



# SELF-NEGLECT STRATEGY

## What this means in Practice

### WHAT IS THIS STRATEGY ABOUT?

This strategy sets out how everyone in Swindon works together to support adults who self-neglect.

It is based on:

- What people with lived experience told us
- What practitioners told us
- Learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)
- Compassionate, trauma-informed practice

**KEY MESSAGE:** Self-neglect is not a lifestyle choice. It is often linked to trauma, mental ill-health, addiction, and loss of confidence or self-worth.

### WHAT DOES SELF-NEGLECT MEAN?

Self-neglect is when an adult:

- Struggles to look after their personal care, health or home
- Lives in unsafe or unhealthy conditions (including hoarding)
- Finds it hard to avoid harm
- Declines support that could reduce risk

People may have capacity but still struggle to make changes because of trauma, addiction or difficulties with executive functioning

### THE FOUR PRIORITIES

#### 1. PEOPLE - ALWAYS WORK WITH PEOPLE

##### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE

- Build trust and relationships over time
- Listen to what matters to the person
- Take small steps at the adult's pace
- Do not dismiss risks as a 'choice'

##### WHAT MANAGERS SHOULD EXPECT

- Clear evidence of engagement and persistence
- Capacity assessments that consider executive functioning
- Person-centred plans and strengths-based approaches

### THE FOUR PRIORITIES

#### 2. PREVENTION - ACT EARLY TO REDUCE RISK

##### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE

- Spot early signs of self-neglect
- Respond before crisis point
- Use early intervention and prevention tools
- Include home fire risk awareness where relevant

##### WHAT MANAGERS SHOULD EXPECT

- Early conversations and referrals
- Use of Welfare and Safety Plans
- Prevention recorded in casework and supervision

### THE FOUR PRIORITIES

#### 3. PARTNERSHIP - WORK AS ONE SYSTEM

##### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE

- Share information openly and lawfully
- Agree a lead professional
- Hold regular multi-agency discussions for complex cases
- Escalate concerns if risks persist

##### WHAT MANAGERS SHOULD EXPECT

- Clear roles and shared decision-making
- Recorded rationales for decisions
- Use of multi-agency meetings and escalation routes

### THE FOUR PRIORITIES

#### 4. PRACTICE - SUPPORT GOOD PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

##### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE

- Be professionally curious
- Balance rights, risks and duties
- Use policies, guidance and learning from SARs
- Keep trying – don't walk away from difficulty

##### WHAT MANAGERS SHOULD EXPECT

- Reflective supervision that challenges drift
- Clear oversight of high-risk cases
- Learning from audits, reviews and data

### WHAT PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE TOLD US

- "Don't judge me"
- "Listen to me – don't rush me"
- "Do what you say you will do"
- "Quick fixes don't work"
- "This did not happen overnight"

**KEY MESSAGE:** Relationships, time and trust make the biggest difference.

### OUR AMBITION FOR SWINDON

We want Swindon to be a place where:

- People who self-neglect feel supported, not judged
- People are at the centre of decisions about their lives
- Services work together, not in silos
- Practitioners are supported and supervised to do this complex work well

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

#### If you are a practitioner?

- Be curious, patient and persistent
- Record what matters to the person
- Use supervision – you are not expected to manage this alone

#### If you are a manager

- Make sure staff have time and support
- Challenge normalisation of risk
- Ensure oversight, learning and escalation

**Key Takeaway: Always Care.** Self-neglect is complex, long-term work. Success is measured not just by risk reduction, but by how safely, respectfully and consistently we walk alongside people.

For full guidance, policies and tools, refer to the Swindon Safeguarding Partnership [Self-Neglect resources](#).