

# The Safeguarding Process



This booklet explains what we do when someone tells us you may have been abused.

If people are worried that you may have been harmed or abused in any way, it is our job to look into this and make sure you are safe. This is called safeguarding.

We work with the police, health services, housing, voluntary organisations and anyone else who can help to make and keep you safe. We work together and share information to protect you from further abuse.

We will involve you at every stage so you can work with us to decide what is best for you.

## What happens first?

Three things have to happen immediately.

- We check to see if you are in immediate danger.
- You will have a contact person who will talk to you and listen to what you want to happen. A contact person is a named person who will keep you informed of what we are doing and why.
- We will work with you to make sure that you have the right level of support during any investigation.

## What happens next?

- If we think you are in immediate danger, we will work with you quickly to make you safe. For example, if someone is hitting you or stealing your money, we will work with you quickly to make you safe. Your contact person will explain what is happening.
- If we think you are NOT in immediate danger, we will talk to you and decide what to do next. For example, your family might be worried that you are not looking after yourself and that this might cause you problems in the future. We would talk to you about their concerns.
- It gets more complicated if we think you are in immediate danger but we also think you do not have mental capacity. Lacking mental capacity means that you do not understand the situation and cannot make decisions about what to do. For example, you might be too ill or confused to realise you were not getting the right level of support.
- Your contact person can tell you more about mental capacity. If we think you are in immediate danger but do not have mental capacity, we have to work quickly and do what we think is best for you. We have to be very careful about what we decide. We will work with people who can represent you and who understand your views.

- Another complication is when there are other people at risk. We then have to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone. This may mean you do not agree with all of our actions. For example, you might not worry that a support worker is not giving you your medication, but that could be more serious for someone else.

### How do we decide what to do?

We usually hold safeguarding meetings as a first step in finding out what the concern is and what we need to do to make things better. We may also need to carry out an enquiry to learn more about the situation and sometimes, we may need a safeguarding plan to make sure the concern does not happen again.

### What are safeguarding meetings?

Safeguarding meetings are held so that we can all get together in order to:

- Establish the facts
- Hear your views and wishes
- Identify if further action is needed to ensure your safety and wellbeing

There are normally at least two safeguarding meetings. The first is to decide if a full enquiry is needed. The last meeting is to make sure that everyone knows what has happened.

## Can I attend my safeguarding meetings?

Yes, always, and you can bring someone with you. That person can be an advocate, a friend, a member of your family, or anyone you choose.

If you do not want to attend or cannot attend, you can choose someone to go on your behalf or we will talk to you before the meeting so your views can be heard.

If you do not attend a meeting, we will always tell you afterwards what was discussed and what will happen next.

We are very careful with personal information, so we will not invite someone to a safeguarding meeting where we have to discuss other people's personal details.

## Who else will be at the safeguarding meetings?

- Your contact person will always attend this meeting.
- We will invite other people who have useful information or who can help stop the harm.

People who attend the safeguarding meeting know that everything said is confidential.

## What happens if an enquiry is needed?

An enquiry is a detailed look into the concerns. At the first safeguarding meeting, we will decide who are the best people to carry out the enquiry. This might be Solihull Council, the police, health staff or the care provider.

The people leading the enquiry will talk to anyone who can help with the enquiry so we can find out what happened. This may include members of your family of employed staff. They may also want to see care records.

The people leading the enquiry will always talk to you whenever they can. They can arrange for you to be supported by an independent advocate.

An independent advocate will:

- Listen to you
- Provide information
- Explain options to you
- Help you reach your own decisions
- Support or represent you. The independent advocate should always support your views whether or not they agree with those views.

## What might happen to the person who is abusing me?

- We can usually make sure that the person under investigation is not allowed to contact you, if that is what you want.
- In serious cases, the person who is abusing you may be arrested by the police who might prosecute them.
- It is more likely that we will recommend training or that we have to change how we do things.
- If you want to carry on seeing this person, we will try to make that possible with support services, advice and information.

## What happens at the end of an enquiry?

When the enquiry is finished, we will usually organise a final safeguarding meeting.

At this meeting we will discuss with you or your representative what has happened and what needs to happen next. If we think you are safe, we will take no more action and the case will be closed. If we think you are still at risk of abuse, we will talk about what

can be done to prevent the abuse. This becomes your Safeguarding Plan.

We record all our actions on our computer system. You can see what is recorded.

### **What is a Safeguarding Plan?**

If we think you are still at risk of abuse, we will put a safeguarding plan in place. This plan will set out what we have to do to help stop you being harmed or abused again.

A named person will make sure the plan is carried out.

We will review the plan on a regular basis with you and any other people involved in the safeguarding plan.

## What happens afterwards?

We will ask you:

- If you feel safer now
- If you are happy with what we did to help you or is there anything more you would like us to do
- If you think we treated you properly

We hope you will tell us what you think, so we can review how we do things and make improvements if necessary.

## How long will the process take?

The length of the process depends on what the concern was. Sometimes it can be quite quick, but often it can take a month or more.

You will be kept informed at all times. If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please talk to your contact person.

