



What is adult safeguarding?

What you need to know about reporting abuse or neglect to the council

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Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 requires a local authority to make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if it believes an adult is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect.

'Safeguarding adults' is the name given to the multi-agency response used to protect adults with care and support needs from abuse or neglect.

Reporting a concern

The safeguarding adults process begins when a concern is reported to the council that an adult with care and support needs is at risk from abuse or neglect. Anyone who becomes aware of or suspects abuse or neglect should report this to our safeguarding team. This is particularly important if the adult is still at risk or if others might be at risk.

Concerns could come from:

- The adult
- Staff or volunteers, others using the service, a carer or a member of the public who may have witnessed or suspect harm
- A friend or relative observing the adult's behaviour or another person's behaviour towards them

How can I report a concern?

If you feel a person is in **immediate danger**, please **dial 999**.

For less urgent concerns, please complete the [Safeguarding Concern form](#) on our Care Advice Buckinghamshire website:

- **Go online:** careadvice.buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- ➡ Click on 'Report a concern about abuse or neglect'
- ➡ Click on 'Are you concerned about an adult?'
- ➡ Select 'Safeguarding Concern form'

You can also reach us by phone or email:

 **Call:** Safeguarding Adults on **0800 137 915**
9am to 5:30pm Monday to Thursday
9am to 5pm on Friday
or
Emergency Duty Team on **0800 999 7677**
Available outside of working hours

 **Email:** ascfirstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

What happens after a report is made

When we are made aware of a safeguarding concern, an initial 'strategy discussion' will be held by our safeguarding team. We will discuss what action needs to be taken immediately, such as:

- Ensuring the adult is safe
- Any need for police involvement
- Involvement of anybody else, such as professional advisors
- Consideration of the mental capacity of the adult and of the person who may be causing harm
- Deciding whether a safeguarding enquiry needs to be carried out
- Any disciplinary procedures that may be necessary

Speaking to the adult

The safeguarding worker will contact the adult. This will allow us to:

- Assess the capacity of the adult to engage in the process
- Consider the adult's need for advocacy
- Find out what the adult wants to happen
- Consider any risks there may be
- Check any relevant records and documents

Involvement of relatives & friends

- It is important that we make sure relatives and friends are involved in safeguarding procedures if the adult wants them to be. This will help them to feel fully supported when dealing with difficult or distressing issues
- If the adult gives their consent, we can share the concerns for their welfare or safety with relatives or friends
- We can involve relatives or friends in meetings so that they can see how concerns or allegations are being addressed. They can also see how the adult is being supported so that any further abuse can be prevented and they will be safe in the future
- A safeguarding enquiry may need to be undertaken to establish the facts about safeguarding concerns

What if the adult decides they do not want relatives or friends to be involved?

If the adult decides that they do not want a relative or friend to be informed or involved, then the people involved in the safeguarding arrangements will need to respect this decision. However, if an independent advocate needs to be included, the local authority can support the adult to get one.

If the adult does not have the mental capacity to decide this for themselves, a decision will need to be made in their 'best interests' in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Within the safeguarding procedures, relatives or friends may take on a range of roles depending on the circumstances and wishes of the adult.

These may include a role in:

- Supporting the adult to tell professionals what their views and wishes are and to help make sure these views are heard
- Supporting the person through difficult meetings or interviews about distressing experiences
- Sharing knowledge about the risks the adult is experiencing and their support needs
- Contributing to the Safeguarding Protection Plan; this is a record of the agreed actions that will keep the person safe from harm

- Supporting an assessment of needs. Sometimes, this may include the needs of relatives/ friends if they are a carer for the adult
- Advocating for the adult according to their wishes, or in their best interests if they do not have the mental capacity to represent themselves on particular issues

Safeguarding Protection Plan

The next step will be to make a plan to help the adult. This is known as a Safeguarding Protection Plan. A plan may be put in place if there are concerns that the adult is still at risk of abuse or neglect. The aim is to remove immediate and potentially ongoing risks to the adult. The plan may include:

- Ways to help the adult take action to keep them safe and stay in control of their life
- A change of care or accommodation where the adult is at risk of abuse
- Action against the person or support service who carried out the abuse
- Support to help the adult to recover from abuse

To make these plans, the safeguarding worker may need to arrange a meeting, or they may decide to contact people individually instead. At all times, the views of the adult will be included in any plans made.

What happens if an enquiry is carried out?

When an allegation about abuse or neglect has been made, there may be an enquiry. This is sometimes referred to as a Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiry. The aim of the enquiry is to find out what happened and what action needs to be taken, if any, to support and protect the adult.

The enquiry could be as simple as a telephone conversation. It may also include speaking to people who witnessed or were involved in the incident(s). The adult can have someone sit in with them for support if they would find this helpful, and any communication needs (for example, translation) can be provided for.

Depending on the circumstances, the enquiry may also involve a range of other activities including reviewing records or policies and procedures.

Additional enquiries may also need to take place separately from the safeguarding enquiry – for example, a police investigation if a crime is suspected, or a disciplinary process if an employee is involved.

Safeguarding enquiries are conducted in a fair, impartial way and findings will be based on established facts. If concerns have been raised about a person's actions, they will have an opportunity to respond to these allegations.

If the person accused of abuse or neglect is in a position of power or trust, this will be dealt with under the Allegations of Person in Position of Trust Framework.

The enquiry will also consider the adult's views on what outcomes they want, whether anyone else is at risk of harm, and what follow-up actions should be taken with the person or organisation responsible for the harm. They will also consider any actions that may be needed urgently to keep the adult safe.

What happens after the enquiry has taken place?

Once the enquiry has taken place, a safeguarding meeting is held to discuss and review the findings of the enquiry. This meeting will include the people involved in the enquiry, the people responsible for taking actions to keep the adult safe, the adult and/or their representative.

Throughout the enquiry, decisions will be made as to whether any actions are needed to keep the adult or other people safe. These decisions will be reviewed once the enquiry is complete.

Feedback and outcomes

Feedback will be given to the adult or their representative (and others as appropriate) at all stages of the process. The findings of the enquiry will be reviewed, and the adult will be involved in the decisions if there are any changes needed to their Safeguarding Protection Plan.

Sometimes the safeguarding adult manager will be responsible for these decisions, taking the adult's views and wishes, as well as the adult's desired outcomes, into account.

On other occasions there will be a safeguarding meeting. Any plan about the adult's support or care will need to be agreed with the adult.

A case safeguarding meeting is held where it is helpful for all concerned to meet and discuss the findings of the enquiry and how to support the adult and to keep them safe.

People who are either involved in the enquiry or involved in supporting the adult to be safe will be invited.

The adult will also be invited and they can ask someone to come and support them.

The chairperson for the meeting can help check that the adult has been given all the support they need.

We may need to agree some review dates, so that we can check with the adult how the protection plan is working and how they feel about it.

Ending the enquiry

At the end of the process, we will check that the enquiry has achieved the adult's safeguarding outcomes and that they are safer. We will also help to arrange ongoing support if needed.

With everyone's agreement, the enquiry will end, and feedback will be provided to the person or people who made the original report.

Who can I speak to if I have questions about the enquiry?

If anyone has questions or concerns at any time, the allocated safeguarding worker or safeguarding adult manager will be happy to answer your questions.

If anyone is unhappy with the outcome of the enquiry, they can follow the complaints process (see Factsheet: 'I have a compliment or a complaint').

If you are an employee of an organisation and concerns have been raised about your practice or actions at work, you should speak to your employer.

Use this space to write down things you need to remember to tell us

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How to contact us

Adult Care Services

To get more information about adult social care services you can:

 **Go online:** buckinghamshire.gov.uk and click on 'Care for Adults'

 **Call:** Social worker: _____ Team: _____

Are you worried about somebody?

If you or someone you know is at risk of abuse or neglect:

 **Call:** 0800 137915 (24 hours a day)

If you would like to give us feedback

 **Go online:** Please complete the online form at buckinghamshire.gov.uk

If you prefer you can:

 **Call:** 01296 387844

 **Email:** complimentsandcomplaints@buckinghamshire.gov.uk