



Carers Network

7 Minute Briefing: Carers & Safeguarding



1. Who is a carer?

A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member. Sometimes they can care for more than one person. The people they support may be affected by disability, physical or mental ill health, frailty or substance misuse. Anyone can become a carer at any point in their life. In the UK today 1 in 8 adults are carers this equates to 6.5 million people; it is believed that this number increased over the lockdown period to 13.6 million people. Therefore increasing numbers of us have caring roles to a greater or lesser extent in our personal lives. Recognising that this is an everyday experience for many people is an important reminder that 'carers are not to be stereotyped. Carers are from a diverse range of backgrounds. Carers may be parents, daughters, sons, partners, neighbours and friends. Carer may be adults or children and patients and service users – and at risk themselves.

2. The impact of caring

Many carers have reported to suffering negative impacts from caring:

- Social
- Financial
- Physical and Psychological
- Wellbeing
- Employment and Education
- Identifying and supporting carers matter: making caring and carers visible and making support services inclusive

3. The Care Act 2014 recognised the important role that carers play in relation to safeguarding. Carers can witness abuse, experience intentional or unintentional harm from the person they are providing care to or can intentionally or unintentionally harm or neglect the person they support.

4. Carers and Safeguarding: Making Safeguarding Personal is central to supporting safeguarding for both carers and the person they care for. When reviewing a safeguarding situation it is important that ensure the safety and wellbeing of both the person and their carer. Early interventions can, in particular, make a big difference in preventing situations escalating or abuse and neglect occurring. Examples that require a safeguarding response involving a carer include:

- The carer witnessing or disclosing the existence of abuse or neglect
- When supporting those they care for, experiencing deliberate or unintended harm from them
- Neglect and poor practice in care settings such as a care home or hospital or in relation to care services at home
- Deliberate or accidental harm or neglect to the person they are caring for

5. Learning from regional Safeguarding Adults Reviews

Safeguarding Adults Reviews that have raised the issues about carers needs. Key learning that has been highlighted includes:

- Carers, whether formal or informal, should be asked about their own needs and offered a carers assessment where this is required
- All services should make efforts to ensure that carers are kept informed of key updates in relation to the people they are caring for
- The Think Family approach should be adopted when working with individuals around their safeguarding needs. This means that whole of the family dynamic and wider family needs should be considered when engaging with service users

6. Key Tips: Things that you can do to further support carers include:

1. Ask questions and check whether someone is a carer or has caring responsibilities
2. Familiarise yourself with support that is available to carers and services that they can be signposted to
3. Remember that people with care and support needs, such as learning disabilities, can also be carers. Do not make assumptions about who may or may not be a carer
4. If you are concerned that about a carer's ability to cope or are worried that they may be experiencing abuse or neglect you can make a referral to safeguarding adults or children's

7. Support available in Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster:

Carers network exists to reach and empower every unpaid carer in the Bi-borough. We do this by helping carers lead healthy fulfilling lives, with a range of practical, personal and financial support suited to their needs.

Our Opening times are Monday – Friday from 9am – 5pm

Please call us on 02089603033 or send us an email on: info@carers-network.org.uk.

More details can be found on our [website here](#)