public has called in to say there is an ‘old lady’ living in a camper van in their street and she is not looking after herself.
- They think she is mentally ill and can be very difficult.
- She needs to be taken into care.
- She is causing problems in the street.
- Something needs to be done.
Lady in the Van synopsis

- *The Lady in the Van* tells the true story of Alan Bennett’s strained friendship with Miss Mary Shepherd, an eccentric homeless woman whom Bennett befriended in the 1970s before allowing her temporarily to park her Bedford van in the driveway of his Camden home. She stayed there for 15 years. As the story develops Bennett learns that Miss Shepherd is really Margaret Fairchild, a former gifted pianist. She had tried to become a nun, was committed to an institution by her brother, escaped, had an accident when her van was hit by a motorcyclist for which she believed herself to blame, and thereafter lived in fear of arrest.
Lady in the Van

Discussion Points

- Is she self-neglecting? If so why?
- Does this need an immediate response?
- If so, by whom?
Fluffy the Cat
"It is hard to imagine a more depressing and inexcusable state of affairs. A defenceless 91 year old gentleman in the final years of his life was removed from his home of 50 years and detained in a locked dementia unit against his wishes. Had it not been for the alarm raised by his friend RF he may have been condemned to remain there for the remainder of his days. There can be no doubt that ECC's practice was substandard. They failed to recognise the weakness of their own case and the strength of the case against them. They appeared unprepared to countenance any view contrary to their own. They maintained their resolute opposition to P returning to his home until the last possible moment. In my judgment the conduct of ECC has been reprehensible. The very sad and disturbing consequences for P cannot be ignored."
Refusing? How to approach this

At the heart of good self-neglect professional practice is a complex interaction between knowing, being and doing
Refusing? How to approach this

Knowing

You are unlikely to be able to build a trusting relationship and achieve a positive outcome unless you can gain an understanding of the adult’s experience of self-neglect from their point of view.

How could this be achieved in practice?
Refusing? How to approach this

Being

Being, in the sense of showing personal and professional qualities of respect, empathy, honesty and reliability, care, being present, staying alongside and keeping company.

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Doing

Doing, in the sense of balancing hands-off and hands-on approaches, seeking the tiny element of latitude for agreement, doing things that will make a small difference while negotiating for the bigger things, and deciding with others when enforced intervention becomes necessary.
Refusing? How to approach this

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building rapport</th>
<th>Taking the time to get to know the person; refusing to be shocked.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moving from rapport to relationship</td>
<td>Avoiding knee-jerk responses to self-neglect; talking through with the person their interests, history and stories.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding the right tone</td>
<td>Being honest while also being non-judgemental; expressing concern about self-neglect, while separating the person from the behaviour.</td>
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# Refusing? How to approach this

<table>
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<th>Going at the individual’s pace</th>
<th>Moving slowly and not forcing things; showing concern and interest through continued involvement over time.</th>
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<td>Agreeing a plan</td>
<td>Making clear what is going to happen; planning might start by way of agreeing a weekly visit and developing from there.</td>
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<td>Finding something that motivates the individual</td>
<td>Linking to the person’s interests (for example, if the person is hoarding because they hate waste, link them into recycling initiatives).</td>
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## Refusing? How to approach this

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<th>Starting with practicalities</th>
<th>Providing small practical help at the outset may help build trust.</th>
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<td>Bartering</td>
<td>Linking practical help to another element of agreement (for example, ‘If I can replace your heater, would you go to see the doctor?’).</td>
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<td>Focusing on what can be agreed</td>
<td>Finding something to be the basis of initial agreement, which can be built on later.</td>
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<td>Keeping company</td>
<td>Being available and spending time to build up trust.</td>
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Refusing? How to approach this

Straight talking
Being honest about potential consequences.

Finding the right person
Working with someone who is well placed to get engagement - another professional or a member of the person’s network.
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY WORKING FLOW CHART

Case Work
- Single or multiple agency involvement with an individual with complex or high risk presentation.
  - Perceived unmanaged

Use existing mechanisms where appropriate
- CPA, MARAC
- MAPPA, Channel
- Care Act Review
- Safeguarding Professionals meeting
- Local high risk meetings

Other agencies
- Refer as appropriate to other agencies for specialist engagement

Non agreement or conflict re organisational involvement agreement
- Escalation process to named senior accountable person within each organisation
“The state is servant not master”

Lord Justice Munby
A Local Authority V A