

Changing relationships

Beryl developed Alzheimer's disease when she was 74. She had been married for 50 years by then and she and her husband Bert had always been so happy. As her health deteriorated, Bert found it increasingly hard to cope. Eventually, after two years, and very reluctantly, he asked that she should be moved to a nursing home. Bert visited every day and took Beryl out for lunch every Sunday. Bert still lived in the home that they had shared all their married life.

Beryl deteriorated to the point where she did not recognise Bert or anyone else. She was incontinent,

could not feed herself and required all her care needs to be met by the carers.

Bert's feelings for Beryl had not changed and he had spoken before about them having a full sexual relationship, even after Beryl's diagnosis and up until she moved to the care home. He had also spoken about how he missed that intimacy. One Sunday, Bert brought Beryl back and mentioned to staff that there had been sexual intimacy that afternoon between himself and Beryl because he just loved her so much and missed that side of the relationship.

Check your knowledge

- 1 Why is what happened to Beryl abuse if she is still married to Bert?
- 2 Why might Bert think that he has not done anything wrong by having sexual intercourse with Beryl?
- 3 Why is it important that all incidents of concern are investigated by the appropriate professionals?
- 4 What does your manager need to consider before referring the matter to the police?

Baby P

Peter Connelly, known as Baby P, died in 2007 in Haringey, London, aged 17 months. At autopsy, he was found to have swallowed one of his teeth after being punched in the face, he had a broken back, broken ribs and mutilated finger tips. His mother's boyfriend was found guilty of causing his death. The family were known to social services and had made numerous visits to healthcare professionals, where injuries and incidents of suspected abuse were noticed.

Peter's death led to a Serious Case Review as failings had been identified in the practice of the social workers, their managers and the medical professionals directly involved in Baby P's care.

Check your knowledge

- 1** How did the healthcare professionals involved in this case fail in their duty of care to Peter Connelly?
- 2** Why is it important to ask specific and directed questions of the carers and relatives of service users with regard to their care, if the service user cannot speak for themselves?
- 3** What should you do if relatives refuse to answer your questions or become hostile?
- 4** Why is it important to follow up the actions on concerns that you have reported?
- 5** What should you do if you feel that the parents or carers of your service user are trying to prevent you from doing your job competently or efficiently?

Mrs Richardson



Mrs Richardson is 78 and becoming increasingly frail. She lives with her daughter in a two bedroom flat on the tenth floor of a tower block. As her daughter does not work and Mrs Richardson's friends have moved away or died, they have very few visitors. Usually, they stay together and keep each other company.

Mrs Richardson likes getting dressed up, even if she is not going anywhere.

When her daughter went into hospital, a homecare worker was sent to help Mrs Richardson with her basic needs. The care worker said that, as she was not going anywhere, then there was no point 'getting all dolled up' and that all that was needed was a change of nightdress so that she would feel fresher.

Check your knowledge

- 6 Why has the care worker been neglectful? Why should Mrs Richardson complain?
- 7 What support will Mrs Richardson need to make a complaint?
- 8 Why is it important to maintain a service user's dignity and respect their choices?
- 9 What do you need to consider when delivering personal care?