

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS IN HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM



REFERRAL PROCEDURE FOR PARTNER AGENCIES

A short guide on
how to recognise
adult abuse and
what to do about it

This pan-London guide is based on the Hammersmith & Fulham Inter-Agency Guidelines for the Protection of Adults (POVA) 2006

'Adults at risk' has replaced the terms 'safeguarding of vulnerable adults' and 'protection of vulnerable adults'.



STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

All agencies have a duty to safeguard vulnerable adults from abuse, to recognise the signs of abuse and to take action where abuse is reported.

All agencies will actively work together on the prevention and identification of abuse. Adult social care teams in Hammersmith & Fulham community services will manage and direct the investigation of alleged abuse.

DESCRIPTIONS

1) Vulnerable adult

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over “who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation”. ‘Who Decides’, Lord Chancellor’s Department (1967).

For the purpose of these procedures the term “community care services” will be taken to include all care services provided in all health or social care settings or contexts by any agency whether statutory, voluntary or independent. The definition includes advice services.

2) Abuse

Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons, ‘No Secrets’: guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse: Department of Health - Publications.

The main forms of abuse are:

Physical: hitting, punching, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual: rape and sexual assault or sexual acts including inappropriate touching to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent to or was pressured into consenting to.

Psychological: emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Financial or material: theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect and acts of omission: ignoring medical or physical care needs; failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services; the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Discriminatory: when a person is treated in an unfair manner because of his/her membership of a particular social group or when practices and procedures operate in such a way that they have a negative impact on a specific social group.

Institutional: institutional discrimination can be detected in processes, attitudes or behaviours which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance or thoughtlessness and lead to the mistreatment of an individual by an institution. It can also occur through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care or bad professional practice.

SIGNIFICANT HARM

'No Secrets', published by the Department of Health, provides the guidance on developing and implementing a safeguarding adults policy and recommends consideration as to whether the victim has suffered 'significant harm.'

It quotes 'Who Decides' (1997) The Lord Chancellor's Department giving the following guidance:

“'Harm' should be taken to include not only ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical), but also the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development”

It goes on to state that the seriousness or extent of abuse is often not clear at referral. It is important therefore to approach reports of incidents or allegations with an open mind. In making any assessment of seriousness the following factors need to be considered:

- The vulnerability of the individual(s) involved.

- The nature and extent of the allegedly abusive acts.
- The length of time the alleged abuse has been occurring.
- The impact of the alleged abuse on the adult who has been victimised or exploited.
- The risk of repeated or increasingly serious act of abuses occurring involving the same or other vulnerable adults.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY AGENCIES IN RESPONSE TO THE DISCOVERY OF ABUSE

Immediate action to protect an adult

The first concern should be the immediate well-being of the vulnerable adult who has been abused. If the vulnerable adult is injured or anyone is in any immediate danger, the Ambulance Service and the Police should be called without delay using the 999 emergency number.

If a crime has been committed

Where there is suspicion that a crime such as a physical or sexual assault or a theft has been committed and the suspect is on the scene then the Police should be contacted either by dialling 999 in an emergency or via the local Control Rooms at Hammersmith or Fulham Police Stations. The contact number for both Control Rooms is the same: 03001 231212

Inform a manager

Every allegation/suspicion of abuse involving a vulnerable adult must be treated seriously and reported to a line manager as a safeguarding alert. This includes situations where the alleged perpetrator is a colleague or another vulnerable adult.

If it is difficult to approach the line manager then a more senior manager should be contacted. If that is not possible, the relevant adult social care team should be approached. If in doubt about the appropriateness of the alert, contact the social work team for a discussion. Adult social care teams manage and investigate all allegations of abuse wherever they arise (in hospitals or in the community).

REMEMBER THE 3 Rs

- Recognise abuse (when the evidence /disclosure comes to your attention).
- Report it (it is not your job to lead the investigation).
- Record what you have seen, heard and done.

Managers in all agencies are responsible for ensuring that:

- The safeguarding alert is made immediately to the most appropriate adult social care social work team. Please do this by telephone, email or fax and or follow up by telephone to ensure alert has been received.
- Support is provided to staff and good standards of practice are promoted and maintained during and after the investigation.
- Effective working relationships between agencies are maintained. If working relationships are not effective and differences arise between agencies, managers will provide the first line of negotiation.

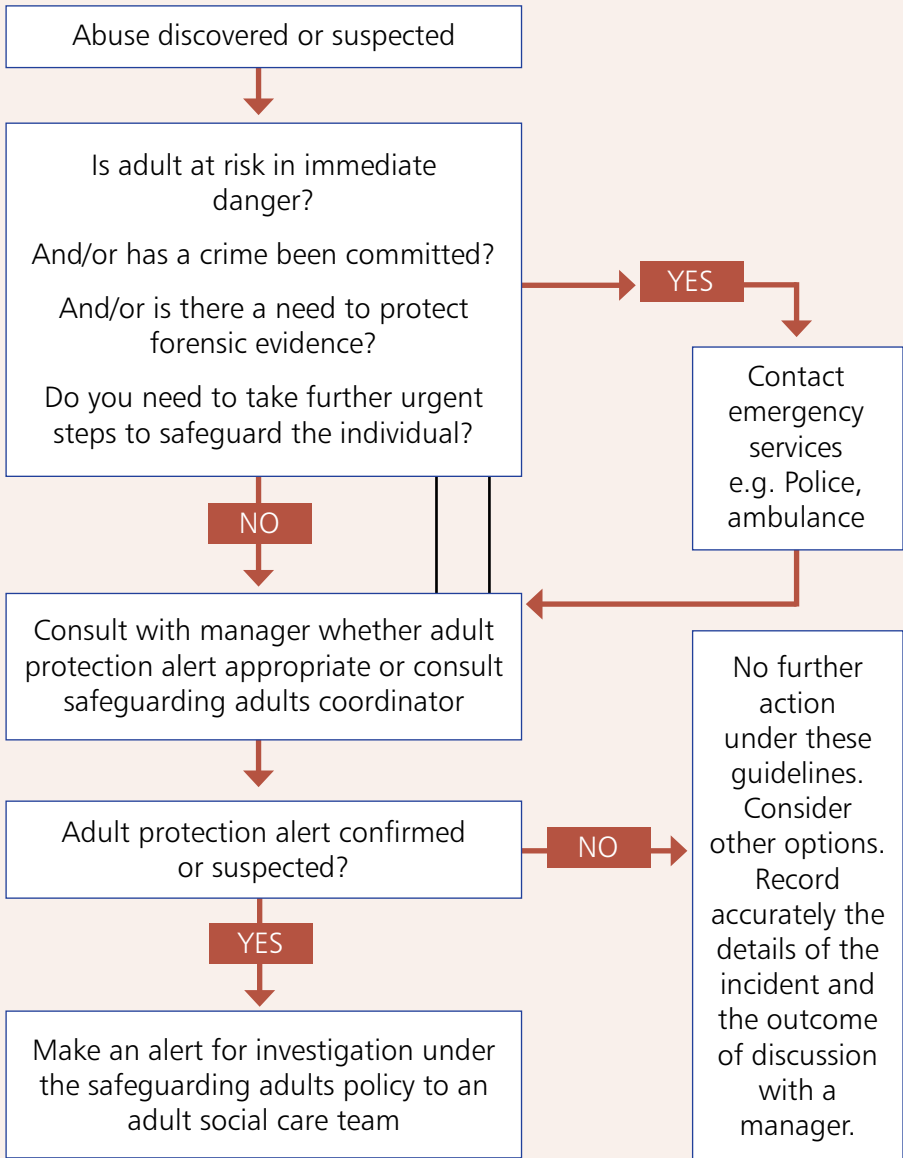
INFORM COMMUNITY SERVICES/ MULTI DISCIPLINARY TEAMS

Any suspicions that a vulnerable adult has been abused, should be reported immediately as a safeguarding alert to the most appropriate adult social care team.

The teams are: adults, health and disability social work, learning disability, drug and alcohol, community mental health. A safeguarding alert should be made as soon as possible within 24 hours of any incident occurring. Do not hesitate to speak to a social work manager, or the safeguarding adult coordinator if you are uncertain whether your concerns come within the safeguarding procedures.

FLOW CHART FOR AGENCIES REPORTING CONCERNS OF AN ADULT AT RISK OF ABUSE

An alert regarding all suspected incidents must be made immediately and within 24 hours of discovery.



CONTACT DETAILS FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE TEAMS

For general referrals

H&F Advice

0845 313 3935
h&fadvice.care@lbhf.gov.uk

Mental health

Mental health assessment

020 7386 1111/1113

Recovery team north

020 8483 1750

Recovery team south

020 7386 1275

Community mental health team
older people's service

020 8483 2525

Learning disability

Community learning disability team

020 8383 6464

Adult care team

All age team

0845 313 3935

Health and disability social work team
(Hammersmith and Charing Cross Hospitals)

020 8846 1844
020 3311 1844

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