

# **Chairing Safeguarding Adults Meetings**

# Chairing Safeguarding Adults Meetings

## Introduction

The following is a list identifying many of the issues the Chair of any Safeguarding Adults meeting may need to consider. The list is not exhaustive but attempts to provide a comprehensive framework from which to work.

The role of the Chair in the Safeguarding Adults process is a crucial one. Those taking on the role must have an understanding of the Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures and be in an appropriate position within their agency to undertake the task. The Chair of Safeguarding Adults meetings, ordinarily, is the Safeguarding Manager identified within the appropriate agency to manage the safeguarding process.

Whilst this list can be seen as a useful tool it cannot take away the need to attend relevant training. Details of relevant training can be obtained by contacting the Safeguarding Adults Team: 0191 566 1736.

**Please Note:** It is important that all relevant Safeguarding Adults documentation is completed at the appropriate time (in accordance with the relevant stage of the process) and promptly forwarded to the Safeguarding Adults Team. All forms and documentation, including templates, are included in Section 3: Forms and Documentation.

Please also refer to Section 1: Procedures; Process – Stages 4 and 5

## Considerations Prior to the meeting

- The Chair of Safeguarding Adults meetings, ordinarily, is the identified Safeguarding Manager within the appropriate agency who manages the safeguarding process.
- Consideration needs to be given whether it is appropriate and relevant for the alleged victim or adult at risk to attend the Safeguarding Adults Meeting(s). If the matter concerns a service, rather than an individual, the needs of all service users must be taken into account.
- If the alleged victim or adult at risk does not have mental capacity, the criteria for the instruction of an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) needs to be considered, (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Protocols and Procedures).
- Consideration needs to be given to the involvement of carers and family members within the safeguarding process. A decision will need to be made whether it is appropriate or relevant to invite them to attend meetings or to provide feedback, (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Involvement of Carers in the Safeguarding Process).
- The meeting should involve professionals from relevant agencies and service providers who should have been contacted as part of the initial information gathering. Attendance from individuals with specific knowledge of the situation is recommended. It should not include anyone who may be implicated in the abuse.

- Good practice would dictate that professionals invited to the meeting should be asked for written reports to be submitted prior to the meeting to enable circulation by the Chair in advance. Anyone sending apologies should also be asked to submit a Report, no later than 24-hours prior to the meeting taking place for the Chair to either circulate in advance (if given enough time) or to present at the meeting, (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation for Safeguarding Adults Report Template).
- The Chair should meet with the minute-taker prior to the meeting to inform them of the possible issues to be raised. It would be helpful for the minute-taker to be informed where the minutes will need to be used by an employer to make a referral to the Protection of Vulnerable Adults (PoVA) List and that consequently the names of service users and whistleblowers should be anonymised as far as possible, (See Section 4: Practitioner Toolkit; Safeguarding Adults Minute Taking).
- Practical arrangements regarding venue should be seen as important and take into account the known requirements of individuals attending, particularly those with need for specific provision regarding mobility or communication and the consequent decisions regarding, for example, access, interpretation or advocacy.
- The Chair can restrict or exclude attendance of people at the meeting if they are likely to prevent a full and proper discussion. For this reason, it is important to consider whether all involved in the matter should be invited to the same meeting or it would be more appropriate to hold two separate meetings. For example, where the abuser is also a service user, it would be more appropriate for their needs to be addressed separately to those of the alleged victim. Similarly, it may be possible to consider the needs of the alleged victim or adult at risk and their carer(s) at the same meeting but their distinct, perhaps conflicting needs may make this untenable, and thus a separate meeting would be more appropriate.
- Issues of confidentiality must be taken into account when considering attendance and for this reason, victims and carers should not be present when action against a member of staff or service is being discussed or other confidential information is being disclosed.
- The consideration of who should attend the meeting becomes an even more important issue where the abuse may be of a possible criminal nature. In such cases the Chair must take advice from the Police to ensure that the potential attendance of anyone would not compromise the Police investigation in any way. (See Section 2: Practice Guidance; Involvement of the Police in the Safeguarding Process). Should the attendance of the victim or carers be deemed unsuitable for this reason, it would be necessary for the Chair to either arrange a separate meeting or agree arrangements at the meeting for any relevant information to be subsequently shared with the individuals concerned.
- The Chair should ensure that the reason(s) for the meeting are explained to the alleged victim or adult at risk and representative(s) prior to the meeting and that whatever decision regarding their attendance has been taken is also explained.

## Considerations During the Meeting

The meeting should generally follow the structure as outlined in the templates to be found in Section 3: Forms and Documentation.

The following considerations are a useful reminder of some of the important issues the Chair should remember:

### Introductory Matters

- Facilitate introduction of all participants: name, title and agency.
- State apologies and where appropriate explain any reason for anyone's partial or non-attendance.
- Read out statement of confidentiality (See Agenda Templates in Section 3: Forms and Documentation).
- Outline the purpose and explain the structure of the meeting.
- Ensure a brief, factual background to the case is given including the date the original concerns were raised. This could be given by an allocated Care Manager or key worker or be given by the Chair, using the information on the original Safeguarding Adults Notification, Outcome & Review Form – Part A (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation).

### Views of Participants

- If the alleged victim or adult at risk has capacity and is present at the meeting, ensure his or her views are communicated. If not having capacity, or not present, views could be communicated by, for example, a care worker, advocate (Independent Mental Capacity Advocate) or carer, as appropriate.
- Facilitate full discussion of the facts and opinions, ensuring the views of all professionals involved are expressed.
- Present any Reports from participants giving apologies.

### Identification of Risk

- Ensure the discussion identifies any possible risk, not just to the adult central to the matter but also to others, and where this is the case any ensuing Safeguarding Plan covers everyone deemed to be at risk, (See Section 1: Procedures; Process - Stage 5 and Section 3: Forms and Documentation).
- Where appropriate, and taking account of the need for immediate action, formulate or review a clearly defined Safeguarding Plan and mechanisms for on-going support arrangements.
- Where appropriate, discuss and decide the need to indicate or inform other local authorities, Care Managers or services regarding the level of concern.

### Actions/Next Steps

- When identifying the need for an Assessment or Investigation be clear about the terms of reference, who is doing what, how and to what time-scale.
- Ensure that other actions such as criminal investigation or disciplinary procedures are taken into account so that the safeguarding process can run simultaneously without compromising either of the other processes.
- Formally record the above in an Action Plan, (See Section 1: Procedures; Process – Stage 5 and Section 3: Forms and Documentation).
- Confirm that everyone involved in any ensuing actions is aware of their role.
- Ensure feedback is provided, if necessary, to anyone not in attendance at the meeting for example, service user, carer and Alerter, and by whom.
- Consider the need for referral to other processes for example, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA), Protection of Vulnerable Adults (PoVA) List, General Social Care Council or Nursing and Midwifery Council.
- Consider the need for Review.
- Ensure that the next meeting date is set, as appropriate.

## Considerations After the Meeting

- Meet with the minute-taker to check and clarify notes and use this as an opportunity to discuss any emotional impact the meeting may have had on the minute-taker.
- Agree minutes to be circulated, amending where necessary.
- Monitor progress of any Action Plans or Safeguarding Plans.
- Ensure all relevant Safeguarding Adults documentation is completed and forwarded to the Safeguarding Adults Team within timescales.
- Consider use of the Audit Tool to evaluate process and assist in personal development and refer to the Safeguarding Adults Reflective Practice Sub-Group as appropriate.

