

Safeguarding Adults is Everybody's Business – An Aide Memoire.

Front line health and social care professionals have a duty to report safeguarding concerns they identify in the course of their general duties.

Health and social care staff are uniquely placed to identify possible safeguarding concerns during the course of their general duties, even where those concerns do not relate directly to the primary focus of, or person in receipt of their interventions. For example;

- a district nurse visiting a home to dress a person's leg ulcers may observe that other residents in the home are looking dishevelled and unkempt and that they struggle to find a member of staff to assist them, or
- a GP may be told that neighbours are psychologically abusing an adult with a learning disability who is the son of a patient that they are seeing for a review of their diabetes, or
- local authority staff visit an older person in their own home as part of a multi-agency team to assess their eligibility for continuing healthcare funding. The husband of the person they are assessing reports that their son has been using their bank card to make a number of small unauthorised withdrawals from their bank account. His wife does not have capacity to make decisions about finances.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) provides very clear guidance within The Code (2015) on the professional standards of practice and behaviour expected of all nurses and midwives. This includes a directive that staff put the interests of people using or needing nursing or midwifery services first, ***that their care and safety is the primary concern***, their dignity is preserved and their needs recognised, assessed and responded to. The Code goes on to state that nurses and midwives should make sure that those receiving care are treated with respect and that their rights are upheld. Additional specific guidance is given at section 17 of The Code that nurses and midwives must:

Raise concerns immediately if they believe a person is vulnerable or at risk and needs extra support and protection.

To achieve this, they must:

- take all reasonable steps to protect people who are vulnerable or at risk from harm, neglect or abuse,
- share information if they believe someone may be at risk of harm, in line with the laws relating to the disclosure of information, and
- have knowledge of and keep to the relevant laws and policies about protecting and caring for vulnerable people.

The General Medical Council in their document "Good Medical Practice" (2013) instructs GP's that they must take prompt action if they think that patient safety, Safeguarding Adults is Everybody's Business – An Aide Memoire [approved version 1 April 2025](#)
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dignity or comfort is, or may be seriously compromised. It instructs that if a patient is not receiving basic care to meet their needs the **GP must immediately tell someone who is in a position to act straight** away and if patients are at risk because of inadequate premises, equipment or other resources, policies or systems, they should put the matter right if that is possible. They must raise their concerns and make a record of the steps they have taken. The GMC goes on to say that **whether or not the GP has adults at risk of harm or abuse as patients, they should consider their needs and welfare and offer them help if they think their rights have been abused or denied.**

Multi-agency partnership is at the heart of the national safeguarding principles set out in the Care Act 2014. Effective safeguarding can only be achieved when organisations and individuals working closely together, and there is an explicit recognition that safeguarding is everyone's concern. In addition to the responsibilities placed on local authorities, health services and individual health professionals have a vital role to play in preventing, reporting and responding to concerns regarding abuse or neglect regardless of the circumstances in which they recognise them.

Abuse of adults – speak out. Don't ignore it, report it.

When you become aware of abuse or neglect, you should make sure that emergency assistance, where required, is summoned and that your concerns are reported to your manager within your own organisation immediately. In addition, you should:

If the person is in immediate danger:

Call the police on **999** or **(01142) 202020**

If the person is not at risk of immediate harm

If you're worried about an adult, but you don't feel they're in immediate danger, you still need to tell the local authority about it as soon as possible.

Call Adult Social Services on (01226) 773300.

Out of hours emergencies

To report an urgent concern outside of office hours, **call the emergency duty team on 0844 984 1800**. They work on weekends and bank holidays and deal with issues that can't wait until usual office opening hours.