



What do I do if I have an adult safeguarding concern?

A guide for staff and volunteers working with adults with care and support needs

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1 What is safeguarding adults?

Safeguarding Adults is about stopping or preventing abuse or neglect of adults with care and support needs.



2 Who are adults with care and support needs?

Adults with care and support needs could be someone over the age of 18:

- has a learning disability
- has mental health needs including dementia or personality disorder
- has a long term illness/condition
- who misuses substances or alcohol
- who is elderly and frail due to ill health, disability or cognitive impairment.



3 Whose job is it to safeguard adults with care and support needs?

Anyone could be the first person to spot abuse. Everyone has a duty to take appropriate action if they become aware of an adult with care and support needs who may be experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect.



Safeguarding adults is everybody's business.

A photograph of two women wearing red saris and headscarves, smiling and looking towards each other. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery.

What is adult abuse and neglect?

Adults with care and support needs can be victims of many types of abuse or neglect, including:

Domestic abuse

Controlling and coercive behaviour, forced marriage, female genital mutilation or “honour”-based violence

Discriminatory abuse

Ill-treatment or harassment based on a person’s age, sex, sexuality, disability, religious beliefs or ethnic group; disability hate crime

Financial or material abuse

Theft, fraud, coercion over wills, misusing someone’s money, property or other belongings without their agreement

Institutional abuse

Through rigid regimes, systemic poor care, poor organisational culture, lack of resources, denial of choice, lack of dignity and respect for service users

Physical abuse

Hitting, burning, pushing or kicking someone, rough handling, unreasonable restraint (including misuse of medication), locking someone in a room



Neglect or acts of omission

by people responsible for giving care; including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

Sexual abuse

Rape, inappropriate touching or forcing someone to take part in or witness any sexual act against their will

Psychological or emotional abuse

Intimidation, bullying, shouting, swearing, taunting, threatening or humiliating someone, or radicalisation

Self-neglect

Neglecting to care for oneself or environment

Slavery

Trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude



Listen to their views, including the risks they face and what they would like to see happen next...

What do I do if I have a concern that an adult is being abused or neglected or is at risk of this?

1. If the adult is in immediate danger, take action at once such as calling emergency services or medical assistance.
2. Report any concern about a child to the Children's MASH. This includes where you know a child lives in the same home as an adult you think may be experiencing or at risk of abuse.
3. Unless it is not safe to do so, speak to the adult to get their views about the concern and the risks you think they face.

I am asked my opinion if people around me think I am at risk of abuse or neglect

- Listen to their views, including the risks they face and what they would like to see happen next. (They may see the concern differently; some safeguarding concerns can be minor and easily resolved; others can be very serious and affect lots of people.)
- Consider the person's ability to understand the concern (mental capacity). If they are not able to understand, you will need to decide what to do in their best interests. If you are in any doubt, refer the matter to Birmingham City Council.
- If the person declines support, consider if this is because they are scared of someone who may be trying to control what they say or do. That could be a sign of domestic abuse.
- Discuss the concern and what to do with your supervisor/manager/person you report to, unless this would cause a delay that places the person at greater risk (but then make sure you inform them as soon as you can).

I feel listened to and what I say is taken seriously

I know that decisions are made in my best interest when I lack capacity to make them

My views directly informs what happens next

4. Take the action you have agreed to safeguard the adult. This could be:

- The actions the adults wants that resolves a problem in the way they want.
- If a crime has or is being committed, report this to the police. (Take action to protect any evidence of a crime.)
- Where the person agrees (or where you have decided that for their safety you must act,) report the safeguarding adult concern to Birmingham City Council
- Always record what you have done and the reasons for doing it.

I get help and support to report abuse and neglect

Why is it so important to speak to the adult when I have a safeguarding concern about them?

The 2014 Care Act says that safeguarding an adult from abuse or neglect has to be done with their involvement to the greatest extent possible. Everyone has the human right to be involved in the decisions that affect their lives. This approach is known as **“making safeguarding personal”**.

Adults with care and support needs have said that when people act to protect them without including them, this often makes things worse, not better.

Remember **“No decision about me without me”**.

My right to make choices about the risks that I face and to have control over the decisions that affect my life are respected

I know that no decision that affects me will be made without including me in making them

Should I report a safeguarding concern without the person's consent; and what if they tell me not to do anything?

You should always listen and take account of what the person says. But there may be occasions when you need to report a concern without the person's consent; for example :

- If you suspect the adult is being coerced or bullied into refusing support
- If waiting to get their consent would put them at further risk
- If there is a risk of harm to the adult or others,
- If it is necessary to prevent crime or if a crime may have been committed,
- If the adult lacks mental capacity to understand the risks they face



I know that decisions are made in my best interest when I lack capacity to make them

In these circumstances you **must** report your concern.

The adult should always be told of your decision to report the concern and the reasons for this, unless telling them would put their safety, or the safety of others, at risk.

The key issue in deciding whether to report a concern without their consent will be the level of risk of harm to the adult (or to any other adults who may have contact with the person or organisation causing the risk of harm.)

If you are not sure what to do, report your concern to **Birmingham City Council**.

Confidentiality and sharing information – sharing information on a “need to know” basis is essential to safeguard adults. There is a duty to share information to stop or prevent abuse or neglect. But this needs to be balanced against your duty to protect the adult's confidentiality.

You should:

- Wherever possible gain permission of the adult to share information if consent cannot, or is not given, if you judge this is essential to protect the adult, and is in their best interests; or to protect others from harm.
- Only share the information necessary to protect the adult; and only with people who need to know.

Four steps to protecting adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect

1



See It

Recognise what you are seeing or hearing could be abuse or neglect. If the person is in immediate danger take action at once, such as calling emergency services or medical assistance.

2



Talk to the adult

Make safeguarding personal. Share your concerns with the adult, unless it is not safe or possible to do this. Listen to their views and ask them what they would like to see happen next.

3



Decide what to do

Consider:

- What the person wants
- Their mental capacity to understand the concern; If they are not able to understand, you will need to decide what is in their best interests to do.
- The level of risk to the adult or to others
- Who else may need to be informed

4



Take the agreed action

This could be:

Take action that resolves the concern in the way the person wants



Refer any child identified at risk to MASH 303-1888

REMEMBER:
No decision about me without me

- If the adult refuses support, consider if this is a sign of coercion by a perpetrator (domestic abuse) and if you need to act without their consent
- Discuss the concern and what to do with your supervisor/manager/person you report to, unless this would cause a delay that places the person at greater risk.

If you are not sure what to do, report your concern to Birmingham City Council

Report a crime to the police:
ring 101



Report a safeguarding concern to Birmingham City Council

Email:
ACAP@birmingham.gov.uk

Ring:
0121 303 1234

Remember to record what you have done and the reasons why

Full information about safeguarding adults can be found in *Adult Safeguarding: Multi-agency policy and procedures for the protection of adults with care and support needs in the West Midlands* at www.bsab.org

This guide is about safeguarding adults: people over the age of 18. If you are concerned someone under the age of 18 is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, you should contact **Children's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** on **0121-303-1888**

The person I can speak to for advice about adult safeguarding in my organisation is:

Contact details