

**WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU
TELL US THAT YOU, OR
SOMEONE YOU KNOW,
MAY BE BEING HARMED,
NEGLECTED OR ABUSED**

**WEST SUSSEX
ADULTS
SAFEGUARDING
BOARD**

Everyone's business
*Working together to
prevent harm and abuse*

This booklet explains what happens when there is a concern that an adult who may be unable or less able than others to protect themselves could be being harmed, abused or neglected. It explains how we work with the person at risk to find out what they want to happen and to help them and others to be safe. It also explains the investigation and case conference process where this is needed.

When we use the word

'ABUSE'

in this booklet we are including **harm** and **neglect** as well

When we use the word

'ADULT'

in this booklet we mean an **'adult at risk'**

Safeguarding adults at risk

If you tell us that you think you or someone you know is being abused, we have procedures to deal with this.

We use the term 'safeguarding adults' to mean working together with adults at risk, to support them to live as independently and safely as possible, in the way that they want, so they are in control of their lives.

Who is an 'adult at risk'?

An adult at risk is someone aged 18 or over who may be unable or less able than others to protect themselves from harm, abuse or neglect. This may be because they rely more on the help, support or care of others due to their circumstances, needs or health. This can include older people, people with sight or hearing difficulties, a physical condition, illness or disability, learning disability or mental-health condition. The safeguarding procedures could also cover informal carers if they are at risk due to their caring role (for example, a carer looking after someone with challenging behaviour).

If you or the person you are worried about is under 18, we will use the children's safeguarding procedures.

What are the procedures for safeguarding adults at risk?

Throughout the UK, there are very clear procedures to support adults at risk to protect themselves. The procedures say how agencies and organisations should work together and communicate effectively to prevent abuse taking place and respond to any concerns.

Across Sussex, health services, adult social-care services and the police have agreed ways of working together to prevent, respond to and look into the suspected abuse of adults at risk. You can see a full copy of *'The Sussex Multi-agency Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Adults at Risk'* on our website at www.westsussex.gov.uk.

This booklet briefly explains what happens when we use these procedures.

Co-ordinating information to prevent abuse at an early stage

Concerns may be raised by different people and could be passed to a range of organisations and professionals. Adults' Services (provided by West Sussex County Council), co-ordinate all the information people provide about any concerns they may have.

Signs that abuse may be happening can sometimes be subtle and hard to notice. Sometimes concerns that may appear minor may indicate wider or more serious issues. If this is the case, the earlier we are told about the concerns the more likely we are to be able to prevent harm from happening or increasing.

We always encourage people to report their concerns, even if these may not appear serious. Safeguarding adults is 'everyone's business'.

For more information about how to report something you are worried about, see our leaflet '*What to do if you or someone you know may be being harmed, neglected or abused*' (ws100).

What happens when you receive information that an adult at risk may be being harmed?

When we receive information that might mean an adult at risk may be being harmed, abused or neglected, we always take this seriously.

We consider the information carefully before we decide what action might be the most appropriate and proportionate way to respond. This will include considering any other information that may also be relevant.

If the information tells us that the person may have experienced harm, or may be at risk of serious harm, we call this an 'alert'.

There are seven types of harm or abuse described in the adults' safeguarding procedures. These are:

1. Physical abuse

2. Sexual abuse

3. Psychological abuse

4. Financial abuse

5. Discrimination

6. Neglect

7. Institutional abuse



Are all concerns automatically recorded as 'alerts'?

We record all the information we receive. If information tells us that an adult at risk may have been harmed or could be at risk of serious harm, we record this as an 'alert'.

If we decide the information is not an 'alert', we may take other action depending on what the concern is about.

When we record information, we will always try to talk to the adult at risk about this as soon as possible to ask them what they want to happen.

If we decide that information should be recorded as an 'alert', we put a trained investigation manager in charge of this. The investigation

manager will work either in adult social care or working-age mental health services, provided in West Sussex by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

What happens if you record a concern as an 'alert'?

We will always:

- take all concerns we receive seriously;
- take appropriate action regarding any immediate risk;
- try to talk to the adult at risk as soon as possible about what they want to happen and what support they may want to help them keep safe – if the person refuses help, but others may be at risk, we will need to take appropriate action, but we will always keep the adult at risk informed;
- talk to the police if it is a criminal matter;
- talk to those involved and ask them what has happened;
- talk to other professionals who may need to be involved; and
- gather relevant information to decide whether we need to take further action under the adults' safeguarding procedures.

Who makes the decision whether or not you need to take further action or carry out an investigation?

The investigation manager will decide whether we need to investigate the concerns further or take other action. The investigation manager will consider:

- what the adult at risk wants to happen;
- if there are any risks to others;
- how serious the information and risks involved are;
- whether we can put an effective safeguarding plan in place without using the safeguarding procedures (for example, whether we could share information with other agencies who may be able to help and co-ordinate a response without using these procedures);
- whether another procedure or process would achieve better outcomes for the person or others (for example, a process to support them with their care needs, if that is what they want to happen, or the process for dealing with domestic violence); and
- if we need to investigate any aspect of the concern further.

Ideally, the investigation manager must make this decision within 24 hours of receiving the alert or must record the reasons why the decision needs to take longer. We will tell the person who raised the concerns if we will respond to their concerns, but this is usually all we can tell them.

If we decide to take further action under the adults' safeguarding procedures, the investigation manager is responsible for co-ordinating and leading this and any safeguarding investigation that may be needed.

**Do I have a choice about whether someone raises a concern about me or whether this is investigated?**

We will always try to get your agreement about any action we take. However, we may not be able to do this, for example if others are at risk. If this is the case we will always explain the reasons and what will happen next. We will make sure you are fully involved in any decisions and in the safeguarding process.

What support is there for the adult at risk?

If the person is not able to make their own decisions about their safety, it is important that they get help and support throughout the process. The person who helps them is called their representative. The representative could be a friend, relative or someone who has permission to act on their behalf. If an adult at risk does not have a representative, the investigation manager can arrange for them to have an advocate or an independent mental capacity advocate (IMCA) to support them through the process.

What will happen if the investigation manager decides you should take further action?

We will include the person who may be at risk throughout the process and make sure they are in control as much as possible. We will speak to them and find out what they would like to achieve from an investigation. We will work with them to support them to deal with their situation in the way they want to and to help them keep themselves safe in the future. We will do this sensitively and professionally. If other adults at risk could be harmed or abused, we must also think about their safety and take any necessary action.

How the investigation manager plans an investigation or further action

The investigation manager will have a discussion or meeting with other professionals from agencies and organisations that need to be involved. We call this a 'strategy discussion' or 'strategy meeting'. The investigation manager will try to do this within five working days of making a decision that further action is needed. If it is not

LEVELS OF INVESTIGATION

The investigation manager will decide what 'level' of investigation to use. There are four levels (1 to 4), and these help us to provide the right response to different situations and make consistent decisions.

LEVEL 1

This is when a person who is receiving a particular service appears to have been harmed or might be at risk of being significantly harmed. The investigation manager will ask the manager of the service the person is receiving to investigate the matter.

LEVEL 2

This is when a person appears to have been harmed or might be at risk of being significantly harmed.

LEVEL 3

This is when a person appears to have been significantly harmed.

LEVEL 4

This is when more than one person appears to have been harmed or significantly harmed, or may be at risk of being significantly harmed. This also includes situations where there may be a range of concerns about a service that could mean more than one person is at risk of harm or significant harm.

For level 2, 3 and 4 investigations, the investigation manager will usually ask a social worker, nurse or mental-health nurse to investigate the matter, and to write a report about what they have found. We call this an investigation report. The investigation manager will choose someone who is independent of the concern raised and who has the right skills to do this.

possible to meet this timescale, the investigation manager will record the reasons for this.

At this stage, only professionals are involved. The organisations included share as much information as possible and discuss what action to take based on what the adult at risk wants to happen, and whether there are any risks to others. The aim of the strategy discussion or meeting is to:

- consider what the adult at risk wants to happen (or, if it has not been possible to gain their views, to plan how to gain these without increasing any potential risk to them);
- fully assess the risk they or others may face;
- plan how to support the person and make sure others are as safe as possible (we call this a 'safeguarding plan');
- decide if an investigation is still needed and if it is, review the level of the investigation needed, and plan how we will carry it out; and
- plan how anyone who could be responsible for the suspected abuse will be involved and how they will be given an opportunity to respond to this concern.

Sharing information and working together

Our procedures for safeguarding adults influence and co-ordinate all the other processes that we may need to carry out. For example criminal, complaints or disciplinary processes.

If a crime has been committed, we have a duty to let the police know. We will work with Sussex Police and share information with them and other professionals. If other adults are at risk, we must share this information. Where possible, we will keep all information confidential and only share it with people who are involved and have a need to know.

If a concern raised is an allegation about another person, we call this person the 'person alleged responsible'. We will make sure that the 'person alleged responsible' has an opportunity to be able to respond to any concerns or allegations that relate directly to them, but there are exceptions, for example, in domestic violence situations.

We will work to make sure that anyone affected by or involved in a concern is treated fairly.



What happens in an investigation?

The investigating officer will talk to all those directly involved and to anyone else who may be able to help them understand what happened. They will also look at any records or other information that might help them.

Sometimes there may be more than one investigating officer if we need people with different skills and expertise. The investigating officers keep the investigation manager up to date with the progress of the investigation.

The investigation manager is responsible for co-ordinating and overseeing the whole safeguarding process, including the investigation, and for making sure everyone is involved who needs to be. The investigation manager also decides when the investigation is finished.

What happens at the end of the investigation?

The investigating officer will write a report. The report will cover the safeguarding plan we have agreed with the adult at risk and others to help safeguard them in the future. The report will include how the investigation was carried out, what the adult at risk wanted to happen, and the response of the person or service alleged responsible. It will also recommend one of the following decisions about the concerns investigated.

Substantiated

The information suggests that the harm, abuse or neglect probably took place.

Unsubstantiated

The information suggests that the harm, abuse or neglect probably did not take place.

Inconclusive

The investigating officer cannot make a clear recommendation based on the information. For example, it is one person's word against another's and no-one else was there.

What is the role of case conference process?

This is the process used to bring the safeguarding investigation to an end. It may involve either a discussion or a meeting. Its purpose is to:

- make sure there is an effective safeguarding plan in place in line with what the adult at risk wants to happen;
- make sure we have dealt with any risks to others;
- make sure there is good communication between agencies and organisations;
- decide whether or not it is likely that the harm or abuse took place; and
- agree how we will give details of the safeguarding plan and other important information to those involved who were not directly involved in the case conference process.

The investigation manager will decide if it would be more appropriate to have a discussion or a meeting to end the safeguarding process, and who needs to be involved in this. Their decision is based on how to achieve the best outcome for the adult at risk and others involved, taking

account of their views and the nature of the concerns involved.

At least two working days before the case conference, the adult at risk and those involved in the investigation should receive the findings of the investigation or a copy of the investigating officer's report, or the part that relates to them.

Any final comments people involved want to make about the investigation's findings will be included in the case conference process.



Is there a different process for ending different levels of investigation?

For level 1 and level 2 investigations, the end of the process is usually through a discussion led by the investigation manager.

For level 3 and level 4 investigations, the end of the process may also include a case conference meeting chaired by an independent chairperson who works for West Sussex County Council and who has not previously been involved in the investigation. The investigation manager and independent chairperson will together agree who will be invited to attend all or part of this meeting.

A case conference will usually be held at the end of any level 3 and level 4 investigation, unless there are good reasons why this is not needed.

Who attends the case conference?

In most cases the adult at risk or their representative (or both) will be invited to attend the case conference meeting. Sometimes, because of confidentiality for other adults or for employees, the

adult may be invited to attend only the part of the meeting that is just relevant to them.

If the adult chooses not to attend, we will still give them information about the investigation and the meeting.

The person alleged responsible is not usually invited. Their response to the concern investigated will be included in the investigating officer's report.

Other professionals who need to attend will also be invited.

What happens at a case conference meeting?

The people involved in the case conference will:

- make sure the final agreed safeguarding plan is in place and all those involved understand their role in this;
- make sure the investigation covered everything it should have;
- check that the adult at risk and their views have been the focus of the investigation; and
- decide whether or not it is likely the harm or abuse took place.

If anyone disagrees with something said in the case conference, we will record this in the minutes.

We will send a copy of the minutes or the relevant sections to everyone who goes to the case conference or who should see them. The person alleged responsible will also receive a copy of the section of the minutes of the case conference that relates to them.

A more detailed information sheet is available for people invited to the case conference and we will send this out with the invitations before the meeting

The 'safeguarding plan'

Throughout the process we will discuss and agree with the adult at risk, or their representative, what they want to happen and how they want to keep themselves safe. This will include any support they may want or need to do this. We call this a 'safeguarding plan'. At the end of the case conference process we will make sure the safeguarding plan is still relevant for the adult at risk and for any others who may be affected. This includes who will carry out any action and when.

What is a review case conference?

In some cases we agree that there should be another meeting to review whether the safeguarding plan is working and whether we have carried out other action we identified as necessary. We call this a 'review case conference' and it usually happens within three months.

What if I'm not happy with the safeguarding process?

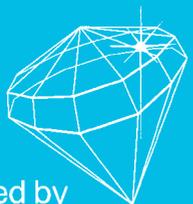
Anyone affected by the safeguarding process can tell us their comments or complain. If you make a complaint part-way through the investigation, we may delay looking into your complaint until the investigation is finished.

If you are not happy, and want to make a formal complaint, you should talk to or write to the investigation manager or our customer relations team (see below for their details). Please also ask to see our leaflet '*Comments, compliments and complaints about adults' social care (AS119)*'.

- West Sussex County Council
Customer Relations Team
County Hall
Chichester, PO19 1RQ
- Phone: 01243 777100
- Textphone (Typetalk) if
you are hard of hearing
18001 01243 752164
- Fax: 01243 752001
- Email: feedback@
westsussex.gov.uk
- Website: www.westsussex.gov.uk

Crystal
Mark
20397

Clarity approved by
Plain English Campaign



STAGES AND MAIN ROLES IN THE PROCESS OF SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

'Alert'

When we are told that a person may have been harmed, or may be at risk of significant harm, we call this an 'alert'.

If there is a significant risk, we will aim to contact the adult at risk within 24 hours. In all other cases, we will aim to contact the adult within three working days wherever possible.

Making decisions about how to respond

Wherever possible, we will ask the adult what they want to happen. Ideally, within 24 hours, the investigation manager will decide whether or not we need to respond or carry out an investigation using the procedures for safeguarding adults, and will decide the level of response needed.

We aim to agree, within five working days, what needs to be done to meet the wishes of the adult at risk, to assess any risk to others, and make sure a safeguarding plan is in place to deal with this and, if we need to carry out an investigation, plan how we will do this. We call this a 'strategy discussion' or 'strategy meeting'.

Time frames for carrying out 'investigations'

If we decide to carry out an investigation, we will use the following time frames wherever possible.

- **Level 1 or 2:** we will give a report to the investigation manager within 14 working days.
- **Level 3 or 4:** we will give a report to the investigation manager within 28 working days.

If the investigation takes longer than these times, we will make sure the adult and others involved are kept informed about this.

The 'case conference' process

All those involved should know the information and any recommendations we have made in the investigation report at least two working days before the case conference.

For level 1 and level 2 investigations

The Investigation Manager leads the process and, ideally within 14 working days, will have reviewed all available information about the investigation before making a decision about the outcome. Any delay to this will be notified to those involved.

For level 3 and level 4 investigations

Ideally, there will be a case conference within 28 working days of the strategy discussion or meeting wherever possible. We will tell those involved about any delays.

- If there is a case conference meeting, we aim to give those involved a copy of the minutes within five working days.
- Any comments or amendments to the minutes go to the chairperson within 10 working days. If you need longer to make comments about the notes, you should discuss this with the chairperson.
- Ideally, any changes to the minutes will be made no more than five working days after this.

There are four different roles in the safeguarding process.

1. Investigation manager: oversees and manages the investigation
2. Investigating officer: carries out the investigation
3. Independent chairperson: advises on the safeguarding process and chairs case conferences for cases where they have had no previous involvement
4. Note-taker: writes notes for strategy and case conference meetings

USEFUL CONTACTS

WS647 10.13

Adults' Services

Bognor Regis & Chichester

Durban House, Durban Road
Bognor Regis, PO22 9RE
Phone: 01243 642400
Fax: 01243 642437

Crawley

Crawley Library, Southgate
Avenue, Crawley RH10 6HG
Phone: 01293 895100
Fax: 01293 532807

Horsham

County Hall North, Chartway
Horsham RH12 1XA
Phone: 01243 642555
Fax: 01403 267064

Shoreham-by-Sea

Glebelands, Middle Road
Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 6GA
Phone: 01273 268800
Fax: 01273 268801

Worthing

Centenary House, Durrington Lane
Worthing BN13 2QB
Phone: 01903 839100
Fax: 01903 839248

Learning Disability Service

Coastal

Centenary House, Durrington
Lane, Worthing, BN13 2QB
Phone 0330 222 7778
Fax 01903 846668

North

County Hall North, Chart Way
Horsham, RH12 1XH
Phone 01403 229129
Fax 01403 217671

Western

Durban House, Durban Road
Bognor Regis PO22 9RE
Phone 0330 222 7888

Challenging Behaviour Commissioning and Support Team

County Hall North, Chart Way
Horsham, RH12 1XH

Independent agencies

Elder Abuse response

080 8808 8141

Sussex Mental Healthline

(24 hour) helpline 0300 5000 101

Public Concern at Work

(for staff concerned about
malpractice in the workplace)
020 7404 6609

NHS Direct 0845 4647

Samaritans 0845 790 9090