



Adult Protection Thresholds Guide

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to practitioners, professionals and others about when to make an adult safeguarding concerns

(Version 4)

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There are many different ways in which adults at risk of abuse can experience harm. There are varying levels of risk depending on a number of different factors and in line with the Care Act 2014 practitioners must ensure that responses to concerns are proportionate.

The following guidance is to support practitioners and professionals to understand the threshold for Adult Safeguarding concerns and subsequent enquiries.

When using this guidance always consider the following factors:

- The severity and seriousness of the alleged abuse
- The frequency of the abuse, is this repeated or likely to escalate?
- The history, is there a pattern of similar incidents?
- Was the abuse premeditated or accompanied by threats?
- Are there any wider implications; are other vulnerable adults or children at risk?
- What level of support does the adult require?
- Consider Making Safeguarding Personal - What are the views of the alleged victim? Is an advocate required?
- Consider the Mental Capacity Act 2005- What capacity do they have to express their views and make decisions?

This assessment of risk should be continuous throughout the Adult Protection process and be continually reviewed.

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Type of Abuse	Not protection – Conduct/Complaints/Care Quality or Regulation Issues (Managed via other approaches)	Level 1 Enquiry (passed to Cluster or own organisation to investigate)	Level 2 Enquiry (passed to APT, other relevant professional or own organisation for investigation, could be a joint enquiry)	Level 3 Enquiry (passed to APT, often requires urgent joint enquiry with police due to suspected crime)
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor one off unintentional incidents of staff error causing little or no harm One off incident involving service user to service user with no or little harm caused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incidents of assault with no or little harm (marks, lesions, minor cuts) but occurred on more than one occasion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriate restraint Unexplained serious injuries Assault causing injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious physical assault, grievous bodily harm Suspicious death Irreversible injuries sustained Assisted Suicide
Organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care planning not person centred Lack of activities Lack of service user involvement in running of the service Odours or low level unclean environment Unintentional one off incident of lack of dignity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rigid routines that are detrimental to the service users Recurring incidents of lack of dignity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture of poor professional practice resulting from the organisational structures, policies and practices Unhygienic environment meeting threshold for Environmental Health or Health and Safety Executive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing ill treatment resulting from organisational structures, policies and practices that may include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> widespread use of physical or medication restraint for behaviour management, whistleblowers not being listened too, inability of providers to manage their own enquiries
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One off low level sexualised verbal remark made where little or no distress was caused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One off low level sexualised touch where little or no distress or harm is caused (consider if the victim or perpetrator is a service user or staff member and their capacity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reoccurring sexualised verbal harassment Sexting and other use of social media that causes harm or distress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rape Sex between a service user and staff member Sexual assault Being made to look at pornographic material Being subject to indecent exposure Sexual harassment Voyeurism Sexual Exploitation
Discriminatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One off incident of teasing that causes little or no distress 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal abuse of a discriminatory nature causing distress or harm Humiliation or threats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hate crime involving serious injury Discriminatory cyber bullying that causes emotional harm
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One off incident of rudeness that caused little or no distress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undermining someone's dignity and self esteem Denying a service users choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recurring verbal abuse Emotional blackmail Humiliation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vulnerable to Radicalisation Denial of basic human rights Withdrawal of services or support for coercive purposes Cyber bullying that causes emotional harm
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service user not regularly involved in decisions about how money is spent Staff benefit from supporting service user e.g. using own rewards card when shopping Care fees not being paid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person denied access to own funds/property Fraud or theft relating to income, benefits or property Misuse of persons property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Payment fraud or theft relating to council commissioned services 	
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One off incident of missed medication, over medication or missed meal that causes no harm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recurring missed home visits where harm caused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing lack of care that causes significant ill health e.g. malnutrition, pressure sores (see below), dehydration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to access life - saving services Ongoing lack of care that causes irreversible ill health e.g. malnutrition, pressure wounds, dehydration

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One off incident of missed care visit that causes no harm • Inappropriate hospital discharge where no harm occurs • Inadequate care that causes discomfort but no harm • One off report of short staffing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One off missed visit, missed medication or over medication where harm occurred • Inappropriate hospital discharge where harm occurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One off missed visit, missed medication or over medication where serious harm occurred • Pressure sores that have developed in a health or social care setting through mis-management • Repeated ignoring of emotional needs that causes harm or distress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One off missed visit, missed medication or over medication where death has occurred as a consequence • Intentional withholding of the necessities of life such as adequate nutrition and heating
Modern Slavery				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human trafficking • Forced Labour • Domestic servitude • Slavery
Domestic Abuse				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forced Marriage • 'Honour' based violence • Female Genital Mutilation
Self-Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviours of neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding 			