

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

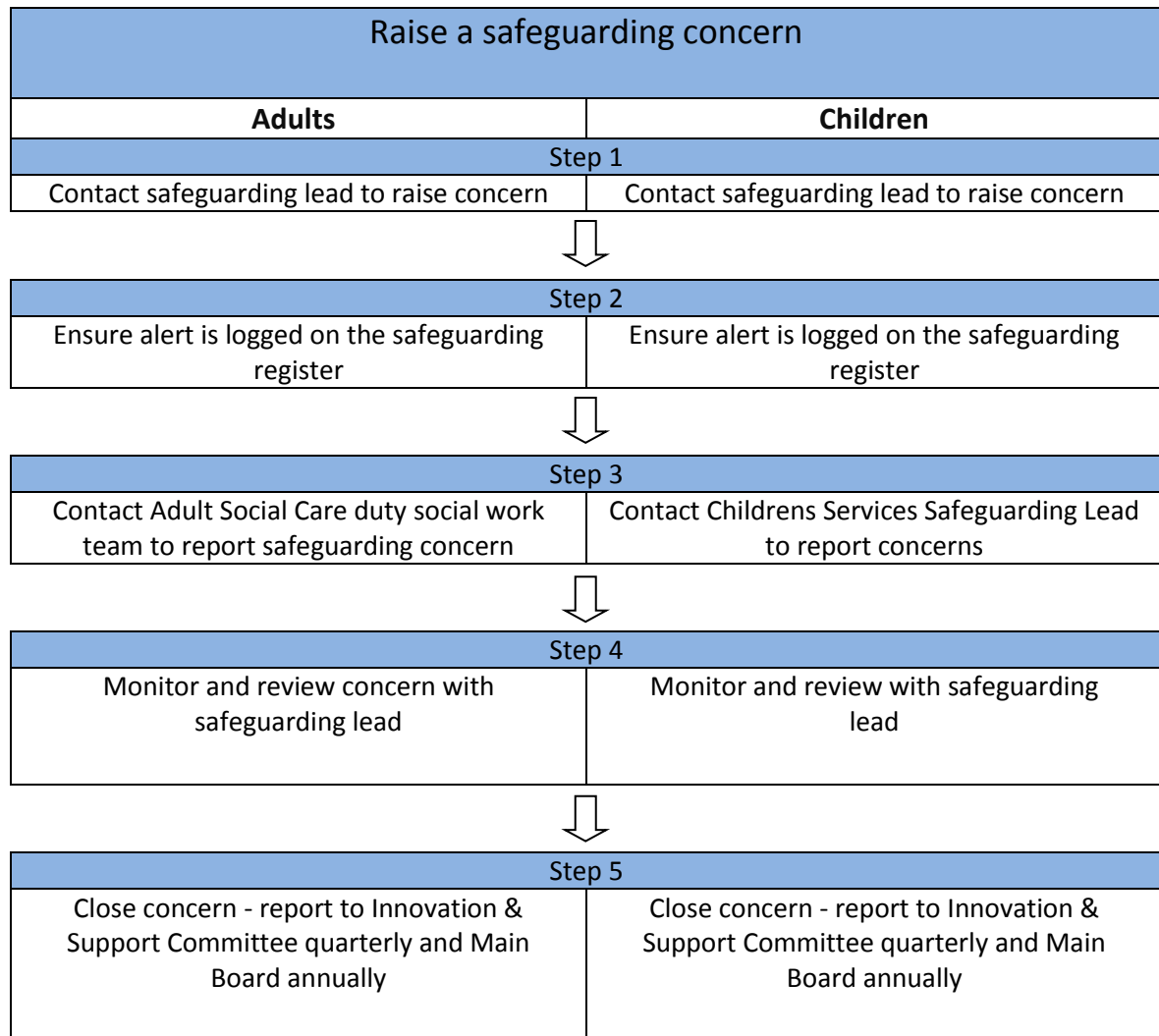
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Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

1. Safeguarding Flowchart Adults



2. Definitions of Abuse (Adult)

Those who need safeguarding help are often elderly and frail, living on their own in the community, or without much family support in care homes. They are often people with physical or learning disabilities and people with mental health needs at risk of suffering harm both in institutions and in the community.

Safeguarding encompasses six key concepts: empowerment, protection, prevention, proportionate responses, partnership and accountability. Social care organisations play an important role in the protection of members of the public from harm and are responsible for ensuring that services and support are delivered in ways that are high quality and safe.

What is adult abuse

Abuse is a violation of a person's human and civil rights by any other person. Abuse can take many forms which are described below:

Access for Adult Safeguarding procedures is for anyone who is not in a position to take care of their own needs or remain safe for short or prolonged periods of time.

Significant harm may include ill treatment, the impairment of, or an unavoidable deterioration in physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

Abuse may consist of a single or repeated act. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial, emotional or sexual transaction to which he or she has not or cannot consent fully. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of the person subjected to it.

Definitions of abuse (vulnerable adults)

In addition to definitions provided above, in the context of vulnerable adults the following outlines some of the main forms of abuse:

- physical abuse, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions
- sexual abuse, including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented fully, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting
- psychological abuse, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation, or withdrawal from services or supportive networks

- financial or material abuse, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits⁶
- neglect and acts of omission, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating
- discriminatory abuse, including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment. Neglect or poor professional practice can often develop into institutionalised abuse. Signs of institutionalised abuse are:
 - Poor care standards, lack of positive responses to complex needs, rigid routines, inadequate staffing and an insufficient knowledge base within the service
 - Unacceptable 'treatments' or programmes which include sanctions or punishment such as withholding food and drink, seclusion, unnecessary and unauthorised use of control and restraint over medication.
 - Failures of agencies to ensure staff receive appropriate guidance on anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is defined as physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, verbal or economic abuse. Domestic abuse is therefore coercive, intimidating behaviour used in order to establish power and maintain control in the context of a relationship, or a previous relationship. LHT has published policies and procedures for dealing with domestic abuse. For more information please refer to the Domestic Abuse policy and procedure for further guidance and information.

Child protection and Adult Safeguarding

There are times when individual situations cross the boundaries i.e. some instances of physical abuse in Adult Safeguarding maybe be domestic abuse but where the victim's vulnerability is related to a lack of capacity to make themselves safe; a child may have a parent who may be seen as vulnerable due to their mental capacity and hence their maybe concerns about their ability to keep their child safe

Safeguarding Children

The safeguarding of children and young people is not a specialist activity, it is the universal responsibility of everyone and will remain at the heart not only of all services for children and their families, but services for adults who may care for or have contact with children. This responsibility extends beyond professional interventions across agencies, to include the aspirations and culture of the communities within which children live, play and learn. The Safeguarding of children and young people incorporates their protection from harm with the promotion of their welfare.

3. Recognising Abuse or Neglect

Who is a vulnerable adult?

A vulnerable adult is any person aged 18 years or over, who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves or is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. This may be because they have mental health issues, a physical or learning disability, visual or hearing impairment is frail or has an illness.

Why do we need to protect vulnerable adults?

Everyone has the right to live their lives free from abuse. People who would describe themselves or could be described as being a vulnerable adult must be treated with respect and dignity. Everyone should be able to choose how to live their lives independently and receive support to do this if required.

What is adult abuse?

Abuse is a violation of a person's human and civil rights by any other person. Abuse can take many forms as previously described.

4. 'Significant Harm' to a person?

Significant harm can be caused by one or more traumatic events or incidents that may impact on the independence, well being and choice of the vulnerable person. Significant Harm includes ill treatment; the impairment of or, an avoidable deterioration in physical or mental health and impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behaviour development.

5. Preventing Abuse

People who may be at risk of being abused can often be those with poor health or an enduring long-term health condition; people who may have become increasingly socially isolated; who do not feel or have been made to feel that they are not part of their local community. There are three main strands that greatly contribute to the prevention of adult abuse:

- Staying healthy
- Social Inclusion
- Community Safety

Staying healthy: Being fit, well and healthy means people are much more likely to ensure their personal safety. Eating well and having access to the right services and medical care are all fundamental to the well-being of anyone and especially vulnerable adults who may need support to access such services.

Social Inclusion: The more socially isolated people become the greater they are at 'risk' from abuse from others. Discrimination and victimisation on the grounds of age, physical disability, learning disability, mental health, race or religion can isolate someone even further.

Community Safety: People who feel safe in their homes and the community are more likely to feel in control of their lives and take positive steps to ensure their personal safety. Door Step crime, distraction burglaries, rogue traders all affect vulnerable members of communities; this includes the people covered by adult safeguarding work.

Victims of adult abuse, where there maybe criminal offences may need the support of 'Witness Support Services' who are there to assist through the criminal justice system.

Positive action in the prevention of abuse is essential in enabling vulnerable adults to keep control of their lives especially at times when they are most risk of losing their independence due to abuse.

Staff, contractors, agency staff and volunteers at LHT are encouraged to consider these factors when they deal with the members of the public and make referrals immediately for advice and support if they suspect that there is a 'Safeguarding' concern.

Anti-social behaviour: In some cases LHT will use a combination of actions to protect someone if there are 'Safeguarding' concerns and may rely on powers available under Crime and Disorder legislation or other legal remedies which may provide protection to an individual.

If someone is found to be the perpetrating abuse then similar actions may be considered to prevent further abuse from occurring and to protect the victim.

6. Responding to Disclosure of Abuse

A person is more likely to disclose details or concerns about abuse to someone they trust and with whom they feel safe. By being open to listen and take seriously what a person is saying, you are already actively helping the situation. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately should a similar situation arise.

Always:

- Record exactly what has been said to you as soon as possible
- Remain sensitive and calm about what you are hearing
- Reassure the person that they:
 - ❖ Are safe
 - ❖ Were right to tell you
 - ❖ Are not to blame
 - ❖ Are being taken seriously
 - ❖ Let the person talk – Do not interview or prompt

- Listen & hear, you must give the person time to say what they need to tell you
- Try to create a positive experience
- Explain that you must tell, but that the information shared will maintain confident
- and on a need to know basis only.

☐ Tell person what will happen next

☐ Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in telling and that it will be dealt with appropriately as quickly as possible

☐ Involve appropriate individuals immediately

Never:

- ✗ Question unless for clarification
- ✗ Make promises you cannot keep
- ✗ Rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- ✗ Make/pass a judgment on alleged abuser
- ✗ Say you don't believe them
- ✗ Take sole responsibility – you must consult the designated officer or your line manager so you can begin to protect the person and gain support for yourself

7. Safeguarding Lead Officers

Winsome Chambers Head of Operations

winsome@londonhousingtrust.org

8. Role & Responsibilities of the Safeguarding Lead Officers

The role of the Safeguarding Lead officers is to offer support and guidance to in the following ways:

- To be a named contact to offer advice, guidance and support and to identify next steps
- To ensure that concerns are logged correctly and to support staff when making referrals to outside agencies if required
- To monitor the progress and response of referrals
- To monitor the safeguarding concern in conjunction with the staff member or referring agencies
- To offer support to escalate concerns in line with Local Authority escalation process

- To challenge decisions where necessary / appropriate
- To support the staff member to close the concern at an agreed point

9. Raising a Concern

If you have concerns regarding a person, it is not your responsibility to establish whether abuse is taking place, however, it is your responsibility to record and report any concerns regarding the safety and welfare of children, young people or vulnerable adults to the appropriate agencies by following the guidance below.

Vulnerable Adult

If you believe that a vulnerable adult is suffering or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, contact the Duty Social Worker at the appropriate Local Authority Adult Social Care Team.

Liaise with your designated Safeguarding Lead once you have logged your concern; review and monitor concerns and referrals on an individual basis with your Safeguarding Lead until no further action is necessary.

If you are unsure about whether you should formally log a concern or who to contact, you must seek guidance from the designated Safeguarding Lead.

Always keep a record of all contacts and referrals made in service records when raising a concern with Adults Services.

Support - Concerns around safety and wellbeing

Where there are concerns of a vulnerable adult's safety, wellbeing and the ability to take care of themselves, you should initially deal with this through support plans (where applicable) and by making the appropriate referrals to teams/agencies for additional support/services.

However, if you feel an assessment of a vulnerable adults needs is still required from Adult Social Care, a referral can be made by emailing/faxing 'For the Attention of the Duty Officer' stating details of your concern and reasons for requesting an assessment. This request must go to the Duty Officer at the team based in the area of the person's address or the area where their GP is located.

Safeguarding / Adult Protection - Concerns that a vulnerable adult is suffering or may be at risk of suffering significant harm

Some instances of suspected abuse require an urgent response, under these circumstances, follow the guidance below:

- If you suspect a serious criminal act has taken place telephone 999. Tell them if you think it might be adult abuse
- If the individual is injured seek immediate medical treatment. Tell the ambulance personnel or A&E staff that this is a potential adult abuse situation

Domestic Abuse Procedures

Where there are no children present within the family, domestic abuse concerns should be addressed using the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) procedures and by completing the MARAC 1 Risk Assessment tool.

If there are children present in the family who may be witnessing and affected by domestic abuse, the MARAC Risk Assessment 1 should be completed and these concerns must also be shared with Children's Services.

MARAC

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a multi-agency lead initiative and is chaired by the Police. It draws together the Police and partner agencies to provide a victim-focussed response to those most at risk from domestic abuse. It is a pro-active fortnightly meeting, which enables agencies to share information, in the interests of the protection of vulnerable people including victims. The MARAC itself does not carry out the agreed actions, but it facilitates better inter-agency working.

MARACs Referrals can be made using a common referral form and Risk Assessment document.

The referring agency should carry out the formal risk assessment of their case and upon meeting the MARAC threshold for high risk cases, the risk assessment and referral form should be returned to the address above.

10. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Sharing information about adults

As a matter of good practice you should routinely gain written consent or documented verbal consent to share information from the person about whom the information is concerned.

You should not give assurances of absolute confidentiality where there are concerns about abuse as in circumstances where abuse is a criminal act or placing other vulnerable people at risk the information must be disclosed.

11. Allegations Made Against Staff

Initial Response to an Allegation or Concern

The member of staff who has received the allegation or who has a concern about a colleague or a member of staff from another organisation must immediately notify the designated Safeguarding Lead and or the relevant Assistant Director in all cases:

The member of staff should:

- ✓ Reassure the person they are right to report it
- ✓ Make a written record of the information of the initial report (where possible in the child/adult's own words, including the time, date and place of incident(s), persons present and what was said)

- ✓ If the allegation is about a staff member from another organisation ensure this is reported immediately to your Assistant Director or Safeguarding Lead.

The member of staff should not:

- ✗ Investigate, prompt or ask leading questions if seeking clarification
- ✗ Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations
- ✗ Promise confidentiality – however you can give an assurance that the information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

Initial Action by the Assistant Director and/or Safeguarding Lead

When informed of a concern or allegation, the Assistant Director and Safeguarding Lead will instigate the following actions with the relevant Safeguarding Lead or a Senior Officer.

- ✓ Obtain written details of the concern/allegation, signed and dated by the person receiving the allegation (adult making the allegation).
- ✓ Confirm receipt of the information. Record any information about times, dates and location of incident(s) and names of any potential witnesses.
- ✓ Record discussions about the allegations, the adult and/or member of staff, any decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions
- ✓ If the adult has sustained an injury, liaise with the Adult Safeguarding unit and seek advice on medical assistance.
- ✓ If the Assistant Director decides that no further action is required the reason for that decision must be recorded and the written record sent to Local Authority

Designated Officer (LADO) and if relevant to the Disclosure and Barring Service 12

Consideration will be given to the following:

- Has the employee behaved in a way that has harmed a child/vulnerable adult, or may have harmed a child/vulnerable adult?
- The allegation is of a criminal nature against or related to a child/vulnerable adult?
- The employee has behaved towards a child or children/vulnerable adult or adults in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children/vulnerable adults?

Dependant on the nature of the concern, the designated Safeguarding Lead or Assistant Director may advise or seek guidance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

The DBS have responsibility to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children or vulnerable adults.

Helpline operators can be contacted through the helpline on 0870 909 0811 between the hours of 8.30am and 5.30pm or via email customerservices@dbsgsi.gov.uk

Initial Consideration by the Assistant Director and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

There are up to 3 strands in the consideration of an allegation against an employee:

- A police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- Children's Social Care enquiries and/or assessment about whether a child is in need of protection or services
- Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action

12. Related policies & procedures

- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedures
- ASB Policy
- Whistle Blowing

13. Useful Website's for information

Blackburn with Darwen Council Adult Safeguarding

<https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/Pages/Safeguarding-adults.aspx>

Lancashire County Council Adult Safeguarding Team

<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=3552&pageid=10775>

Manchester City Council Adult Safeguarding Team

http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/3961/safeguarding_adults_procedures_and_guidance13

Trafford Adult Safeguarding

<https://myway.trafford.gov.uk/i-need-help-with/keeping-peoplesafe/safeguarding-adults/safeguarding-adults/understandingsafeguarding/policy-and-procedures.aspx>

Calderdale Adult Safeguarding

<https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguardingadults/index.html>

Salford Adult Safeguarding

<http://www.partnersinsalford.org/adultsafeguardingboard.htm>

Disclosure and Barring Service

www.gov.uk/disclosure-and-barring-service

Warrington Adult Safeguarding

http://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/200497/safeguarding_adults/205/safeguarding_adults

Rochdale Adult Safeguarding

<http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=2309>

Bolton Adult Safeguarding

<http://www.bolton.gov.uk/website/Pages/Safeguardingvulnerableadults.aspx>

Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

<http://www.scie.org.uk/adults/safeguarding/>

coordinated action against domestic abuse (CAADA)

<http://www.caada.org.uk>