

Multi-agency Versus Single Agency Approaches

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Introduction

As with any aspect of our policy and procedures, the chosen approach to adult safeguarding should be based on the principles of making safeguarding personal, proportionality and optimising the inclusion of the very people we are seeking to support. The section below defines possible courses of action - but is not prescriptive and is not meant to undermine or restrict professional judgment.

Whilst our overarching policy and procedures are multi-agency – the approach taken in case work may require the input of one agency – or different agencies to play their part.

These approaches are not alternatives to our policy and procedures for safeguarding adults, they are approaches that fit within the rhythms of good safeguarding practice, and in carrying out enquiries.

Multi-Agency Approach

“Establishing a multi-agency approach to safeguarding is complex and does not occur automatically. Rather, the transition to collaborative practices needs to be planned, with agreed practices and processes implemented from the beginning and reviewed regularly”.
([Journal for Adult Protection, Nov 2019](#))

Multi-agency cooperation & partnership working can be vital:

1. For effective risk assessment.
2. To provide the necessary range of help, support, advice, and oversight when it is needed.
3. To reduce the likelihood of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or harm from reoccurring.

A multi-agency approach involves more than one agency. This can range from 2 or more agencies to play their part, depending on the nature and scope of the work required, or in relation to any *enquiries*.

A multi-agency approach can also be adopted when there are several enquiries or activities to be made.

A multi-agency approach is co-operative and collaborative in its nature. Each agency or partner can bring their skills, experience, professionalism, curiosity, and challenge; as well as relevant information and case histories to provide the best possible solution to more complex safeguarding scenarios.

Analogy: *A head chef, sommelier, front of house manager and waiting staff are core components of a team in a successful restaurant, complementing the roles of one another, with the shared aim delivering the best customer experience.*

The waiter is not a chef, and not responsible for pairing the wines, nor is the head chef serving tables directly – each component partner plays their own role.

Or to take the example further, we are putting our skills and ingredients to make a refined salad, not blend the ingredients into a soup.

Additionally, by putting our collective safeguarding lenses together, we may be able to see a clearer picture of what is going on – and the range of solutions that may be available to the person.



***Example:** Mr and Mrs Granville have been married for 60 years, and Mr Granville (86) was diagnosed with progressive dementia 10 years ago. Mrs Granville has been physically assaulted by Mr Granville and believes this to be out of his usual character. She attributes his behaviours to his illness and wants her husband to have better support at home. In this scenario it is likely that a number of agencies may have a role to play – Safeguarding Adult Team (SAT), Jersey Domestic Abuse service (JDAS), Adult Social Care Team (ASCT), Older Adults Mental Health (OAMH), General Practitioner (GP), Police Protection Unit (PPU), advocacy and service providers. Therefore, in this scenario, the work undertaken, and relevant enquiries will need to be multifaceted rather than singularly focused, with each agency playing its part.*

Benefits of joint working
For organisations:

Organisational benefits of joint working

Access to wider range of options to meet people's needs

More robust decision making

Professional courtesy and challenge enhanced

Fostering respect for other's roles and responsibilities

Speed and efficiency in implementing plans

For people and their carers:



Also please see [Team Around the Person](#).

Single-Agency Approach

As the name suggests, single-agency approaches involve one agency. This may be a statutory agency but could also be another agency requested by the lead agency to make any further enquiries or safeguarding plans. For example: a care establishment addressing an employee related safeguarding matter, or a ward manager carrying out a route cause analysis.

A single agency approach is likely to be appropriate when it is unnecessary, disproportionate, or overly oppressive to involve multiple agency partners, or put another way, when the person's outcomes can be met in the most expedient way.

The single agency or multiagency approaches are not inflexible. Depending on the information gathered by the one agency it may then be deemed necessary to involve multi-agency partners.

Team Around the Person Approach

Stopping the experiences of ping-pong between agencies.



The team around the person is well established in children's social care – early help. The guiding principles can be considered in relation to adult safeguarding enquiries, and the monitoring of safeguarding plans.

The team around the person approach avoids the *revolving door* nature of case closures, or people being passed off between agencies.

The team around the person approach promotes a culture of collective responsibility, persistent involvement, **professional curiosity**, and genuine interest in the person's circumstances.

The 'team' identifies the needs and risks and is cognisant of the desired outcomes of the person.

The team, in partnership with the person agree a shared plan with clear roles, responsibilities, actions, and timescales, including next steps and contingencies if risks increase.

This approach **can be effective** in cases of self-neglect, or in cases where the person needs regular safeguarding input, is at risk of repeat victimisation, or requires regularised monitoring and review. Therefore, the case is likely to remain open – to allow for slower stream progress and consistency of worker/team involvement.

There remains a principle need to maintain collective oversight. Each member of **the team retains their own (agency) responsibility** to maintain engagement and continuity to the person; and to provide support to team members alike. A lead officer may be appointed – to maintain the focus of the group.

A new adult safeguarding law for Jersey is in policy development – which, subject to various agreement could be enacted in 2025. The law may and is likely to include a 'duty to cooperate between safeguarding partners.' This move to cooperation should help smooth access to a wide range of services and ensure they are playing their full part in safeguarding our community.

