



# Section 1

## Multi-Agency Procedures

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# Introduction

# Introduction

These Procedures outline a framework to which staff and volunteers must respond when there are concerns, suspicions or allegations that an adult is at risk of abuse or may be experiencing abuse.

The overall aim of the Procedures is to enable people who are at risk of abuse to access support to reduce that risk and to live a safer life that is free from abuse.

Sunderland’s Multi-Agency Procedural Framework is intended to provide staff and volunteers from all partner agencies with information about the process and their role and responsibilities within that process.

These Procedures should be considered alongside Sunderland’s Safeguarding Adults Policy Document, which sets out the agreement and commitment from partner agencies to accept and comply with the Framework.

Each partner agency is committed to providing the opportunity for training on the Procedures and to support its staff and volunteers throughout the process. Any member of staff or a volunteer taking action in line with these Procedures can expect support from their agency, their professional body and from the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board.

These Procedures act as a net of safety to ensure a consistent response and approach from all partner agencies. They create a framework for all agencies to work together in seeking to ensure that all citizens of the City of Sunderland live safe and fulfilling lives.

## Application of Procedures

### Who Do These Procedures Cover?

Those adults eligible for support under the Safeguarding Adults Procedures are those who are:

18 years and over

**and who**

are, or may be eligible to receive support from social care or health services

**and who**

may be unable to take care of themselves, or be unable to protect themselves against serious harm or exploitation

**and whose**

independence and well-being would be, or is at risk if they did not receive appropriate health or social care support.

People who may be eligible include adults who are frail, either physically or mentally (dementia) due to old age, adults with mental ill-health, adults with physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments, and adults with learning disabilities. Other people to consider include adults who misuse substances, adults whose behaviour or condition puts them at risk of abuse, and victims of domestic violence who meet the above criteria.

It may also include carers; family and friends of those people who provide personal assistance and care to adults on an unpaid basis, who meet the above criteria.

Individuals **who are not in receipt of services** but fulfil the above criteria are eligible for support under the Safeguarding Adults Procedures.

Adults who are meeting their assessed care needs through **Direct Payments** or **Self-Funded Placements**, (adults funding their own care arrangements), will be afforded the same support to investigate and safeguard themselves against abuse as would any other adult eligible to access the Safeguarding Adults Procedures.

**Please note:** that just because someone is disabled in some way, or old or ill does not mean that they are unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse. They may be perfectly able to do so. However, research has shown that anyone being cared for, either in a care setting or at home or by other services, is by definition vulnerable. This is because the person is in a position of dependency on others.

Generally the more dependent a person is on the assistance or support of others to carry out everyday activities of daily life, the more vulnerable the person is likely to be. This is particularly so when there is also a degree of mental incapacity or mental disorder that affects the persons ability to make informed decisions and exercise choice.

There needs to be careful consideration at the outset of any concern being raised that the Safeguarding Adults Procedures are the most appropriate to take the issue forward. If an adult is being abused but they are not covered by these Procedures, they must be signposted to other appropriate agencies or services. (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Useful Contacts).

## What Do These Procedures Cover?

These Procedures should guide and inform the practice of all individuals within all organisations working in partnership to safeguard adults. They should be applied in all situations where the possibility or risk of abuse cannot be ruled out and a decision has been made that the Safeguarding Adults Procedures are appropriate to address the concern.

The Procedures apply to:

■ any setting

People can be abused in their own homes, in residential, nursing or day care settings, supported housing, hospital, education, training and work place settings and in public places

■ any perpetrator(s)

It must be recognised that anyone can, and may, abuse others and cause harm. For example:

- people in positions of trust
- informal carers, including relatives, family members, friends and neighbours
- professional staff
- paid care workers
- volunteers
- other service users or vulnerable adults
- strangers.

The Procedures are described in the following Overview, accompanied by a Procedural Flowchart. More detail is then given, stage-by-stage, on roles and responsibilities and any particular issues to be considered at each stage.

**In the event of any difficulties in using these Procedures, you should contact a member of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board, where possible from your own organisation, (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Membership Lists and Remits). Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding Adults Team: 0191 566 1736.**

# Process

# Overview of the Procedures

The procedural process is divided into six stages:

- 1. The Alert**
- 2. The Decision**
- 3. Notification**
- 4. Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting**
- 5. Safeguarding Adults Assessment/Investigation**
- 6. Review**

These stages are taken from Standard 9 of the Association of the Directors of Social Services (ADSS) document, 'Safeguarding Adults: A National Framework of Standards for good practice and outcomes in adult protection work'. The Standards are used as a guide to help formulate the actions, roles and responsibilities for each of the stages.

The stages are outlined in the Procedural Flowchart. (See page 9). The starting point of the process is when a member of staff or volunteer of an agency notices or is told that an adult is at risk of abuse or may be experiencing abuse.

There are three distinct roles within the process:

- 1. Alerter**
- 2. Responsible Person**
- 3. Safeguarding Manager**

Each role is linked to the process at various stages and each has its own set of responsibilities.

Each stage will be described in more detail, outlining particular roles and responsibilities and any issues to be considered at each stage. Documentation to be completed at each stage will also be identified.

Throughout, there will be references to other sections of the Framework to provide additional advice and information, when and where appropriate.

# Procedural Flowchart

STAGE	ACTION	MAXIMUM TIME FRAME
1. Alert	Reporting concerns, suspicions or allegations that an adult may be at risk of abuse or may be experiencing abuse, which are received or noticed within a partner agency. A person reporting concerns or suspicions of abuse is called an <b>Alerter</b> .	Concerns must be reported immediately.  Any immediate protection needs are addressed.
2. Decision	Concerns are reported to the line manager within the partner agency. This person is called the <b>Responsible Person</b> . A decision is made as to whether the Safeguarding Adults Procedures are appropriate to address the concern.	Within the same working day as the Alert.
3. Notification	If it is deemed appropriate to use the Safeguarding Adults Procedures, then a Notification is made to the Safeguarding Adults Team. <b>Part A of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form</b> is completed and forwarded to the Safeguarding Adults Team.	Within one working day of the decision being made.
4. Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting	Co-ordinating the multi-agency Strategy Discussion Meeting, by the <b>Safeguarding Manager</b> , to begin formulating an <b>Action Plan</b> to assess risk, address protection needs and agree a way forward. <b>Part B of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form</b> is completed after the meeting and forwarded to the Safeguarding Adults Team, along with the <b>Action Plan</b> and minutes from the meeting.	Within 5 working days of the Alert being raised.

STAGE	ACTION	MAXIMUM TIME FRAME
5. Safeguarding Adults Assessment/ Investigation	<p>Initiating further investigation or further assessment of risk to stop abuse or reduce the risk of abuse.</p> <p><b>The Safeguarding Manager</b> is responsible for convening multi-agency <b>Assessment/Investigation Meetings</b> to co-ordinate the ongoing collation of information and to manage any assessment or investigative process.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Adults Team is kept informed of the assessment or investigative process by forwarding the minutes from each meeting, including <b>Action Plans</b> to the Safeguarding Adults Team.</p> <p>Once a decision is taken to conclude the assessment or investigative process, <b>Part C of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form</b> is completed and forwarded to the Safeguarding Adults Team along with the <b>Safeguarding Plan</b>, if appropriate, and identifying any outcomes to date.</p>	Within 8 weeks of the Notification.
6. Review	<p>Review the effectiveness of the Safeguarding Plan and/or update any outcomes following the conclusion of the safeguarding process.</p> <p><b>Part D of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form</b> is completed confirming outcomes and forwarded to the Safeguarding Adults Team.</p>	<p>To be agreed at the end of the assessment/ investigation, and be held no later than in 6 months time.</p> <p>Reviews should be held more frequently if significant risk(s) remain.</p>

All Safeguarding Adults cases will be different, with various issues specific and unique to each case. This means that it may not always be possible to complete each stage of the process within the timescales indicated above. However, the timescales are given as a maximum time for stages to take place and **every effort** must be made to adhere to these timescales to ensure a swift and efficient response/outcome. Timescales for notification, completion and review will also be used when measured against any local or national Performance Indicators. When it is not possible to adhere to the timescales, the reasons for any delay needs to be clearly identified, recorded and shared with whoever is involved in the case, including the Safeguarding Adults Team.

The only stage where a delay would not be acceptable is Stage 3: Notification, which involves the completion and forwarding of the Part A of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form, to the Safeguarding Adults Team. It is important that the **Part A is sent in immediately** (do not wait until after the Strategy Discussion Meeting or until the completion of the Safeguarding Adults process and send all Parts in together) as this is the only way the Safeguarding Adults Team will be made aware that a concern has been raised. It is also the responsibility of the Safeguarding Adults Team to ensure that the Notification is recorded and checked against the Safeguarding Adults database to identify any patterns/trends/previous referrals and pass such information along to the relevant professionals.

**The Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form can be found in Section 3: Forms and Documentation.**

# Stage 1: The Alert

## Alert

An Alert is identified as an expression of concern, suspicion or allegation that an adult is at risk of abuse or is experiencing abuse. It must always be taken seriously even if the person raising the concern remains anonymous.

## The Alerter

An Alerter is the person who raises the concern. **Anyone** can be an Alerter.

Abuse may be identified in a wide range of contexts and therefore concerns can be expressed by a variety of different people. For example:

- paid staff and volunteers within Adult Services
- paid staff and volunteers within health services/agencies/hospital settings
- paid staff/volunteers within partnership agencies
- Police
- volunteers and paid staff within voluntary services/agencies
- care staff (paid and volunteers), nursing staff, agency staff and managers within independent care homes and domiciliary care agencies
- paid staff and volunteers within educational services
- students on placement within services where adults may be vulnerable
- probation workers
- staff from housing services including sheltered housing schemes and supported living schemes
- carers, friends, family/relatives, neighbours, members of the public/community.

The above is not an exhaustive list and will include anyone who has knowledge of, or comes into contact with, an adult who may be vulnerable or at risk.

The adult who is at risk, or is being abused, may themselves want to tell someone in order to receive help and support.

## Action by Alerters who are Staff or Volunteers within Partner Agencies

### Duty of Care to Act

There is a responsibility or '**Duty of Care**' which is shared by all staff and volunteers, at all levels, across all sectors, to take appropriate action where there is a suspicion, concern or allegation of abuse. All staff and volunteers have an individual responsibility to safeguard people from harm or suspected harm, by making known their concerns about abuse in order that full consideration can be given to whether or not further action is needed. Most workers, for example Care Workers, Nurses, Doctors and Social Workers are also expected to do so under their professional Code of Conduct and under relevant legislation or guidance, (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Legal Framework).

A failure to do this is a failure in a person's Duty of Care and could be perceived as negligent practice, which may lead, in some cases, to disciplinary or other action. This would only apply to situations where someone was **knowingly** withholding information.

## Uncovering Abuse

A member of staff or volunteer may be told about abuse by the service user themselves, by someone else who knows or works with the service user or they might observe signs and symptoms that would indicate the person is being abused or is at risk of abuse. The member of staff or volunteer may also witness the abuse themselves, so it is important that they are familiar with the different types of abuse, as many forms can be very subtle or difficult to identify, (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Definitions, Categories and Indicators of Abuse).

If a member of staff or volunteer is told by another worker that something is wrong, they should check if that person has voiced their concerns and followed the Safeguarding Adults Procedures, or are going to do so. If they have not, the member of staff or volunteer should ensure that they do so.

## Actions

Alerters must:

1. assess whether anyone is at risk or is in immediate danger.

Take any reasonable steps **within their role** to protect any person who may be at immediate risk or harm, for example:

- call the Police if a crime is taking place or is believed to have just taken place
- call an ambulance or GP if someone needs urgent medical attention
- separate the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator, only if it is safe to do so.

**Alerters should never put themselves at risk.**

2. **not** approach, confront or interview the alleged perpetrator unless this is within their role and it is necessary to do so to ensure the safety or well-being of others. If necessary, the Alerter should try to obtain advice (preferably from the Police) before doing so, (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Police Involvement in the safeguarding process)
3. take reasonable steps to preserve any evidence, if at a potential crime scene, (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Police Involvement in the safeguarding process)
4. report concerns, verbally, to their line manager or to the person identified in their own Individual Agency Guidance as soon as is practicably possible, (See Section 1: Procedures; Individual Agency Guidance)
5. make a written account of what has happened, or of what has been noticed or said, as soon as possible; remembering to record facts and not to make assumptions.

## Reporting Concerns

### Who to Report to

Partner agencies should have in place their own Individual Agency Guidance, linked to the overall Safeguarding Adults Procedural Framework (See Section 1: Procedures; Individual Agency Guidance). This Guidance should clearly indicate roles and responsibilities and should make clear the reporting procedures for that agency. Each member of staff should ensure that they have access to these internal guidelines so that they are aware of their responsibilities.

**In most cases Alerters report their concerns to their immediate line manager.** If their line manager is not available, the employing agency should have guidelines in place to identify who they should report to.

If the concerns involve their line manager (or the person that they would normally report to), guidelines should be in place identifying alternative reporting mechanisms.

In some agencies it may not be the line manager, but the person allocated lead responsibility for Safeguarding Adults, to whom the Alerter reports. All members of staff should ensure that they have read their own Individual Agency Guidance **so it is clear to whom they report.**

Agencies should also ensure that all Alerters are supported, in whatever way, appropriate to the situation. Concerns **must** be taken seriously and any immediate or ongoing support provided, as appropriate.

If the Alerter feels that the person to whom they have reported their concerns does not take them seriously or has not acted appropriately, they should:

- report their concerns to a more senior manager or to the lead for Safeguarding Adults in their agency
- if unable to do the above, the Alerter should take their concerns directly to the Safeguarding Adults Team

**The Alerter must first consider reporting concerns to their line manager or someone identified within their own agency. However, if the Alerter feels unable, for whatever reason, to report their concerns to anyone within their own agency, they should contact the Safeguarding Adults Team: 0191 566 1736.**

### How to Report Concerns

Reporting concerns to the line manager should be done verbally in the first instance and then followed by a written account.

#### Written Account

When producing and submitting a written account, an Alerter should remember the following:

- write it as soon as possible to ensure that detailed information, events or facts are not forgotten
- only include factual information including dates/times. Do not include personal views or feelings or make any personal judgements or assumptions. If it is felt necessary to include personal views, ensure that this is clearly indicated in the account and state the reason(s) why
- write down the setting and whether anyone else was present

- if recounting a disclosure, try to write down exactly what the person said, using their words
- if writing by hand, ensure that the handwriting is legible
- if support is needed in writing the account, Alerter should ask their line manager
- sign the account, date and time it
- give the written account to the person to whom the concerns need to be reported (do not ask anyone else to do this)
- be aware that any written account may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure.

Written accounts about concerns and disclosures of abuse are strictly confidential. Such information should only be entered into a record book or file which is inaccessible to the perpetrator or to those who do not need or have right to the information. It is the responsibility of the person receiving the written account to file it appropriately and in line with Data Protection, taking into account individual agency confidentiality and filing procedures.

## Feedback

Once concerns have been reported, the Alerter should be given feedback as to how the concerns are being dealt with. The Alerter should not expect to receive detailed feedback but they should be informed if Safeguarding Adults Procedures have been implemented, and if not, what other action, if any, has been taken. If the Safeguarding Adults Procedures have been implemented, the Alerter should receive general feedback throughout the process and be informed of any outcome(s), if possible. If the Alerter does not hear anything once they have reported their concerns, **they have the right to ask for feedback**. It is important that the Alerter is reassured that their concerns have been taken seriously and acted upon accordingly.

**Remember:** An Alerter is not reporting that abuse has necessarily occurred (unless personally witnessed). They are simply passing over information that someone has told them or providing information on what they suspect to be abuse (signs and symptoms they may have observed). As such, an Alerter **does not** have to have evidence or provide any 'proof', they are simply passing over their concerns. It is the role of other professionals in the process to investigate if appropriate. An Alerter acting in good faith **will not** be criticised or disciplined in any way should the outcome be that there is no cause for concern. They will be deemed to have acted in their Duty of Care.

## False or Malicious Allegations

It is recognised that some people may make false or malicious allegations, sometimes on a regular basis. Such allegations may be made by anyone, including members of staff or service users.

When such allegations are identified, it is important that the appropriate person (Employer, Care Manager, service manager) addresses the issue and puts in place safeguards to reduce such incidents in the future.

It is also important to record the allegations, where appropriate, to provide some protection for individuals subject to the allegations.

## Responding to Disclosures

If an Alerter becomes aware that someone is about to make a disclosure, they should inform the person beforehand that depending on what is disclosed, the information may need to be passed on. This may stop the person from disclosing. Should this be the case, the Alerter needs to inform their line manager and record that this has occurred. The Alerter will need to continue to demonstrate to that person that they (or anyone else) is available for them to speak to, when and if they want to.

If someone discloses that they have experienced or are experiencing abuse **the Alerter should:**

- remain calm and try not to show shock or disbelief
- listen carefully to what is being said and demonstrate that they are actively listening by maintaining eye contact (if possible) and making affirmative gestures such as nodding the head
- reassure the person that they are doing the right thing in disclosing
- confirm that the information disclosed will be treated seriously
- give the person information about the next steps that will be taken, which is:
  - that they, as an Alerter, must inform an appropriate person
  - that someone (may not be the Alerter) will be in contact to explain further about what will happen next.

If someone discloses that they have experienced or are experiencing abuse **the Alerter should not:**

- press the person for details. Alerters are not investigators; they are simply listening to what the person has to tell them. If there is a need to clarify something that has been said, open-ended questions should be asked, such as "what did you mean by that?". Care should be taken that words are not put into the person's mouth by asking leading questions such as "when you said that did you mean....?"
- stop someone who is freely recalling significant events, as they may not speak about it again
- promise to keep secrets. Even if the person asks the Alerter not to tell anyone, it must be explained, in a way that the person can understand, that they have a Duty of Care to pass on the information. It may help to explain that the information is only being passed to those who 'need to know' and that this is being done because of the concerns about them
- give unrealistic expectations or guarantees regarding confidentiality or safety by saying, for example, "Don't worry this will never happen to you again"
- be judgemental
- tell anybody that doesn't need to know
- contact the alleged perpetrator or anyone who might be in touch with him or her.

## Further Responsibilities for Alerters

- Alerters may be asked to continue to support the person during the Safeguarding Adults process that follows the Alert. If this is the case, the Alerter's role will be to continue to offer support without directly asking questions or seeking opinions from the person. If the Alerter is unsure as to how far their role extends during this process, advice should be sought from their line manager.
- Alerters may also be asked to attend the Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting to report on the details of the Alert.
- The abused person might need ongoing support and the Alerter may play an important role in providing this.

## Remember

- Be aware of signs and symptoms (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Definitions, Categories and Indicators of Abuse).
- Abuse **does** occur, so take the suspicion, allegation or disclosure seriously.
- Remain calm.
- The Duty of Care dictates the need to act. Do not try to 'ignore' or 'forget' any concerns. If someone else comes forward with the same concerns and it becomes clear that you didn't, disciplinary action could result.
- Do not delay. If in any doubt, don't wait, bring the concerns forward and act, even on instinct, that something is 'wrong' or 'doesn't seem right'.
- Consider the immediate risk or danger to the alleged perpetrator or others.
- Consider the need for medical treatment.
- Consider the need to inform the Police.
- Take the appropriate steps to preserve any evidence.
- Create opportunities for the safe sharing of information. If someone is wanting to talk about something, try to provide a private space for the disclosure to take place.
- Do not interrogate or cross-examine the alleged victim.
- Do not talk in the presence of an alleged or suspected perpetrator. Do not contact the perpetrator.
- Do not put yourself at risk.

## Anonymous Alerts

All Alerts will be taken seriously, even if the Alerter remains anonymous.

All requests for anonymity by the Alerter will be fully respected. It cannot, however, be guaranteed, especially if the Alerter's information becomes an essential element in any subsequent legal proceedings. In addition, The Data Protection Act 1998 removes the blanket confidentiality of third party information (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Legal Framework).

If someone does decide to remain anonymous, they must consider that, by doing so, they may impede or delay the safeguarding process. If they do not give sufficient details or information in their Alert, it may be difficult to take the process forward and may, in some instances, prevent the process from being instigated. The person must also understand that they will not be given any feedback or outcomes in relation to their concern and may not know if their concerns have been looked into appropriately. Also it would not be possible to provide the person with any support, if required.

## Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is a process that enables employed staff or volunteers to raise serious concerns in the workplace and to have these concerns properly addressed.

There may be allegations or concerns of abuse which implicate a member or members of staff. A member of staff may have concerns about the conduct or behaviour of a colleague. Despite working closely together or even socialising outside of work, the Duty of Care necessitates the matter being raised, in accordance with the Safeguarding Adults Procedures.

Front-line staff are often the first to see or suspect misconduct, but are often worried about raising concerns. They may worry that they are being disloyal to their colleagues or are worried about the consequences of coming forward. It is recognised that whistleblowing is often seen in a negative light and that this negativity has been perpetuated for many years. Consequently it is difficult for staff to see the positives but this needs to be encouraged. A good starting point is to ensure open, honest and effective communication amongst staff teams and within services. Where this is the case, staff should begin to feel more confident and positive about coming forward with ideas, thoughts, suggestions and concerns. All managers must ensure that they listen to their staff and support them in this.

Each agency should have in place their own Whistleblowing Policy, which should outline the process for support in such instances. All workers need to, therefore, be aware of any whistleblowing policies within their own agency. The Policy should be effective in supporting staff to come forward with their concerns, and relay confidence that they will be supported throughout the process.

The Safeguarding Adults Team can provide guidance and support to agencies to assist in developing and implementing effective whistleblowing policies.

## Prevention – Managing Risks Through the Safeguarding Process

With the shift from protection to safeguarding and the increased focus on prevention, it is important to remember that an Alert can be made **without** an incident of abuse taking place, or alleged to have taken place. If there are concerns that someone is at **risk** (for whatever reasons; their behaviour, their circumstances, their environment/surroundings or the behaviour of others, for example), then an Alert should be made. By alerting concerns in this way, the risk can be addressed and managed through the safeguarding process, thus reducing the likelihood of abuse or even preventing it from occurring in the first place. **Do not wait until abuse occurs; concerns should be raised as soon as any risks are identified,** (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Preventative Strategies in Safeguarding Adults).

## Concerns of a General Nature/not Relating to a Specific Individual

There may be instances where concerns do not relate to a specific individual. It may be that there are concerns in respect of institutional abuse or neglect within a service, and this may affect a number of people who use that service. (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Definition, Categories and Indicators of Abuse).

Concerns do not need to be specific to an individual in order to Alert. The Duty of Care remains the same whether alerting concerns involving one individual, several individuals or service-related issues that may affect many people.

## Training

It is important that all staff identified as Alerters have access to the Safeguarding Adults Multi-Agency Training Programme.

Specific training for staff identified as Alerters – Level 1: Alerter Training is available and it is expected that staff will attend this training.

The Training Programme is available by contacting the Safeguarding Adults Team: **0191 566 1736** or on the Safeguarding Adults Website: **[www.alertabuse.org.uk](http://www.alertabuse.org.uk)**

For more information on Training please see Section 2: Practice Guidance; Training in Safeguarding Adults – Information for Staff.

## Action by the Public

Everyone has a role to play in identifying and responding to abuse.

Friends, neighbours and members of the public, are often in a position to notice changes in an individual and must not hesitate to bring concerns to the attention of someone who is in a position to help. We all have a moral responsibility to act and not ignore abuse. There may be the feeling that telling someone may actually make things worse for the person concerned but it is important that things are not simply ignored in the hope that they get better. If services to people who may be vulnerable are to be improved, and if someone needs to receive help or support, then all comments, observations and concerns must be alerted so that they can be properly looked into.

### Members of the Public can Alert Their Concerns by:

- **contacting Emergency Services – 999** - if they feel the person is in immediate danger
- **contacting Northumbria Police Main Switchboard - 0191 454 7555** - if the concerns are of a possible criminal nature
- **contacting the 24-hour Safeguarding Adults Helpline - 0181 528 2748** - if they don't feel the person is in immediate danger but have concerns that they may be at risk of abuse or are being abused
- **contacting the appropriate Adult Services Area Team**, if they are aware that the person they have concerns about is receiving support through Adult Services, (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Local Contacts)
- **contacting the appropriate health service**, if they are aware that the person they have concerns about is receiving support through health services, (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Local Contacts).

# Stage 2: The Decision

Whether or not to progress to the next stage of Notification.

Concerns are reported to the appropriate person identified within each agency – usually the Alerter's line manager. The person who receives the information from the Alerter is called the **Responsible Person**.

It is important, therefore, that each agency clearly identifies who (which role/job title) are Responsible Persons within their agency. This should be written into Individual Agency Guidance. It is equally important that those staff identified as Alerters, have read the guidance and clearly understand to whom they take their concerns (Section 1: Procedures; Individual Agency Guidance).

It is the role of the Responsible Person to receive and review the information provided, and any action taken, by the Alerter. Based on that information, the Responsible Person makes a decision on whether or not to progress to the next stage of Notification.

## Action to be taken by the Responsible Person

In order to confirm which course of action needs to be taken, the Responsible Person must firstly confirm from **where** the concerns originate.

1. Do the concerns originate from within my own agency i.e. staff or service users/abuse occurring in my own agency?
2. Do the concerns originate from another agency or service in Sunderland?
3. Do the concerns originate from another Local Authority?

### 1. Concerns originating within own agency

If the information received from an Alerter relates to concerns about abuse or the risk of abuse **occurring within their own agency**, then it is the responsibility of that agency to respond to and address the concerns and the **Responsible Person should**:

- ensure that all relevant immediate actions have been taken (has medical treatment been sought, have the Police been contacted) and consider actions within their role that can safeguard anyone who may continue to be at risk, for example:
  - suspension of a member of staff
  - change of service provision to a service user who is an alleged perpetrator
  - contact the Single Point of Contact within the Police for advice or information, if needed (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Police Involvement in the safeguarding process).
- ensure the person who may have been abused or is at risk of abuse is immediately given the appropriate help to ensure his or her safety or support.

**Please note:** Do not contact the alleged abuser until any agreements are made at the Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting, unless this is part of an emergency action needed to safeguard the adult or others at risk, for example, suspending a member of staff. If having to suspend a member of staff at this stage, ensure that any explanation given raises only general concerns about conduct, rather than specific details, the disclosure of which might jeopardise any subsequent investigation.

## Other Considerations for the Responsible Person

- If a crime has been suspected or known to have taken place, the Police must be informed
- If a child is at risk then the Local Authority Children's Services should be contacted (See Section 1: Practice Guidance; Local Contacts).
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided to the Alerter, including support to complete a Written Account, if necessary
- Ensure Written Account is stored/filed appropriately
- Ensure that all staff who support the service user, and others affected by the incident, have guidance and access to support
- Remind staff of the importance of confidentiality (not to discuss details with other staff or service users, or to discuss outside of the workplace)
- Any relevant organisational procedures have been actioned, for example:
  - Complaints Procedure
  - Serious Incident Report
  - Disciplinary Procedures
- Reports or notices are made to the relevant regulatory or commissioning body, for example:
  - Commission for Social Care Inspection
  - Strategic Health Authority
- Secure all written material which may be used as evidence, for example, written reports, diary records, service user files or staff files

**Please note:** It is the role of the Responsible Person to gather all information appropriate to the concern so that a decision can be made in relation to that concern, **it is not** the role of the Responsible Person to investigate, interview or interrogate at this stage.

## Decision

Once the above has been considered and all relevant information gathered the Responsible Person must make a decision on whether or not to progress to the next stage of Notification. In order to make this decision, the Responsible Person must determine:

1. Whether or not the adult is eligible for support under the Safeguarding Adults Procedures (See Section 1: Procedures; Introduction)
2. Whether abuse, or the possibility of abuse can or cannot be ruled out

The Responsible Person should seek, if necessary, support and advice in making this decision from their line manager or the identified Safeguarding Adults Lead within their agency. If still uncertain, advice can be sought by contacting the Safeguarding Adults Team to discuss the situation.

Timescales suggest that this decision should be made within the same working day as the Alert. However, it is recognised that, in some cases, information vital to the decision may not be immediately available. In these instances, the decision should be made as soon as possible.

If it is determined that:

**The adult is eligible for support under these procedures and abuse cannot be ruled out**

When it has been determined that the adult is covered under the Safeguarding Adults Procedures and abuse cannot be ruled out, then a decision must be taken to **proceed to Notification** and **Part A** of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form **must be completed** (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation for a copy of the Form) and forwarded to the Safeguarding Adults Team. The Alerter should be informed of this decision.

See Next Stage - Notification

**The adult is eligible for support under these procedures but abuse can be ruled out**

When it has been determined that the adult is covered under the Safeguarding Adults Procedures, but abuse can be ruled out at this stage, there will be **no need to proceed to Notification**. However, it is important that the concern and the reason(s) for ruling out abuse is documented using the agency's own recording mechanisms. It is important to document this internally to enable any patterns or trends to be identified in the future. The Alerter should be informed and given the reason for this decision.

**The adult is not eligible for support under these procedures but abuse cannot be ruled out**

When it has been determined that abuse cannot be ruled out but the adult does not meet the criteria to be supported using the Safeguarding Adults Procedures then the person should be given any other relevant information or support as necessary in relation to their situation, including signposting them to more appropriate support or advice services (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Local Contacts). There will be **no need to proceed to Notification**, however the decision and any subsequent action taken does need to be documented, as appropriate, within that agency. The Alerter should be informed and given the reason for this decision.

**The adult is not eligible for support under these procedures and abuse can be ruled out**

If both of the above is determined then there is **no need to proceed to Notification**. Again, good practice would recommend that the concern is recorded, as appropriate, within the agency and the Alerter informed and given the reason for this decision.

Should there be any disagreement with the decision to proceed to Notification, the matter should be taken to the identified Safeguarding Adults Lead within that agency. If the disagreement persists, then the Safeguarding Adults Team must be contacted.

## 2. Concerns originating from another agency or service within Sunderland

If the information received from an Alerter relates to concerns about abuse or the risk of abuse **occurring within another agency or service in Sunderland**, the **Responsible Person should**:

- contact the Safeguarding Adults Team for advice and guidance: 0191 566 1736
- if the matter is urgent and out of office hours, contact the Adult Services Out of Hours (Emergency) Duty Team: 0191 528 9110

## 3. Concerns originating from another Local Authority

If the information received from an Alerter relates to concerns about abuse or the risk of abuse **occurring in another authority**, the **Responsible Person should**:

- report their concerns to the Safeguarding Adults Team/Safeguarding Adults Lead, within that authority (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Local Contacts)
- if the authority is not a neighbouring authority or no details of contact are available, contact the Safeguarding Adults Team in Sunderland: 0191 566 1736
- if the matter is urgent and out of office hours, contact the Adult Services Out of Hours (Emergency) Duty Team: 0191 528 9110

## Training

It is important that all staff identified as Responsible Persons have access to the Safeguarding Adults Multi-Agency Training Programme.

Specific training for staff identified as Responsible Persons – Level 2: Responsible Person Training is available and it is expected that staff will attend this training.

The Training Programme is available by contacting the Safeguarding Adults Team: 0191 566 1736 or on the Safeguarding Adults Website: [www.alertabuse.org.uk](http://www.alertabuse.org.uk)

For more information on Training please see Section 2: Practice Guidance; Training in Safeguarding Adults – Information for Staff.

# Stage 3: Notification

Notifying the Safeguarding Adults Team about the Alert and the decisions taken following the Alert.

## Notification of Alert (Part A)

Part A of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form **must** be completed when it is determined that:

1. The adult meets the criteria to be supported using the Safeguarding Adults Procedures.
2. Abuse cannot be ruled out.

**All** sections of the Part A need to be completed so it is important to have, at hand, as much information as possible when filling in the Form however, there should be no delay in forwarding a Notification if the information is not easily available.

**No section should be left blank.** Sections should be completed with N/K if not known or N/A if not applicable. The Safeguarding Adults Team will follow up any incomplete forms received.

The Safeguarding Adults Team can be contacted if there are any queries when completing any Parts of the Form.

The information required:

- details of the adult about whom the concern has been raised
- details (if known or applicable) of the alleged perpetrator
- details of the abuse that may be taking place/or the risk of abuse
- any immediate action taken in response to the concern being raised.

The Responsible Person should complete the above information on the Form.

## Next Step

The Final Section of the Part A – The Decision - is to identify the next step to be taken following the Alert. This Section of the Form should be completed by, or in conjunction with, the **Safeguarding Manager**, who in most instances is the Responsible Person's line manager. See Stage 4 for more information on the role and responsibilities of the Safeguarding Manager.

There are two options to consider:

1. To convene a Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting or
2. Not to convene a Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting.

## 1. Decision to Convene a Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting

If, having considered all the information available at this point and **abuse, or the possibility of abuse, cannot be ruled out**, then a decision **must** be taken to convene a **Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting**. This must be indicated on the Form with any additional information/documentation, as appropriate, to support the decision. See Stage 4 for more information on convening a Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting.

This decision indicates that the Alert is to continue further down the Safeguarding Adults process.

## 2. Decision Not to Convene a Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting

If a decision is taken **not** to convene a Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting, then this must be indicated on the Form.

If this option is indicated, it is **essential** that the reason(s) for not convening the Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting is stated clearly on the Form.

It will also be necessary to provide any additional information or documentation as evidence to support this decision.

Finally, it will be necessary to identify, on the Form, any other actions that are to occur or any other procedures or processes that are to be put in place, where necessary.

This decision indicates that the Alert is not to continue further down the Safeguarding Adults process.

## Forwarding the Part A to the Safeguarding Adults Team

Once a decision has been agreed, the Safeguarding Manager must sign and date the Part A and ensure that it is forwarded **immediately** to the Safeguarding Adults Team, along with any supporting documentation as appropriate.

The Safeguarding Adults Team will acknowledge receipt of the Part A and any supporting documentation, in writing. If the Part A indicates that a Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting is **not** to be convened, this would signal an end to the safeguarding process. If, however, it is not clear or evidenced appropriately as to how this decision was reached, the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator may contact the Safeguarding Manager to discuss the decision further. The case will be formally closed when the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator is satisfied that the appropriate decision has been made, and this will be acknowledged in writing to the Safeguarding Manager.

It is important that the Part A is forwarded **as soon as possible** to ensure that it is recorded within the Safeguarding Adults Team. The information from the Part A is entered onto the Safeguarding Adults database where any patterns/trends or previous alerts involving either the alleged victim, alleged perpetrator or service can be identified. If any such information is identified, the Safeguarding Manager will be informed, as appropriate.

## Consent to a Notification

It is important to ensure that the adult who may be at risk of abuse, or who is alleged to be abused, is placed at the centre of the process. That is, it is important to ensure that the process is used to support the person's independence and choices as much as possible and not use it as something that is 'done to' the person. It is good practice, therefore, to gain the informed consent of the person with mental capacity who may be at risk of abuse before making a notification on their behalf. Their consent should be given on the basis of having full information and without undue pressure or intimidation.

However, in some safeguarding adults situations, the person's consent cannot be gained or is superseded by other concerns. These include:

- when it is not safe to gain their consent
- when they do not have mental capacity to consent to the Notification
- when there is a duty on organisations to act either because:
  - i) the level of risk to the individual is very high (life or limb)
  - ii) another person or other people covered by the Procedures are also at risk.

This last situation may be the case where abuse is alleged to be caused by someone who provides services to or cares for other people covered by the Procedures and where organisational failings place their service users at risk.

Sometimes a person who is experiencing abuse decides that they do not want help or support to stop the abuse. If they have the mental capacity to make such a decision and no one else is at risk, then we may not have a remit to intervene. The Duty of Care, however, takes away the option to do nothing. It is important to:

- make reasonable endeavours to see the person in a safe and confidential environment
- ensure, where possible, that the person has the opportunity to speak without the alleged perpetrator present
- ascertain, where possible, that the person is not being pressured, threatened or manipulated by the alleged perpetrator into saying that they do not want any action taken
- ensure that the person has the full information required to be able to decide what action to pursue. The use of accessible information, interpreters, personal assistance or advocates must be considered, as appropriate
- take reasonable steps to ensure that the person understands the level of risk involved and the possible consequences of not taking any action.

If all of the above is taken into consideration and the person for whom there are concerns **still** decides that they do not want help or support to stop the abuse, Part A of the Notification, Outcome and Review Form **must** still be completed, with the decision 'Not to convene a Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting' indicated. This decision needs to be supported by information on any actions taken to provide support or monitor the situation. Should the person change their mind or circumstances change/the risk increases, the Safeguarding Adults Procedures would need to be re-instigated.

**Part A of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form can be found in Section 3: Forms and Documentation.**

# Stage 4: Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting

## **Safeguarding Adults is everyone's responsibility.**

Therefore, it is the responsibility of the agency or service where the abuse is alleged to have occurred, to manage the safeguarding process, where appropriate.

## **Safeguarding Manager**

The role of the Safeguarding Manager is to **manage** the safeguarding process.

This responsibility is taken by individuals with appropriate levels of experience and authority to co-ordinate multi-agency working. They may be employed by any of the partner agencies.

Safeguarding Managers need to be at an appropriate level of seniority and responsibility within an agency to ensure that they can make relevant decisions and take appropriate action(s) as necessary within the safeguarding process. This means that Safeguarding Managers should **at least** be at managerial level, and may be at senior managerial level.

Each agency/service should identify who (job role) their Safeguarding Manager(s) is (are), and this should be included within their own Individual Agency Guidance (See Section 1: Procedures; Individual Agency Guidance).

It is recognised and agreed that, whilst carrying out the role and responsibilities of Safeguarding Managers, people are acting on behalf of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board, and are accountable to it, via their agency.

## **Training**

It is important that all staff identified as Safeguarding Managers have access to the Safeguarding Adults Multi-Agency Training Programme.

Specific training for staff identified as Safeguarding Managers – Level 3: Safeguarding Manager Training is available and it is expected that staff will attend this training.

The Training Programme is available by contacting the Safeguarding Adults Team: 0191 566 1736 or on the Safeguarding Adults Website: [www.alertabuse.org.uk](http://www.alertabuse.org.uk)

For more information on Training please see Section 2: Practice Guidance; Training in Safeguarding Adults – Information for Staff.

## **Safeguarding Manager within the Safeguarding Adults Team**

Ordinarily it is the responsibility of the agency or service where the alleged abuse occurs, to manage the safeguarding process. However, there will be instances where this would not be appropriate or where the circumstances of the case dictate that the Safeguarding Manager must be independent of the matter. In these cases, the Safeguarding Manager within the Safeguarding Adults Team will

manage the process. This Safeguarding Manager will also manage cases that are particularly complex, for example organisational and/or multiple cases. The Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator will decide which cases the Safeguarding Manager within the Safeguarding Adults Team will manage.

For more information on the role of the Safeguarding Manager within the Safeguarding Adults Team please see Section 1: Procedures; The Safeguarding Adults Team.

## Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting

When a decision is made that **abuse cannot be ruled out**, a Strategy Discussion Meeting must be convened. The Strategy Discussion Meeting must be convened **within 5 working days of the Alert being raised**

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Manager to convene a **multi-agency** Strategy Discussion Meeting as developing the strategy is a multi-agency process involving all agencies appropriate to the particular matter.

The aims of the Strategy Discussion Meeting are:

- to assess risk and consider any immediate safeguarding needs in relation to the alleged victim and for any other adult who may be at risk
- to discuss and share all relevant information in relation to the situation or allegation, in accordance with the principles guiding the sharing of information and with respect to boundaries of confidentiality (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Information Sharing and Confidentiality)
- to agree an Action Plan based on information obtained through the Strategy Discussion.

Each agency must be proactive in offering resources within their remit to meet the above aims.

### Who to Involve in the Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting

It is the role of the Safeguarding Manager to decide who and which agency is appropriate to be included in the Strategy Discussion Meeting.

All individuals and agencies having information relevant to the matter need to be considered and included.

Strategy Discussion Meetings may include any of the following as necessary:

- the alleged victim/adult at risk
- the adult's carer, family member(s) or an independent advocate
- an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA), (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; ADASS Practice Guidance: Criteria for the use of IMCA's in Safeguarding Adults Cases).
- the adult's key worker
- Care Manager, CPN or other professional responsible for managing the person's care arrangements
- Police Officer (Inspector), where a criminal offence is alleged or suspected
- a representative from the line management of the provider service
- a representative from the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) where it is thought that a regulated service may be in breach of regulations

- a representative from the agency commissioning the service, from either health or social care organisations
- a representative from the Procurement Team, Adult Services where there are any issues relating to contract terms and conditions, where a contract is in place with the Council
- a representative from Social Care Governance, Adult Services where there are issues relating to services, particularly those of quality, standards, governance and service improvement issues
- a health representative, for example Ward Managers, Ward Nurses or Consultants in hospital or District Nurses or GP's from the Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust
- the Direct Payments Manager, Adult Services (who is the designated lead in financial abuse cases), representative from Welfare Rights, the Department of Work and Pensions, bank or building society, or a representative from the Receivership Administration Team, where there are suspicions of financial abuse
- a representative from Domestic Violence services where cases involve issues of domestic violence
- a legal advisor for those cases that need legal advice or support. The council's Legal Services has a solicitor designated to safeguarding adults cases
- the Safeguarding Manager from the Safeguarding Adults Team to provide support
- a designated minute taker
- anyone else deemed appropriate and beneficial to the Strategy Discussion by the Safeguarding Manager.

All partner agencies have a responsibility to take an active role in this process.

Contact details for many of the agencies, services and individuals listed above can be found in Section 2: Practice Guidance; Local Contacts.

**Please Note:** It is imperative that representatives invited to Strategy Discussion Meetings attend and bring concise written records, analysis of information and details of actions taken to date. If an identified representative is unable to attend a meeting, a Report must be forwarded to the Safeguarding Manager at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

A Report Template can be found in Section 3: Forms and Documentation.

## **The Alleged Victim/Adult at Risk**

Where an adult has mental capacity to decide which actions should be taken on their behalf, they should be involved as a key partner in the Safeguarding Strategy, unless prevented by other considerations for example; for their safety, the safety and rights of others (including the rights of the alleged perpetrator) or for the potential contamination of evidence. The Safeguarding Manager will decide whether it is appropriate and/or beneficial for the adult to attend the Strategy Discussion Meeting. If a decision is taken for the adult to attend the meeting, the Safeguarding Manager must consider the use of independent advocates or other support services, such as victim support, to support the adult during the meeting, as appropriate. The Safeguarding Manager must also consider the format and context of the meeting in relation to issues of confidentiality and communication/understanding, when the adult at risk is attending the meeting.

Where such an adult with mental capacity cannot be included as a full partner, the Safeguarding Manager should agree with them how their views and choices are to be incorporated into the strategy-making process. They may want an independent advocate, Care Manager, or family member to represent their views. The involvement of anyone acting on their behalf and the involvement of any member of the public, for example a carer, friend or family member, must only take place with the informed consent of the adult at risk.

Adults who lack mental capacity may be able to involve an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) to represent them in decision-making through the safeguarding process, if they fit the set criteria. For more information on the role of the IMCA see Section 2: Practice Guidance; Legal Framework.

For information on the criteria for instructing an IMCA please see Section 2: Practice Guidance; ADASS Practice Guidance: Criteria for the use of IMCA's in Safeguarding Adults Cases.

## The Alleged Perpetrator

An alleged perpetrator would only be included in the Strategy Discussion Meeting in **very exceptional circumstances**, and with the agreement of the Safeguarding Manager. This must also be with the informed consent of the adult who is at risk (where they have mental capacity). Any such decision must be clearly documented by the Safeguarding Manager and safeguards put in place to ensure that any safeguarding strategies are not jeopardised. An Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) may be instructed for an alleged perpetrator who lacks mental capacity and fits the set criteria.

The Safeguarding Manager must carefully consider what information, including outcomes, is appropriate to feedback to the alleged perpetrator and at what stage. If there is Police involvement, guidance must be sought from the Inspector involved in the case. Any decisions and the reasons for the decisions must be clearly recorded.

## What is Considered During a Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting

- Information known about the current situation or concern regarding the alleged abuse or risk of abuse.
- Information about the alleged victim/adult at risk:
  - level of risk/assessed risk – is he/she in immediate danger?
  - their mental capacity to make decisions
  - their best interests, if they do not have mental capacity. There is a need to consider whether or not to instruct an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA), if they meet the criteria
  - their views/choices/feelings about the situation if they do have mental capacity
  - any previous information, concerns, Alerts or allegations in relation to this matter.
- Information known about the alleged perpetrator (where appropriate):
  - relationship to the alleged victim
  - are they a service user or identified as a vulnerable adult?
  - do they have mental capacity to make decisions?
  - if they do not have mental capacity, there is a need to consider whether or not to

instruct an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) if they meet the criteria

- current situation i.e. are they still in contact with the alleged victim? Have the Police been involved? Have they been interviewed/contacted or made aware of the allegation(s)?
- any previous information, concerns, Alerts or allegations that relate to this situation.

■ Information about the setting/service in which the abuse is alleged:

- is it a regulated service? Have CSCI been informed?
- are the concerns/issues service related?
- are other service users/vulnerable adults at risk?
- any previous information, concerns, Alerts or allegations in relation to this service/setting.

■ Involvement of other processes or procedures:

- Disciplinary Procedures
- Complaints Procedure
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) or Non-MAPPA (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements).

■ If Disciplinary Procedures are to be invoked:

- is/should the member(s) of staff be suspended?
- should a referral to the PoVA List be made at this time?

■ Need for Police involvement:

- are any of the issues discussed of a criminal nature?
- do the Police need to conduct a criminal investigation?

## Structure of the Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Manager to Chair the Strategy Discussion Meeting.

It is also the responsibility of the Safeguarding Manager to ensure the attendance of an appropriate, independent minute taker. It is recommended that the person appointed to take the minutes should be familiar with the safeguarding process and should be at a level of responsibility to enable them to take accurate, comprehensive minutes. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Manager to check the minutes for accuracy and to ensure the minutes are distributed to all appropriate individuals (including the Safeguarding Adults Team), **within five days** of the Strategy Discussion Meeting being completed. Any delays in the distribution of minutes and the reasons for the delay must be recorded by the Safeguarding Manager and shared with all appropriate individuals including the Safeguarding Adults Team, (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Recording of Information).

The Strategy Discussion Meeting should be structured in such a way to allow for all individuals and agency representatives to share information, discuss the information and agree a way forward, based on the information.

An **Agenda template** has been produced to assist the Safeguarding Manager in structuring the Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting, (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation).

## Planning the Way Forward – Action Plan

One of the aims of the Strategy Discussion Meeting is to agree the way forward by producing an Action Plan to document actions, people responsible for carrying out the actions and timescales.

The Action Plan may identify:

- the need for an assessment of mental capacity of the adult at risk or of the alleged perpetrator
- the need for further assessment of risk(s) and to whom
- the need to implement safeguarding strategies for the adult at risk and any others at risk. This may include invoking certain procedures such as the Disciplinary Procedure to suspend a member of staff
- the need to seek further information or clarification from other professionals or agencies
- the need for Police involvement
- a plan to meet any needs arising from gender, sexuality, ethnicity or disability of any alleged victims, perpetrators or witnesses, including Special Measures in 'Achieving Best Evidence' (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Legal Framework)
- a plan to meet any needs arising from potential harassment or intimidation of any alleged victims, witnesses or 'whistleblowers'
- the need to co-ordinate between different strands of the assessment, for example any criminal or disciplinary action, or investigation of a complaint, so that they complement and inform each other and do not interfere with each other
- an agreed communication strategy during the safeguarding process
- the appropriate method of feedback to the Alerter and who will undertake this
- a way of ensuring ongoing communication with the adult(s) at risk and others concerned, including family members, and who will undertake this
- the need to agree a method to manage any media interest
- that there may be a need to hold a separate meeting about the service needs of an alleged perpetrator who is also a service user.

The above are just some of the actions that may be identified at the Strategy Discussion Meeting. Each meeting will generate it's own set of discussions, decisions and actions relevant to that case.

The Action Plan should adhere to the following principles:

- the safety of the adult and any others at risk is the overriding consideration
- action is planned to minimise risks to victims, witnesses and 'whistleblowers'
- actions concerning people alleged to have perpetrated abuse are co-ordinated
- best evidence is achieved through victims being given protection and support regarding the criminal justice process, in line with the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act (1999), (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Legal Framework).
- information is shared fully between participating agencies but is shared within the boundaries of confidentiality and with regard to the principles guiding information sharing (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Information Sharing and Confidentiality Agreement)
- all actions should have agreed timescales for completion and be designated to named individuals

- any actions identified are done so with the intention of minimal interruption to the services being provided to the individual, or a group of people, during the safeguarding process.

A copy of the Action Plan should be forwarded, with the minutes of the Strategy Discussion Meeting, to all people who attended the meeting and those who gave apologies. A copy should also be sent to the Safeguarding Adults Team, together with the minutes.

**Please note:** If the distribution of minutes has been delayed, for whatever reason, it is imperative that the Action Plan is forwarded as quickly as possible to all appropriate individuals so that they have a written account and a reminder of the actions for which they are responsible. In those circumstances it would be appropriate to send out the Action Plan and then follow up with the minutes, when completed.

An **Action Plan template** has been produced to assist in planning the agreed way forward following the Strategy Discussion Meeting, (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation).

## Outcome(s) of the Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting

Based on the information provided at the Strategy Discussion Meeting and the actions identified within the Action Plan, the Safeguarding Manager must make a decision, with the agreement of all those in attendance at the meeting, regarding what happens next.

There are three options to consider:

1. No further action **or;**
2. Decision to undertake a Safeguarding Assessment/Investigation **or;**
3. Other action to be taken.

### No Further Action

If all information from the Strategy Discussion Meeting is considered and it is concluded that:

- the adult is not at risk of abuse **or;**
- is no longer at risk of abuse (for example, an alleged perpetrator has been dismissed from their job and referred to the PoVA List) **or;**
- that abuse did not occur

then the Safeguarding Manager may decide to take no further action at this point.

**Where no further actions are possible or needed, the Safeguarding Manager must indicate this in Part B of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form** and forward it to the Safeguarding Adults Team, along with a copy of the minutes from the meeting, where it will be recorded, (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation).

The Safeguarding Adults Team will acknowledge receipt of all Part B's and minutes from Strategy Discussion Meetings, in writing. In such cases, the Safeguarding Adults process would conclude. This outcome must be communicated to everyone involved in the strategy, to the Alerter and to the adult who was alleged to be at risk.

The Safeguarding Manager when identifying this option, must clearly record the reason for this decision and support this decision, if necessary, with any relevant documentation. The minutes from the meeting must also demonstrate the reasons for the decision. If it is not clear or evidenced appropriately how this decision was reached, the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator will contact the Safeguarding Manager for further discussion on the decision.

The case will be formally closed when the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator is satisfied that the appropriate decision has been made, and this will be acknowledged in writing to the Safeguarding Manager.

### **Decision to Undertake a Safeguarding Assessment/Investigation**

If, given all the information from the Strategy Discussion Meeting, **abuse cannot be ruled out** or **concerns remain** about the safety and well-being of the adult, then the Safeguarding Manager **must** take the case to the next stage in the Safeguarding Adults process.

The next stage in the process requires the Safeguarding Manager to co-ordinate the ongoing collation of information to take to further investigation or assessment, (See Stage 5: Safeguarding Assessment/Investigation).

The Safeguarding Manager must indicate this option in **Part B of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form**, identifying reasons for this decision. The Form must then be forwarded to the Safeguarding Adults Team along with a copy of the minutes from the meeting, including a copy of the Action Plan. It is then recorded by the Safeguarding Adults Team, with an acknowledgment, in writing, that the case is continuing down the Safeguarding Adults process. This outcome must be communicated to everyone involved in the strategy, to the Alerter and to the adult at risk.

### **Other Action to be Taken**

If, after considering all information from the Strategy Discussion Meeting:

- abuse cannot be ruled out or the adult remains at risk, **but** the adult has mental capacity and refuses all means of support/help outlined in the Action Plan **and/or**
- refuses to co-operate with professionals or the Police (to be interviewed or to give a statement)

then the Safeguarding Manager may decide not to take the case any further. However, should the adult remain at risk, the Safeguarding Manager must consider proposing other actions, such as:

- agreeing appropriate monitoring and reviewing arrangements (which may be done as part of a care plan or care programme approach, or multi-disciplinary team meeting)
- increasing support packages such as increasing hours of domiciliary care support
- signposting to other services for ongoing support
- providing specialist assessment or services.

There may be further reasons for the Safeguarding Manager to decide that other action is appropriate, for example, where the concern involves issues of a regulatory nature the matter is referred to the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI).

If the Safeguarding Manager decides to take other actions, then this must be indicated in **Part B of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form** clearly identifying what the other actions are and what the reasons are for taking those actions. The Form must then be forwarded to the Safeguarding Adults Team, along with a copy of the minutes from the meeting. Receipt will be acknowledged, in writing, and recorded by the Safeguarding Adults Team. The Safeguarding Adults process would conclude at this point. This outcome must be communicated to everyone involved in the strategy, the Alert and to the adult at risk.

If the reasons for taking other action(s) are not clear, the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator will contact the Safeguarding Manager for further discussion on the decision.

Once the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator is satisfied that the appropriate decision has been made, the case will be formally closed and this will be acknowledged in writing to the Safeguarding Manager.

## Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion

The convening of a Strategy Discussion Meeting is the most effective way to develop the strategy, using a multi-agency process and involving all relevant individuals and agencies. There may be times, however, where it is necessary and more effective to formulate the initial strategy through a series of telephone calls or through a virtual meeting (a Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion).

This decision may be taken when cases:

- are less complex and do not involve many individuals or agencies
- necessitate a need for urgency in terms of co-ordinating information quickly to apply immediate safeguarding measures or strategies to ensure the safety and well being of the adult at risk.

The decision to have a Strategy Discussion is likely to be rare. In most instances, the most effective way to gather information from a number of different sources or agencies would be to arrange a Strategy Discussion Meeting.

Where information is to be gained through discussion or a series of discussions, it is crucial that these are clearly documented. **Part B of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form** must be completed and the documented discussion(s) will take the place of what would be the minutes of the Strategy Discussion Meeting. Where appropriate, an Action Plan should also be produced. Part B of the Notification, Outcome and Review Form must be forwarded to the Safeguarding Adults Team, along with the documented evidence of the discussion(s) and a copy of the Action Plan, if appropriate.

The Safeguarding Manager must indicate the outcome of the Strategy Discussion on the Form, supporting the decision with the appropriate documented evidence. The Safeguarding Adults Team will acknowledge receipt of the Part B and any supporting evidence, in writing. If it is not clear or evidenced appropriately how an outcome is reached, the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator will contact the Safeguarding Manager for further discussion about the decision. Any final decisions by the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator will be confirmed in writing to the Safeguarding Manager.

# Stage 5: Safeguarding Adults Assessment/Investigation

When a decision has been taken to continue with the Safeguarding Adults process following the Strategy Discussion Meeting, the next stage is to initiate further investigation or further assessment of risk to take action(s) to stop or reduce the risk of abuse.

## Investigation

An investigation will commence if the initial Alert involved a specific allegation or concern that abuse had or is taking place. Following the Strategy Discussing Meeting, where abuse cannot be ruled out an investigation should be carried out to determine whether or not abuse has occurred. Evidence will need to be gathered in order to take any appropriate action(s) to stop the abuse or reduce the risk of abuse

## Assessment

If the initial concern did not involve a specific incident of abuse, but the concerns were around the safety and well being of an adult, a further assessment of the situation in relation to the risk of abuse will commence. The adult may be at risk of abuse from, for example, his/her behaviour or condition or living arrangements. This needs to be properly assessed in order to take any appropriate action(s) to prevent abuse from occurring or to reduce the risk of abuse occurring.

## Safeguarding Adults Assessment/Investigation Meeting

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Manager to **co-ordinate and manage** the investigative or assessment process.

The maximum timescale for completion of the assessment/investigative process is **8 weeks from the Notification**, although it is recognised that some cases, due to their complexity or involvement with other processes or procedures (particularly where Police investigation is involved) may take longer. Any delays to the process and the reason(s) for the delay must be recorded and shared with everyone involved in the process, including the Safeguarding Adults Team.

The Safeguarding Manager will be responsible for convening **Assessment/Investigation Meetings** in order to co-ordinate the ongoing collation of information about the abuse that has occurred or might occur.

## Who to involve in Assessment/Investigation Meetings

In most instances, the people who have attended the Strategy Discussion Meeting will be invited to attend the Assessment/Investigation Meetings (See Stage 4 -Who to involve in the Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting).

The Safeguarding Manager should consider who should be invited to the Assessment/Investigation Meetings, and should include each agency with a role in

the investigation or assessment or that may be involved in the Safeguarding Plan.

The Safeguarding Manager may also consider inviting:

- The adult who may be at risk
- A representative or advocate of the adult at risk (of their choice)
- An Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) for those who lack mental capacity, to support them in making choices about the Safeguarding Plan
- Any carer that may have a role in the Safeguarding Plan, with the consent of the adult concerned (if they have capacity to give consent)

The Safeguarding Manager may also, with the consent of the person at risk (if they have capacity to give consent), invite an alleged perpetrator, who is another service user for all or part of the meeting. For example if the Safeguarding Plan is that they adhere to changes in their care plan or to voluntary changes in their behaviour then, the Meeting can be used to formalise this agreement and any monitoring arrangements.

Professionals attending any Assessment/Investigation Meetings must be at a level of seniority and authority to be able to carry out agreed actions as part of the investigative or assessment process. They will be part of an investigative team, for those cases where it is appropriate to carry out an investigation. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Manager to make decisions regarding the appropriate people to be part of this team.

**Please Note:** It is imperative that representatives invited to Assessment/Investigation Meetings attend and bring concise written records, analysis of information and details of actions taken to date. If an identified representative is unable to attend a meeting, a Report should be forwarded to the Safeguarding Manager at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

A Report Template can be found in Section 3: Forms and Documentation.

Training is available for those individuals who would take on the investigative role as part of that process. Investigation Training is part of the Safeguarding Adults Multi-Agency Training Programme. Training Programmes are available from the Safeguarding Adults Team or can be found on the Safeguarding Adults website. It is recommended that any staff or professionals who may act in the investigative role, attend this training.

The Safeguarding Manager will convene as many Assessment/Investigation Meetings as necessary to ensure that all relevant information is made available and shared appropriately. In addition they will ensure that all necessary actions are carried out and that the best possible outcome for the adult at risk is secured.

### **Responsibilities during the Assessment/Investigation**

- The Safeguarding Manager is responsible for co-ordinating the ongoing collation of information about alleged abuse from all strands of the safeguarding process
- The Safeguarding Manager is responsible for convening the Assessment/Investigation Meetings as and when appropriate to share information
- Each agency representative reports promptly to the Safeguarding Manager the results of any assessments or investigations they are undertaking and new information arising that is relevant to the assessment/investigation

- Each agency representative carries out the actions agreed in the Action Plan from the Strategy Discussion Meeting and reports back to the Safeguarding Manager any changes to that Plan
- Each agency representative makes comprehensive records of their work and the findings of any safeguarding assessment or investigation carried out
- Each agency representative makes accurate records of their ongoing support and care of the adult(s) concerned
- Individuals carrying out safeguarding investigations or assessments on behalf of their agency receive specific supervision and support (from their agency) in this role

**Please Note:** A properly conducted multi-agency investigation will achieve more than a series of separate investigations. It will ensure that evidence and information is shared and repeated interviewing is avoided, thus causing less distress for the person who may have experienced the abuse.

### What is considered during Assessment/Investigation Meetings

- Multi-agency consideration of the current and future level of risk to the adult and any other adults identified as being at risk
- Co-ordinating the strands of any other processes or procedures running parallel to the assessment or investigation. For example:
  - Police investigation
  - Disciplinary Procedure
  - Complaints Procedure
  - Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and Non-MAPPA (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements)
- Liaising closely with the Police where there is a criminal investigation (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Police Involvement in the safeguarding process)
- Providing relevant feedback, following meetings, to carers and/or family members, as appropriate
- Providing relevant feedback or information to the Alerter, as appropriate
- Gathering and sharing of information from all agencies in respect of the assessment or investigative process. Agencies must provide written reports of the assessment or investigation carried out, including any actions taken. (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation; Safeguarding Adults Report Template)
- Recording and documenting the above information by producing an **Action Plan** at the end of each meeting and reviewing that Plan at the next meeting (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation; Action Plan Template)
- Producing a **Safeguarding Plan** at the conclusion of the assessment/investigative process, if it is identified that there is an ongoing or future risk of abuse (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation; Safeguarding Plan Template)

### Structure of Assessment/Investigation Meetings

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Manager to Chair the Assessment/Investigation Meetings.

The Safeguarding Manager will decide based on information obtained at each

meeting, whether or not it is necessary to arrange a further meeting. Each case will be different and the number of meetings required to reach a conclusion will depend upon the complexity of the case, the issues involved and the circumstances surrounding the case.

It is also the responsibility of the Safeguarding Manager to ensure the attendance of an appropriate, independent minute taker at each meeting. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Manager to check the minutes and any Plans for accuracy after each meeting and to ensure the minutes are distributed, along with any Action Plans, to all appropriate individuals, including the Safeguarding Adults Team. Minutes should be distributed **within 5 days** of each meeting being concluded. (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Recording of Information). It is imperative that **following each meeting**, any minutes and Action Plans are forwarded to the Safeguarding Adults Team as they are used to monitor the progress of the case. Any minutes and Action Plans received will be acknowledged, in writing, by the Safeguarding Adults Team. The Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator will contact the Safeguarding Manager if there are any issues or queries about the minutes or Action Plans.

**Please Note:** If the distribution of minutes has been delayed, for whatever reason, it is imperative that any Action Plans or Safeguarding Plans are forwarded as quickly as possible to all appropriate individuals so that they have a written account and a reminder of the actions for which they are responsible. In those circumstances it would be appropriate to send out the Action Plan or Safeguarding Plan and then follow up with the minutes, when completed.

An **Agenda template** has been produced to assist the Safeguarding Manager in structuring Assessment/Investigation Meetings (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation).

## **Interviewing as Part of the Assessment/Investigative Process**

Interviews **should only** be conducted by those with **the remit and experience to do so**.

**In cases that involve the possibility of a criminal offence, interviews must only be conducted by the Police** (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Police Involvement in the safeguarding process).

In other instances, not involving a criminal element, the interviewers are most likely to be: employers of a person thought to be a cause of risk; commissioners investigating a breach of contract; Social Care Governance investigating concerns involving service delivery; regulators investigating breaches of regulations; or Care Managers or health workers assessing level of risk to a person, or the level of risk a person may pose to others.

Detailed written records should be made of all interviews. These should be dated and signed by the interviewer on every page.

For those cases **not involving interviews by the Police**, interviews should normally take place in the order below:

### **1. The adult who may be at risk**

Before the interview takes place, a decision will need to be made regarding the most appropriate person to interview the adult who may be at risk.

Where the adult has mental capacity, they are usually the first person to be interviewed as part of the safeguarding assessment or investigation.

Where a person does not have the capacity to take a full part in the

safeguarding process, they should still be interviewed and have the opportunity to express their experience and views in the way that they are able to, and to receive information that is accessible to them about the Safeguarding Adults process.

It may be necessary to collect other information about the circumstances before it is possible to interview a person with limited or no capacity.

The safety of the adult at risk is paramount and their confidentiality must be respected, except where information needs to be shared to protect others.

The interviewer should carry out any of the following tasks, which **have not already been** completed:

- Gain information about actions needed to enable the person to participate in the Safeguarding Adults process, for example to address communication, assistance and physical access needs
- Inform the person that a Safeguarding Adults Notification has been made and what will happen next
- Assess the person's mental capacity to make informed choices about actions that could be taken to decrease any risk of abuse. Where this does not fall within the skills of the person carrying out the interview, appropriate professional advice should be sought.
- Ask the person for their account of any situations highlighted in the safeguarding Alert, and to assess any risk of abuse they may be facing
- Give information about the input that partner agencies could make to the safeguarding assessment or investigation
- Explain any actions that an agency has a duty to take, as a result of the Notification and the interview, including actions to reduce immediate risk
- Enable the person to make informed choices about the safeguarding process, notwithstanding any duty to act by partner agencies
- Establish whether they give consent (if they are able) for information to be shared with agencies
- Establish whether they give consent (if they are able) for family members or informal carers to be informed about the Safeguarding Adults process and whether they wish them to be included in any safeguarding meetings
- This consent can be overridden if a partner agency needs to interview these other people as part of its duty to carry out the assessment or investigation.

## 2. Witnesses to incidents that have led to the concern being raised

These people should be interviewed as quickly as possible by the agency (or specific professional) identified at the Assessment/Investigation Meetings.

## 3. Anyone else thought to have information about the concern

## 4. The alleged perpetrator

**Please note:** In Police (criminal) and/or disciplinary matters any consideration to interview the alleged perpetrator should first be discussed and agreed with appropriate individuals to ensure that it will not undermine or jeopardise any criminal or disciplinary investigation. In these instances, the alleged perpetrator will most likely be interviewed as part of those processes.

In cases where it is appropriate to interview the alleged perpetrator, there should be careful preparation for the interview including considerations of the:

- safety of the alleged victim following the interview
- safety of those undertaking the interview
- safety of the Alerter
- questions to be asked and the order in which they should be asked
- communication needs of the alleged perpetrator
- rights of the alleged perpetrator.

## Action Plan

An Action Plan should be completed at the end of each Assessment/Investigation Meeting to identify actions, agency (individual) responsible for the action(s) and timescales in relation to the assessment or investigation. For example an Action Plan may identify:

- that a Care Manager is responsible for interviewing the adult at risk
- that a Consultant is responsible for carrying out an assessment on mental capacity
- that health professionals are to interview witnesses in a case where specific medical expertise is required.

All actions should relate to the assessment or investigative process as a means of gathering more information or collecting evidence to assist in moving the process on to a final outcome.

The Action Plan must be reviewed at each Assessment/Investigation Meeting. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Manager to monitor the Action Plan and ensure all actions are completed within set timescales. The Safeguarding Manager should follow up any outstanding or delayed actions before or at the next meeting.

See Section 3: Forms and Documentation; Action Plan Template

## Safeguarding Plan

A Safeguarding Plan must be produced when a decision is taken to conclude the assessment/investigative process **and** it is identified that the person (or others) remain at risk, or there is the possibility of on-going risk.

The Safeguarding Plan is produced at the **final Assessment/Investigation Meeting** and identifies safeguarding measures to be put in place because the adult remains at risk or there is the possibility of on-going risk.

The Safeguarding Plan differs from the Action Plan in that the Safeguarding Plan is specific to safeguarding the adult at risk; identifying any measures to be put in place to eliminate or reduce the current risk, or possible ongoing risk of abuse, following the conclusion of the assessment or investigative process. The Action Plan is used throughout and focuses on actions involved in the assessment or investigative process. It is recognised that during the assessment or investigative process the Action Plan may incorporate safeguarding measures as well.

The Safeguarding Plan will identify the safeguarding measures, individuals responsible for implementing the safeguarding measures and timescales. Some safeguarding measures may include:

- Police installing a panic button in the person's home
- a Care Manager securing alternative accommodation (either for the person at

- risk or for the alleged perpetrator if they are a service user)
- a CPN monitoring self-medication of a service user to reduce the risk posed to them as a result of a change of behaviour brought on by not taking the medication

## Conclusion of the Assessment or Investigation

The Safeguarding Manager, in agreement with the agencies and individuals involved in the assessment or investigative process, makes a decision as to when there is no longer a need to convene further Assessment/Investigation Meetings, thus signalling the end of the assessment or investigative process.

In most instances, the assessment or investigation will conclude when all identified actions have been taken and there are no further issues to consider.

Once this decision is made, the Safeguarding Manager must complete **Part C of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form** and forward it, along with a copy of the minutes from the last Assessment/Investigation Meeting to the Safeguarding Adults Team. If it is agreed that the adult remains at risk or there is the possibility of on-going risk, then a Safeguarding Plan should have been produced at the last meeting, and this also must be forwarded to the Safeguarding Adults Team. All Part C's and any Safeguarding Plans received are acknowledged, in writing, by the Safeguarding Adults Team. Receipt of Part C signals the end of the assessment or investigation. Once the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator is satisfied with all decisions made and all relevant documentation has been received, the case will be closed.

Part C of the Safeguarding Adults Notification and Outcome Form can be found in Section 3: Forms and Documentation

The Safeguarding Manager will indicate on the Form, for those cases where it is applicable, the outcome of the investigative process. This should be a multi-agency decision based on all the information and evidence obtained during the investigative process:

Was the alleged abuse:

- Substantiated
- Not substantiated
- Not determined/Inconclusive

**Please note:** These above outcomes should be based on the balance of probability and not beyond reasonable doubt.

If abuse has been substantiated, there should be a plan for positive action to:

- promote recovery of those affected from the abuse
- prevent the perpetrator from abusing in the future, including consideration in consultation with the Police and legal services, of the potential use of relevant legislation.

The Safeguarding Manager will also indicate on the Form, any outcomes, known at that time, for the adult at risk and, if applicable, for the alleged perpetrator, organisation or service. Outcomes must be indicated even if the abuse was not substantiated or not determined/inconclusive.

## Considerations following conclusion of the Assessment or Investigation

- There should be an agreement at the final meeting regarding the feedback to be given, and by whom, to the Alerter and to others concerned.

- The Safeguarding Manager, along with the other agencies and individuals involved in the case should identify if there were any lessons to learn or issues to explore, which would assist in informing good practice. Consideration should be given to referring the case to the Safeguarding Adults Reflective Practice Sub-Group (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Membership Lists and Remits).
- Management of potential media and press coverage.
- The need for short-term or long-term support of the individual (s) affected by the abuse. Consideration should be given to assisting victims in accessing counselling or support services.
- Similarly, the needs of the perpetrator, where they are a service user, must be addressed. It is possible to assist perpetrators in the management of abusive behaviours and therefore reduce the risk of abuse in the future.
- The ongoing needs of carers and family members involved in the recognition, investigation, assessment and management of abusive situations, should also be considered, and where possible, provision made.
- Support and re-assurances for staff and volunteers who have been involved in the process, particularly in those cases involving 'whistleblowing'.

Finally, the Safeguarding Manager will decide if the case needs to be reviewed. A review date **must** be set:

- when a **Safeguarding Plan** has been produced at the final meeting because the adult remains at risk or there is the possibility of on-going risk. A date must then be set to review the Safeguarding Plan **and/or;**
- if there are any outcomes identified at the final meeting (recorded in Part C of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form) which need to be updated. The review will update and confirm final outcomes.

In the above instances, although the assessment or investigation has concluded, the safeguarding process continues to include the Review.

The Safeguarding Manager must indicate their decision in Part C of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form. If it is indicated that a Review is required, then a timeframe for that Review must also be stated on the Form.

See Stage 6 - Review

# Stage 6: Review

A Review should be held within six months of the conclusion of the safeguarding process. It can, however, be called sooner if significant risks remain or arise, if circumstances change or there is an identified need to do so.

The purpose of the Review is to:

1. Review the Safeguarding Plan **and/or**;
2. Update on any outcomes following the final meeting of the assessment/investigation process.

The Review can also be used to reflect on what has occurred since the last Assessment/Investigation Meeting, to identify any changes in circumstances and, if necessary, to reassess any risk(s).

## How the Review takes place

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Manager to set a date for the Review.

It is also the responsibility of the Safeguarding Manager to gather any relevant information from the appropriate agencies or individuals to carry out the review.

## The Review Meeting

If a Safeguarding Plan has been produced, a Review Meeting must be convened. Any update of outcomes can also be reviewed at the meeting, if necessary.

The purpose of the Review Meeting is to bring together relevant information from all agencies involved in the Safeguarding Plan and to review that information. This would involve reviewing the effectiveness of the safeguarding measures put in place following the last Assessment/Investigation Meeting.

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Manager to invite appropriate individuals to the meeting (those involved in the Safeguarding Plan) and to Chair the meeting. If appropriate, the Safeguarding Manager should ensure the attendance of an independent minute taker.

Following the meeting, the Safeguarding Manager will complete **Part D of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form** and forward it to the Safeguarding Adults Team, with any minutes as appropriate.

## Reviewing Outcomes

If a Safeguarding Plan was not produced but there was a need to update on outcomes identified at the last Assessment/Investigation Meeting, then it may not be necessary to convene a meeting. The Safeguarding Manager must gather all relevant information from the appropriate individuals in relation to the identified outcomes from the last Assessment/Investigation Meeting and confirm these outcomes, if possible. Confirmation of outcomes may include, for example, the outcome of a Police investigation, the outcome of a referral to the PoVA List or the outcome of criminal or civic proceedings.

The Safeguarding Manager would then complete **Part D of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form**, and forward it to the Safeguarding Adults Team.

Although a meeting may not be necessary when reviewing outcomes, there may be some instances where convening one would be beneficial, for example, if the information needed to confirm outcomes was quite substantial or complex, or several agencies or professionals were involved. Should this be the case, a meeting would take place as stated above.

Whether or not the review involves a meeting, in both instances the Safeguarding Manager must complete **Part D of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form**.

**Part D of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form can be found in Section 3: Forms and Documentation**

In both instances the Safeguarding Manager will indicate on the Form, any updated or confirmed outcomes and/or the current position of the Safeguarding Plan.

## Outcome of the Review

Consideration must be given to whether or not the review process can be concluded. Where it cannot be concluded, the Safeguarding Manager must decide if another date is to be set or if the Safeguarding Adults Procedures are to be re-instigated by completing a new Notification.

### ■ Concluding the review process

There will be no need to continue with the review process if the adult is no longer at risk or on-going risk.

There will be no need to continue with the review process if all outcomes have been confirmed.

### ■ Setting another review date

Another review date should be set if:

- the adult remains at risk or there is the possibility of ongoing risk **and/or**;
- the Safeguarding Plan remains active (either as it was initially or altered to reflect changes in circumstance or level of risk) **and/or**;
- there has been no confirmation of outcomes (e.g. Police investigation has not been completed).

### ■ Re-instigating the Safeguarding Adults Procedures.

If there are new allegations or concerns of abuse identified, then a Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting must be called, moving the case back to the beginning of the safeguarding process. Part A of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form would need to be completed and forwarded to the Safeguarding Adults Team to indicate that this is a new allegation or concern, and the process followed as outlined in the previous Stages.

**Please Note:** The Safeguarding Manager must indicate on the Form the outcome of the Review.



# **Role of Agencies within the Process**

# The Safeguarding Adults Team

The Safeguarding Adults Team is located within Adult Services Performance and Governance Section. It works in close collaboration with the Social Care Governance Team and the Quality Assurance and Complaints Team, (See Section 1: Procedures; Role of Other Agencies).

The Safeguarding Adults Team comprises of the following:

- Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator
- Safeguarding Manager
- Safeguarding Adults Training and Development Officer
- Part-time Business Support Assistant.

## Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator

The main role of the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator is to work in partnership with agencies to ensure the on-going development and effective implementation of the Sunderland Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedural Framework.

The Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator is expected to take a strategic role in promoting Sunderland's Procedural Framework across all agencies and sectors within the City of Sunderland. It is also expected that the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator will promote Sunderland through representation, regionally and nationally, in the area of Safeguarding Adults.

The Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator is also responsible for ensuring that any relevant national or local initiatives, guidance, procedures and/or legislation are incorporated appropriately into Sunderland's Policy and Procedural Framework. In order to achieve this, part of the role demands that the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator has an active involvement in national networks and initiatives as well as being part of relevant local groups and partnerships.

Any queries, advice or information at a strategic or partnership level or in relation to policy or procedures, guidance or initiatives should be directed to the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator.

## Safeguarding Manager – Within the Safeguarding Adults Team

The role of the Safeguarding Manager – within the Safeguarding Adults Team is threefold:

- to take on the role of Safeguarding Manager in complex cases, for example organisational or multiple cases, or where there is a need for independent input. In such cases the Safeguarding Manager will co-ordinate and Chair safeguarding adults meetings, including Strategy Discussion Meetings, Assessment/ Investigation Meetings and Review Meetings. The Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator will decide which cases the Safeguarding Manager will manage
- to offer support and guidance to Safeguarding Managers from other agencies who may be new to, or inexperienced in, the role and require support in the safeguarding process.

The Safeguarding Manager may attend safeguarding meetings that are co-ordinated and chaired by other agencies, or meet with the agency's Safeguarding Manager to go through the process of meetings or to discuss any issues they may have prior to meetings. It must be noted that the attendance of the Safeguarding Manager at any Safeguarding Adults meeting in these instances, is that of a supportive role only, to help guide the process as necessary and not in any other capacity (i.e. to investigate). The Safeguarding Manager from the Safeguarding Adults Team will remain totally independent of the agencies involved in any case.

- To offer case advice and support to Safeguarding Managers from other agencies. If a Safeguarding Manager from another agency has any questions, concerns or queries in relation to a case they are currently (or will be) managing, they can contact the Safeguarding Manager within the Safeguarding Adults Team.

The Safeguarding Manager within the Safeguarding Adults Team will also offer advice, support or information on general Safeguarding Adults issues to any staff member or volunteer from any agency.

## Safeguarding Adults Training and Development Officer

The main role of the Safeguarding Adults Training and Development Officer is to develop and facilitate the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Training Programme, as well as developing and delivering workshops, awareness raising sessions and information sessions on adult abuse and safeguarding adults.

The Training and Development Officer is also responsible for promoting awareness of Safeguarding Adults through a variety of different formats and methods including developing publicity/promotional materials and organising local events such as seminars, workshops and conferences. Ensuring the smooth running of the Safeguarding Adults website and production of the quarterly newsletter is also the responsibility of the Training and Development Officer.

The Training and Development Officer is also involved in other developmental projects.

Any queries, advice or information in relation to Safeguarding Adults training or in relation to project work or promotional materials, should be directed to the Safeguarding Adults Training and Development Officer.

## Business Support Assistant

The main role of the Business Support Assistant is to provide the appropriate administrative support to the Safeguarding Adults Team.

The Business Support Assistant is also responsible for the inputting of statistical information from the Notification, Outcome and Review Forms into the Team's database.

Information such as forms, documentation, procedures and publicity materials (information for staff or the public) can be obtained by contacting the Business Support Assistant.

## Role of the Safeguarding Adults Team

The Safeguarding Adults Team works in collaboration with the Sunderland Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board and the Sub-Groups to ensure continued development and commitment in the area of Safeguarding Adults in Sunderland.

For more information on the membership and remits of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board and the Sub-Groups, (See Section 2: Practice Guidance).

The principle functions of the Safeguarding Adults Team are to:

- raise the profile of Safeguarding Adults in the City of Sunderland
- act as a focal point for formulation and implementation of multi-agency strategy, training, policy and procedures
- offer advice, guidance and support to improve practice
- provide independent monitoring of progress, actions and decisions made in individual cases to ensure adherence to the procedures
- collate, review and record all documentation and information received from Safeguarding Managers to ensure overall consistency of the safeguarding process
- provide statistical analysis of information received and identify and report on activity, patterns, trends and outcomes
- oversee the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Training Programme and related training events. Endorse any single-agency training provided externally
- act as an engine to drive the work of the Sunderland Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board and Sub-Groups.

# Role and Involvement of other Agencies

**Safeguarding Adults is every agency's responsibility and requires a multi-agency response to ensure the best possible outcome for the adult at risk.**

Therefore, it is the responsibility of the organisation, agency or service where the abuse is alleged to have occurred to manage the safeguarding process, where appropriate.

It is important that each agency ensures that they have their own Individual Agency Guidance identifying roles and responsibilities linked to the Procedural Framework and outlining the process to be followed. It is the responsibility of all staff within their respective agencies to ensure that they are familiar with this Guidance, (See Section 1: Procedures; Individual Agency Guidance).

## Adult Services

### Direct Services

Concerns involving abuse or the risk of abuse taking place in any service provided by Adult Services (day service, short break service, or residential service) should be brought to the attention of the Responsible Person identified in Direct Service's Individual Agency Guidance. It is the responsibility of identified Safeguarding Managers within Direct Services to manage the safeguarding process where abuse or the risk of abuse is identified within any service directly provided by Adult Services.

Direct Service staff will attend Safeguarding Adults meetings managed by other agencies, where it is deemed appropriate that they are involved.

In those cases where staff misconduct is an issue, Disciplinary Procedures will also be instigated. The disciplinary and safeguarding processes can be followed simultaneously; one should not preclude the other.

### Fieldwork and Assessment

The role of Fieldwork and Assessment teams in the Safeguarding Adults process is wide and varied and covers a range of situations particularly those where the abuse or risk of abuse is deemed to be located within the persons own home and/or involves family members.

The Team Manager from the relevant Area Team will take on the role of Safeguarding Manager in cases appropriate to their service area. Care Managers will attend safeguarding meetings managed by other agencies, as appropriate and will take part in any investigative or assessment process where relevant to their involvement in the matter.

In most cases the matter will involve people already known to the Area Team, however, Team Managers also have a Duty of Care to those who meet the criteria for the safeguarding process but are as yet unknown to services.

In those cases where staff misconduct is an issue, Disciplinary Procedures will also be instigated. The disciplinary and safeguarding processes can be followed simultaneously; one should not preclude the other.

## Social Care Governance Team

The Social Care Governance Team will make decisions about attendance at Safeguarding Adults meetings based upon specific circumstances and application of criteria identified within a risk assessment. The purpose of attendance and involvement will be to contribute, ensure that quality, standards, governance and service improvement issues related **to services** are raised and addressed and establish whether there is a role for Social Care Governance in investigation or monitoring.

The Social Care Governance Team will not be involved where it is considered that issues relate specifically to individuals and not services. This includes people in receipt of Direct Payments, individual budgets or other means of personally funding services when it is more appropriate to monitor on an individual basis as part of the assessment, care management or review process. Where issues or concerns also relate to a service, which is commissioned or contracted by the Council, and it is considered that they too may be affected, the Social Care Governance Team will apply the risk assessment to determine the appropriateness of and level of involvement.

Where issues relating to services become apparent during the safeguarding process and the Social Care Governance Team are notified by the Safeguarding Adults Team, involvement will be determined by application of the risk assessment.

Whilst the Social Care Governance Team do not specifically attend Safeguarding Adults Assessment/Investigation Meetings in an investigative capacity, there will be circumstances when it is considered appropriate that the Team have a role in the investigative process. Reasons for involvement in investigations will be variable and be at a level agreed within a multi-agency context considering the need to work in partnership with and support services, as well as the role the Commission for Social Care Inspection have in respect of regulatory matters.

Social Care Governance will share concerns relating to services, as appropriate, with the Safeguarding Adults Team.

## Procurement Team

The Procurement Team will be involved in the safeguarding process, and attend Safeguarding Meetings where issues relate to fees, costs, financial stability, potential cessation or change of services or contract terms and conditions. They will also be involved if there are current issues with the service provider relating to contract compliance or if they are specifically requested to attend by the service provider or the Safeguarding Manager of a particular case.

Should information become available to the Procurement Team about a potential safeguarding matter, it is notified to the Safeguarding Adults Team.

## Quality Assurance and Complaints Team (QACT)

The Quality Assurance and Complaints Team receive complaints and concerns raised by service users, their relatives or members of the public about various matters and issues.

If the complaint is considered to be one that may involve abuse or the risk of abuse, the QACT will immediately pass the complaint to the Safeguarding Adults Team. The Safeguarding Adults Team will consider the complaint and make a decision on whether or not it is appropriate for it to be considered under the Safeguarding Adults Procedures. If it is not appropriate, the Safeguarding Adults Team will ask the QACT to proceed in dealing with the matter through the Complaints Procedure.

If it is appropriate, the Safeguarding Adults Team will inform QACT and the Safeguarding Adults process will take precedence. The QACT will notify the complainant accordingly and the complaint will be managed under the Safeguarding Adults Procedures. Once the safeguarding process is concluded, any outstanding elements of the complaint will be considered for progression through the Complaints Procedure, as necessary.

## **Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust**

Any concerns, allegations or disclosures to staff directly managed by the TPCT (such as District Nurses, Community Matrons, Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Assessors) or Primary Care staff including GP's, dentists and opticians or those practitioners who provide community services e.g. chiropodists should be brought to the attention of the Responsible Person(s) identified within the Trust's Individual Agency Guidance and the process followed as outlined in the Guidance.

It is the responsibility of the Trust to manage the safeguarding process when safeguarding issues are identified within the Trust, or in services commissioned by the Trust or when individuals are placed within services by the Trust (Continuing Health Care placements).

Trust staff will attend safeguarding meetings managed by other agencies, as appropriate and will take part in any investigative or assessment process where relevant to their involvement in the matter.

In those cases where staff misconduct is an issue, Disciplinary Procedures will also be instigated. The disciplinary and safeguarding processes can be followed simultaneously; one should not preclude the other.

## **City Hospitals**

Any concerns, allegations or disclosures raised within Sunderland Royal Hospital (on any Ward or in any Department, including Accident & Emergency) should be brought to the attention of the identified Safeguarding Adults Lead in City Hospitals. The Alerter will complete Part A of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form and forward it to the Safeguarding Adults Lead in City Hospitals and to the Safeguarding Adults Team.

The Safeguarding Adults Lead will take on the role of Safeguarding Manager in those cases where the patient is admitted to hospital.

The Safeguarding Adults Lead will convene the Strategy Discussion Meeting, where appropriate, and invite all relevant individuals to the meeting. It may be decided at that meeting (depending upon the nature of the allegation/where the abuse is alleged to have occurred) that another agency is more appropriate to manage the safeguarding process. If this is the case, the management of the case will then pass to the identified Safeguarding Manager of the appropriate agency to complete the process with involvement/input from City Hospitals, as appropriate.

If the patient is discharged or due to be discharged shortly, the Safeguarding Adults Team will decide which agency is most appropriate to manage the process, with involvement from City Hospitals at any Safeguarding meetings, as appropriate.

Where there are concerns identified by hospital staff, about a patient and the patient subsequently dies in hospital, an Alert must still be raised and Part A of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form completed and

forwarded appropriately as described above. The Safeguarding Adults Lead from City Hospitals will, in most cases, convene the Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting involving all relevant hospital personnel and other agencies and individuals, as appropriate. The case will be referred to the Coroner where necessary. It may be decided at the Strategy Discussion Meeting (depending upon the nature of the concern(s) and the circumstances of the death) that another agency is more appropriate to manage the safeguarding process. If this is the case, the management of the case will then pass to the identified Safeguarding Manager of the appropriate agency to complete the process with involvement/input from City Hospitals, as appropriate.

In those cases where staff misconduct is an issue, Disciplinary Procedures will also be instigated. The disciplinary and safeguarding processes can be followed simultaneously; one should not preclude the other.

## **Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust**

Any concerns, allegations or disclosures to staff directly managed by Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust (such as Community Psychiatric Nurses, Community Nurses, Psychologists, Psychiatrists and Occupational Therapists) should be brought to the attention of the Responsible Person(s) identified within the Trust's Individual Agency Guidance and the process followed as outlined in the Guidance.

It is the responsibility of the Trust to manage the safeguarding process when safeguarding issues are identified within the Trust or in services commissioned by the Trust.

Trust staff will attend safeguarding meetings managed by other agencies, as appropriate and will take part in any investigative or assessment process where relevant to their involvement in the matter.

In those cases where staff misconduct is an issue, Disciplinary Procedures will also be instigated. The disciplinary and safeguarding processes can be followed simultaneously; one should not preclude the other.

## **Partnerships**

Partnership arrangements continue to develop. Each Partnership must ensure that Safeguarding Adults Procedures are embedded in the policies and procedures of those Partnerships.

Staff must be given clear guidance on their roles and responsibilities within the Safeguarding Adults process.

## **Independent Providers**

Each contracted service in Sunderland is required to have in place their own Individual Agency Guidance, setting out how that provider will respond to safeguarding adults concerns, and ensuring a multi-agency response to any Notification. The Individual Agency Guidance must be in line with Sunderland's Multi-Agency Procedural Framework.

Any concerns, suspicions or allegations of abuse occurring within their organisation must be brought to the attention of the Responsible Person(s)

identified within their own Individual Agency Guidance and the process followed as outlined in the Guidance.

It is the responsibility of the provider to manage the safeguarding process when safeguarding issues are identified within their organisation, where appropriate. Safeguarding Managers will be identified within the Individual Agency Guidance. This individual may be, for example, the Manager/Owner of a Home or Home Care Agency or a Regional/Area Manager of the organisation.

The identified Safeguarding Manager can, where necessary, receive support and guidance from the Safeguarding Manager within the Safeguarding Adults Team, (See Section 1: Procedures: Safeguarding Adults Team) In some cases it may be deemed necessary for the process to be independently managed by a Safeguarding Manager from another agency including the Safeguarding Manager within the Safeguarding Adults Team.

In those cases where staff misconduct is an issue, Disciplinary Procedures will also be instigated. The disciplinary and safeguarding processes can be followed simultaneously; one should not preclude the other.

## Voluntary Agencies

Staff or volunteers within a voluntary agency should raise their concerns in accordance with their own Individual Agency Guidance, linked to the overall Procedural Framework. If appropriate, Part A of the Notification, Outcome and Review Form should be completed and forwarded to the Safeguarding Adults Team. Discussion may need to take place regarding who is the appropriate person/agency to manage the safeguarding process (depending upon the nature of the concern and where the abuse is alleged to have taken place). In some instances it may be that the Safeguarding Manager within the Safeguarding Adults Team will manage the process, particularly for smaller voluntary agencies.

In those cases where staff misconduct is an issue, Disciplinary Procedures will also be instigated. The disciplinary and safeguarding processes can be followed simultaneously; one should not preclude the other.

## Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)

CSCI's function in response to safeguarding adults concerns is primarily as a regulator.

CSCI will only become involved where a safeguarding alert suggests breaches of regulations and standards or lack of fitness of registered persons.

Whilst CSCI must always be informed of any Safeguarding Adults concerns within a regulated service, it is not necessary or appropriate for CSCI to attend all Safeguarding meetings. CSCI will decide their level of engagement based on certain criteria.

When CSCI receives information about a possible Safeguarding Adults issue or concern and how to respond, guidance is in place.

**The Safeguarding Adults Protocol and Guidance for the Commission for Social Care Inspection can be found in Section 1: Practice Guidance**

## Safeguarding Adults 24-Hour Helpline

The Helpline is situated within City of Sunderland Corporate Services and staffed by Care Alarm operatives.

Any member of the public who contacts the Helpline will be asked to provide as much information as possible so that the concern can be passed to the appropriate Adult Services Area Team or Health Team. Details of the call are recorded on a Helpline Form, which is then passed to the appropriate Team. The Safeguarding Adults Team also receives a copy of this Form which they use to confirm that the identified Team is taking appropriate action. This also enables subsequent monitoring by the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator.

## Sunderland City Council

If staff or volunteers from any other department or service, within the Council have any concerns in relation to an adult that they feel would be covered under the Safeguarding Adults Procedures, they should contact the Safeguarding Adults Team.

## Children's Services

It is important that staff within Children's Services have knowledge and understanding of the Safeguarding Adults process.

Where Safeguarding Adults issues are identified within Children's Services, staff should contact the Safeguarding Adults Team.

## Healthcare Commission/Strategic Health Authority

The Commission for Social Care Inspection and the Healthcare Commission are expected to merge next year (2008) and it is anticipated that guidance will be produced outlining their role within Safeguarding Adults. It is also expected that the role of the Strategic Health Authority will be clarified at that time.

**Please Note:** The above information outlines agency responsibilities under the Safeguarding Adults Procedures however it is **imperative** that the response to any notification of abuse be multi-agency in nature to ensure transparency. For the same reason, any ensuing investigation or assessment must also be multi-agency. The input of the Safeguarding Adults Team ensures independent monitoring of the process.

It is important that each agency takes responsibility for managing the safeguarding process and keeping safe the people to whom they are affording a service and to whom they have a Duty of Care.

# Individual Agency Guidance

Each agency or service is required to produce its own Safeguarding Adults Individual Agency Guidance and insert it into this section. If this is not possible and it has to be stored separately, then clear instructions to staff on where it can be found must be added to this section.

The Guidance must be compatible with the Safeguarding Adults Multi-Agency Procedures and reflect the philosophy and commitments outlined in the Safeguarding Adults Policy Document.

The following notes may be useful in devising the Guidance.

## **Notes for agencies developing their own internal guidance to sit within the Safeguarding Adults Procedural Framework.**

### **Introduction**

Sunderland's Multi-Agency Procedural Framework is in place to ensure that all agencies that support adults who may be vulnerable, work together to ensure a consistent approach in responding to allegations of abuse. When allegations of abuse are made or where the risk of abuse is identified, the Framework offers guidance to staff and volunteers about the process that should be followed. It identifies roles and responsibilities within that process and also provides definitions and categories of abuse. The Framework also outlines relevant pieces of legislation, good practice guidance and documentation in relation to Safeguarding Adults.

All agencies providing support or care for adults who may be vulnerable should ensure that their members of staff have access to:

- a copy of Sunderland's Safeguarding Adults Multi-Agency Procedural Framework and Policy Document (April 2007)
- copies of the Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome and Review Form (April 2007), which needs to be completed following an Alert, (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation)
- copies of the various templates, forms and documentation to be used during the safeguarding process, (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation).

## Individual Agency Guidance

Sunderland's Multi-Agency Procedural Framework is divided into four separate sections. Individual agencies should insert here their own guidance for workers in the context of their own agency or organisation, as it is recognised that agencies are structured and staffed in different ways.

### **Each agency or organisation is responsible for the development of its own Individual Agency Guidance.**

These notes offer only general advice on what to consider when this guidance is being developed and must be read in conjunction with the rest of the Procedural Framework. All individual guidance must be compatible with the overall Procedural Framework and compliant with the Department of Health Document 'No Secrets' and the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Document 'Safeguarding Adults A National Framework of Standards for good practice and outcomes in adult protection work. (Copies of the 'No Secrets' Document can be obtained by contacting the Department of Health, PO Box 777, London, SE1 6XS. Copies of the ADSS 'Safeguarding Adults' document can be obtained by contacting the ADSS, Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ.)

### **What to include**

- You may want to include at the beginning of your individual guidance, some background information on your agency. This could include a mission statement, statement of philosophy or a general description of what your agency does and how it does it.
- You may want to include some background information on the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board. This information can be found in the Procedures (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Membership Lists and Remits)
- You may want to include the definitions, categories and indicators of abuse (See Section 2: Practice Guidance) and the criteria for use of the Safeguarding Procedures, (See Section 1: Procedures; Introduction).
- You will need to clarify how your agency is structured and the roles and responsibilities of both staff and volunteers within that structure.
- You will need to identify who fits the following roles:
  - Alerter
  - Responsible Person
  - Safeguarding Manager.

These people will need to be named by title, and large organisations should consider identifying more than one Responsible Person or Safeguarding Manager to ensure that all areas and departments are covered, and at all times.

It is also recommended that each agency identifies a Lead Person in Safeguarding Adults. This Person will act as a source of information and support for staff and volunteers within the agency, particularly in relation to how the safeguarding process operates within that agency. This person can be contacted when staff or volunteers have queries or need advice or information about how the safeguarding process works within their agency. This may be the person who is represented on the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board or may be an identified Safeguarding Manager within that agency who has particular expertise and knowledge in the safeguarding process.

You will need to ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of their own role and the roles of others. It is important that individuals know who they should contact and how they can be contacted (i.e. telephone numbers, out-of-hours telephone numbers if required)

- You will need to ensure that you identify the responsibilities of each of the roles as outlined within the Procedural Framework. Please remember that your identified Safeguarding Manager is not just someone identified to pass information to, or inform, but rather they have the role of actually co-ordinating the Safeguarding Adults Strategy Discussion Meeting and subsequent Assessment/Investigation Meetings. This includes drafting the invitation list(s), arranging meetings (venue), chairing meetings and ensuring that minutes are taken and distributed appropriately.
- You will need to outline the process, specific to your agency, to be followed once an allegation or suspicion of abuse is alerted. This process needs to be based on the process outlined in the Procedural Framework.
- You will need to outline any variations to the process, depending on the structure of your agency or the systems established within your agency.
- You may want to outline how any other internal procedures or guidance fit with the Safeguarding Adults Individual Agency Guidance, for example, Disciplinary Procedures, Whistleblowing Procedures, Complaints Procedures or Codes of Conduct.
- You may want to outline, depending on the nature of your agency, any other issues specific to your service, for example, issues of consent, confidentiality and information sharing.
- You will need to include information on recording systems and the storing of confidential information. You will need to ensure that you record all information on the Notification, Outcome and Review Form, as appropriate. This form is used so that the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator can collate statistical information on the incidence of adult abuse in the City of Sunderland, so it is important that the relevant Parts are returned to the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator promptly. This also allows the Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator to monitor the process and ensure consistency across agencies.

To assist in maintaining consistency, templates to be used throughout the safeguarding process have been developed. Please ensure these are used and all minutes forwarded to the Adult Protection Co-ordinator with the relevant Parts of the Notification, Outcome and Review Form (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation).

- You should include information on any other relevant individuals within your agency who may be of assistance in offering advice or information regarding safeguarding issues, such as the identified Lead Person in Safeguarding Adults within your agency. It should also include contact details for the Safeguarding Adults Team and any other relevant service or agency details (See Section 2: Practice Guidelines; Local Contacts).

**Your Individual Agency Guidance must be reviewed on a regular basis to agreed timescales.**

