

# Information on adult safeguarding for relatives and friends



This leaflet explains what we do when we are concerned that an adult with care and support needs might be at risk of abuse or neglect. It tells you what happens, and how you, as a relative, friend, carer or guardian, might be involved.

Adult Safeguarding means protecting the right of adults with care and support needs to:

- Live in safety, free from abuse
- Have control over what they do.

In adult safeguarding terms, abuse is when someone does or says something which harms an adult with care and support needs or makes them upset and scared. Neglect is a “passive” form of abuse. For example, if someone does not do something they should have done, leading to the adult being harmed or put at risk. Abuse is always unacceptable. Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. No-one has the right to abuse someone.

Abuse can happen once or can be something that happens over weeks, months or years. It can be accidental or deliberate. Just because there is no injury does not mean there is no abuse.

## **What is the role of the Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board in the safeguarding procedure?**

The Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board leads and coordinates safeguarding work across Solihull.

Adult safeguarding is an important part of what many public services do, and a key responsibility of local authorities.

We work with the police, health services, housing, voluntary organisations and anyone else who can help to make and keep adults with care and support needs safe.

## **What is the role of relatives and friends in the safeguarding procedure?**

Relatives and friends often help support an adult with care and support needs to take part in their own adult safeguarding.

Your role will vary depending on the circumstances and the wishes of the adult with care and support needs, but can include:

- Supporting the adult to tell us what their wishes are and to make sure they are heard
- Speaking on their behalf in their best interests if they do not have mental capacity
- Supporting them in meetings and interviews
- Sharing information and knowledge about the risks they are experiencing and their support needs
- Supporting an assessment of needs, sometimes this may include your needs as a carer
- Helping us prevent the abuse or reduce the possibility for further abuse.

## **What if the situation also affects my safety?**

We recognise that people who care for adults sometimes also experience risks to their safety. We will work with you to see what we can do to help. For example, we might be able to offer a carer's assessment and some support for you in your own right. We might be able to provide you with a break from caring.

## **Concerns about abuse or neglect**

If we are concerned that an adult with care and support needs might be at risk of abuse or neglect, three things have to happen immediately.

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

## What happens next?

- If we think your relative or friend is in immediate danger, we will work with them quickly to make them safe. For example, if someone is hitting them or stealing their money, we will make sure they agree with what we do. The contact person will explain what is happening.
- If we think they are NOT in immediate danger, we will talk to them and decide what to do next. For example, you might be worried that they are not looking after themselves and that this might cause problems in the future. We would talk to them about the concerns.
- It gets more complicated if we think your relative or friend is in immediate danger but we also think they do not have mental capacity. Lacking mental capacity means that they do not understand the

situation and cannot make decisions about what to do. For example, they might be too ill or confused to realise they were not getting the right level of support. The contact person can tell you more about mental capacity. If we think they are in immediate danger but do not have mental capacity, we have to work quickly and do what we think is best for them. We have to be very careful about what we decide and there are strict guidelines to help us decide what is in their best interests. We will work with people who can represent them and who understand their views.

- Another complication is when there are other people at risk. We then have to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone. For example, one person might not worry that a support worker was not giving them their medication, but that could be more serious for someone else.

## How 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.

## Safeguarding meetings

Safeguarding meetings are held so that Adult Social Care staff and any other partners can all get together in order to:

- Establish the facts
- Hear the views and wishes of the adult concerned
- Identify if further action is need to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

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

The adult concerned can always attend the safeguarding meetings, and can bring someone with them. That person can be you, or an advocate, a friend, another member of the family, or anyone they choose.

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

If they do not attend a meeting, we will always tell them 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.
- The contact person will always attend this meeting.
- We will invite other people who have useful information or who can help stop the harm.

People attending the safeguarding planning meeting know that everything said is confidential.

## The enquiry

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

The people leading the enquiry may talk to anyone else who can help with the enquiry so we can find out what happened. This may include you, other members of the family, employed staff etc. They may also look at care records. The people leading the enquiry will keep your relative or friend up to date with what is happening

and they can arrange for them to be supported by an independent advocate.

## **Independent advocates**

An independent advocate can support your relative or friend and will:

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

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

We can usually make sure that the person under investigation is not allowed to contact the adult concerned, if that is what they want.

In serious cases, the person who is alleged to have abused your relative/friend 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 your relative/friend wants to carry on seeing this person, we will try to make that possible with services, advice and information.

If your relative/friend does not want to see them anymore, we will try to help make this possible.

## **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 your relative or friend, or their representative, what has happened and what needs to happen next. If we think they are safe, we will take no more action and the case will be closed. If we think they are still at risk of abuse, we will talk about what can be done to prevent the abuse. This becomes the Safeguarding Plan.

We record all our actions on our computer system. The adult concerned can see what is recorded.

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

If we think your relative or friend is 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 them 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 your relative or friend and any other people involved in the safeguarding plan.

## What happens afterwards?

We may ask you:

- How satisfied were you with the end result of what people did to try to keep your relative/friend/person you care for safe?
- How satisfied were you with how people dealt with the concern throughout the process?
- Did you or your relative/friend /person you care for, get the chance to say what you/they wanted to happen?

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

## How long will the process take?

The length of the process depends on what the concern was. It can be quite quick, but often takes a long time, perhaps a month or more. Your relative or friend will be kept informed at all times. If they have any

questions or concerns, at any time, they can always talk to their contact person.

You may also contact us at any time and we will share information with you as long as we have permission from the adult concerned.

## Who can I contact?

If you have any questions, the contact person for this safeguarding concern is:

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Phone:.....

Email:.....

Available for contact at these times: .....

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## Other useful organisations who can offer you information and advice:

Age UK Solihull

Tel: 0121 705 9128

Website: **[www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull)**

Carers Centre

Tel: 0121 788 1143

Website: **[www.solihullcarers.org](http://www.solihullcarers.org)**

Community Navigator Services CIC

Tel: 0121 722 8958

Website: **[www.communitynavigatorservices.org](http://www.communitynavigatorservices.org)**

Solihull Action through Advocacy

Tel: 0121 706 4696

Website: **[www.solihulladvocacy.org.uk](http://www.solihulladvocacy.org.uk)**

