

7 Minute Briefing: What makes a good safeguarding referral

1. Raising a Concern: The Care Act 2014 sets out the criteria that must be considered in relation to raising a safeguarding concern. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted, including, where appropriate, having regard for their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

*has needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of those needs)

*is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect

*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

2. Making Safeguarding Personal is about ensuring that the safeguarding process is person centred and outcome focussed. It is essential that the adult at risk is involved throughout the process, and their views obtained. It is essential that, unless in exceptional circumstances it is unsafe to do so - the referrer speaks to the adult at risk about the safeguarding concern before a referral to the Local Authority, to obtain their consent for the referral to be made, and to gather their views on what they would like to happen. If the referrer deems the adult at risk to lack capacity, consider speaking to an advocate, family member, or friend involved with the adult at risk, who has been involved in that best interest decision making.

3. Is poor care a Safeguarding Issue? The aim of every service provider should be effective, high-quality care. When this falls short, people are put at risk. However, many of the issues raised as safeguarding concerns are **not** rooted in harm but in poor practice and poor-quality care. Nonetheless, the impact on the adult at risk can be just as great, regardless of whether harm is intended. It is important to differentiate between the two, in order to address problems in the right way and so that all adults at risk receive safe, high-quality care and support. Please find below a list to help you differentiating between poor care and potential safeguarding issues.

Poor care

- ◆ A one-off medication error (although this could, of course, have very serious consequences).
- ◆ An incident of understaffing, resulting in a person's incontinence pad being unchanged all day.
- ◆ Poor-quality, unappetising food.
- ◆ One missed visit by a care worker from a home care agency.

Potential causes for concern

- ◆ A series of medication errors.
- ◆ An increase in the number of visits to A&E, especially if the same injuries happen more than once.
- ◆ Changes in the behaviour and demeanour of an adult with care and support needs.
- ◆ Nutritionally inadequate food.
- ◆ Signs of neglect such as clothes being dirty.
- ◆ Repeated missed visits by a home care agency.
- ◆ An increase in the number of complaints received about the service.
- ◆ An increase in the use of agency or bank staff.
- ◆ A pattern of missed GP or dental appointments.
- ◆ An unusually high or unusually low number of safeguarding concerns.

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It is good practice to keep the [Care Quality Commission](#) and Commissioners of services fully informed of action that is being taken. Where single instances of poor or neglectful care are repeated, patterns of harm are identified and other people are put at risk, the Care Quality Commission and commissioners must be told and should take decisive action. Of course, the Care Quality Commission does not cover every type of support, and where poor care is delivered by a personal assistant, with no employer other than the person with care and support needs themselves, it can be hard to identify and tackle. Whoever arranged the care and support, usually the local authority, should satisfy itself that a person with care and support needs knows who they can talk to if they are dissatisfied with the support they are getting

To make a complaint to:

Kensington and Chelsea Adult Social Care: ASCCustomerEngagement@rbkc.gov.uk

Westminster Adult Social Care: ASCCustomerEngagement@westminster.gov.uk

4. Consent and empowerment of an adult when raising a safeguarding concern.

It is vital to attempt to seek to discuss the views and desired outcomes of the adult or the adult's advocate/network, and for these to be recorded. When considering the impact, good practice is to identify the adult's account of their feelings and what effect the incident has had upon them. It is important to remember that consent is not essential when deciding whether safeguarding concerns should be raised, and for information to be shared regarding safeguarding risks.

If the adult has capacity and does not consent to a referral and there are no public or vital interest considerations, they should be given information about where to get help if they change their mind or if the abuse or neglect continues and they subsequently want support to promote their safety. The referrer must assure themselves that the decision to withhold consent is not made under undue influence, coercion, or intimidation. The adult will need to be informed that a concern will still need to be raised

5. Responsibilities of the Person making the referral: If, on the basis of the information available to you, it appears that the 3 points (in point 1) are met, a referral should be made to the Local Authority. The person who raises the safeguarding concern has a responsibility to first and foremost safeguard the adult at risk before the referral is made to the Local Authority. It is important to have a conversation with the adult to obtain their views and tell them what action you will be taking. In addition, and if required you can:

***Seek medical treatment.**

***Contact Emergency services if required** - In an emergency call the Police on 999. You can also contact the Police on 101 for non-emergency situations.

***Consider referrals to other agencies** e.g., advocacy or if there are other family members that might need support e.g., children.

*** Any action you can take to remove/reduce risk?** It is helpful if you can think about anything you can do immediately to reduce risk to the adult and keep them safe and then share what actions you have taken when you make the referral to Adult Social Care.

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6. Information required - in order for the referral to be triaged in a timely manner by the Local Authority it is essential that all the information is provided.

Here is a useful list to refer to.

- * Name
- * Date of Birth
- * Ethnicity
- * Address
- * Type of Accommodation
- * GP details
- * Primary Health Conditions/Diagnosis,
- * Basic Facts – (does the adult have care and support needs, any communication difficulties, health needs).
- * Contact details for Referrer, any other relevant individual involved (carers, family members, friends, NOK, Advocate).
- * Telephone numbers - is this number safe to make contact (e.g., in domestic abuse, can this number be used without increasing the risk), if not what number can be used.

7. Contact information

Safeguarding is aimed at anybody aged 18 or over who has care and support needs and who is unable to protect themselves from either the risk or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Local services must work together to safeguard adults in a way that supports them to make choices and have control about how they want to live.

If you think a crime is being or has been committed, or someone is in immediate danger, call the **Police** on **999**. You can also contact the Police on **101** for non-emergency situations

If you have urgent concerns that you or someone you know, is being abused or neglected, you can contact **Adult Social Care** via telephone or email (details below). Your call will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Kensington and Chelsea

T: 020 7361 3013

E: socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk

Westminster

T: 020 7641 2176

E: adultsocialcare@westminster.gov.uk

You can also complete our online referral form to raise a safeguarding concern.

To tell Kensington and Chelsea about any concerns you have (known as 'raising a Safeguarding Alert') you can ring them on the above numbers or complete and send [this alert form](#) to them.

To tell Westminster about any concerns you have (known as 'raising a Safeguarding Alert') you can ring them on the above numbers or complete and send [this alert form](#) to them