

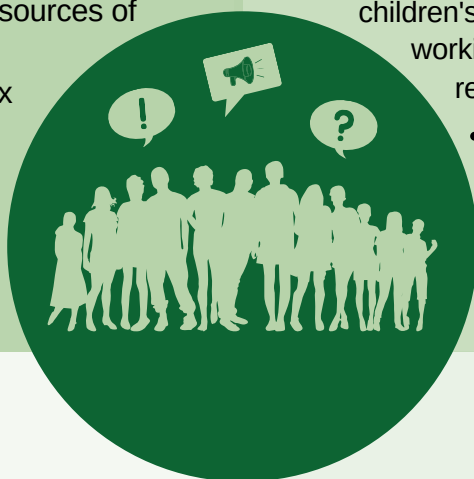
RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS BY FAMILY & FRIENDS

1. What Is Meant by Responding to Allegations by Family Members & Friends

Wider family members, friends & neighbours are often aware of the difficulties some people are experiencing and may keep an eye on the situation. They may intervene directly by providing shelter & food, or report suspicions of abuse, neglect, or abandonment. In many cases they may not wish to be identified and the reports to services are anonymous.

Whether the call is made anonymously or not, several reviews suggest that in some cases it does not result in any record of what action was taken and, in many, insufficient weight was given to concerns raised.

While it is important to recognise that there is no opportunity to challenge such referrals, unlike those from professionals, these referrals should be scrutinised and triangulated with other sources of information. This will often require an exploration and assessment of complex family and community relationships. Failing to do this could prevent other concerns being raised and leave someone in an unsafe situation.



2. Key Messages

- Concerns reported by wider family, neighbours, or anonymously should always be accurately recorded and taken seriously by those receiving the information
- So-called 'malicious' referrals should receive the same response as any other referral until there is evidence to demonstrate that this is the case, i.e. rule in until there is a basis to rule out, rather than the other way round.
- Relatives and communities can help if given the necessary support and should be considered as having the potential to be valuable partners in safeguarding
- Take a multi-agency approach to bring together everything that is known to challenge any potential bias i.e. an assumption that family allegations are unfounded
- When families receive services from adult and children's services, information sharing and joint working enables the development of more realistic plans to safeguard
- Complex family & community relationship dynamics need to be fully explored and evaluated. This may be something that needs to be continually readdressed when circumstances change.

4. Resources

- Child Protection in England
- Complexity and Challenge: A triennial analysis of SCRs 2014-2017
- Complex Needs Learning Resource
- Who is Around the Person Learning Resource
- Family Group Conferences
- Sandwell SAB - Safeguarding Adult Review 'Anne'
- Information on Adult Safeguarding for Relatives and Friends

3. What Does This Mean for Me?

- Would a genogram or **ecomap** help your understanding of family & network relationships? Adult Social Care can use the 'Atom' on Liquid Logic to ensure they are liaising with the most appropriate and relevant people in the person's life - make sure it's kept up to date
- How can you engage with wider friends and family in your work with people?
- Do you explore opportunities for multi-agency working and information sharing all of the time?
- Do you access **reflective supervision** to question any possibility of assumptions or bias?
- Do you routinely record the information you receive and your response to it?

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