

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. Safeguarding involves people and organisations working together to stop abuse and neglect happening.

When do safeguarding responsibilities apply?

Safeguarding does not mean protecting every adult from every kind of harm or risk to their own personal safety. The Care Act tells us that statutory safeguarding responsibilities only apply in specific circumstances where an adult:

- has needs for care and support (whether the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

What is abuse?

Abuse can be defined as "The violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons and may result in significant harm to, or the exploitation of the person subjected to it". There are many forms of abuse, including:

- **Physical abuse** – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse** – including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Modern slavery** – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
- **Discriminatory abuse** – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- **Organisational abuse** – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice because of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** – 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.
- **Self-neglect** – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Why does abuse occur?

There are lots of factors and reasons behind why abuse occurs. Abuse is not always an intentional or a deliberate attempt to cause harm. It can arise out of stress, insufficient resources or lack of knowledge and skills. But abuse is often perpetrated in circumstances where one person (or persons) has power and control over another individual.

Who can be responsible for abuse occurring?

It can be anyone. However, the person responsible for the abuse is very often known to the person being abused. It could be a spouse, partner, son, daughter, relative, friend, carer, or neighbour, a paid carer, volunteer, a health worker, a social care worker, another resident or service user, a visitor or someone who is providing a service to that person. This could also mean a member of our staff.

Reporting

If there is a child or adult in immediate danger or a crime has been committed it is important that you phone 999 for the Police.

You can also report your concerns directly to Lincolnshire County Council's Safeguarding Adult or Child team by telephoning 01522 782155.

A report can be made by any person. It might be made by the person who is at risk, a family member or friend, a member of the public, a paid care worker, a volunteer, a member of our staff, or anyone else.

If we become aware of a possible safeguarding concern, we will appoint an appropriate person (known as a Fact Finder) to respond to the concerns, this includes:

Making initial contact with the person at risk, if deemed safe and appropriate.

Building the picture – getting as clear a picture as possible without avoiding any delay – how serious, how urgent, what is the risk of harm/potential risk of harm, what does the person want, are they able to make an informed decision? Are there any children involved?

Following our investigations we may make a referral to Lincolnshire County Council's Safeguarding Adult or Child team. We will always make a referral to the Local Authority if we receive a report that a child may be at risk of abuse.

Confidentiality

It is preferable to know who is reporting a concern. It can make it more difficult to follow up concerns if the identity or contact details of the referrer are not known. However, if the identity of the referrer has been withheld, we will follow our safeguarding policy and procedure in the usual way.

While every effort will be made to protect the identity of anyone who wishes to remain anonymous, the anonymity of people reporting concerns cannot be guaranteed throughout the process, particularly where the response involves criminal proceedings.

We will not normally act or share information with others without the permission of the person who is being abused but there are some exceptions to this rule. We have a duty to report concerns where there are others at risk of harm and/or where the person is at risk is not able to decide for themselves because of their mental capacity or where we believe the risk could seriously affect their wellbeing.

We also have duty to share information that may be in the public interests, this includes where there is reasonable cause to believe that an adult is suffering, or is at risk of suffering serious harm, to prevent the adult from harming someone, to promote the wellbeing of an adult, detecting crime, apprehending offenders and/or maintaining public safety. Any information shared will be accurate and up-to-date, necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared, and shared only with those who need to know. Such information will be shared and retained securely. Please refer to our privacy statement.

What happens after a safeguarding referral is made?

We will carry out a risk assessment to decide whether to make a referral to Lincolnshire County Council's Safeguarding Adult or Child team. If we do make a referral, the Safeguarding Adult or Child team will review what has happened and decide whether the best way of helping is to continue following safeguarding procedures, or to look to see if there is a more appropriate way to provide support.

They will also consider if any actions are needed urgently to keep the person at risk safe from harm.

A case conference is a meeting held after certain kinds of safeguarding referrals. This normally involves key agencies who will consider the following:

- the findings of the enquiries made.
- whether the person is at risk; and
- the need for a protection plan to keep the person safe.

We will help contribute to any involvement from Lincolnshire County Council's Safeguarding Adult or Child team, this includes playing a part in any investigations or case conferences (where invited to do so). We will maintain an active interest in the safeguarding concern until we are satisfied that the abuse has been addressed or the person involved has the capacity to understand what is happening to them and does not want to stop the behaviour from being repeated.