
Keeping adults safe from abuse and neglect in Leicester: **Guide to the process**

Safer Together



Introduction

This guide tells you about what happens if you report that either yourself or somebody else have been abused or neglected and explains the safeguarding process and the different stages involved.

What should you do if you think you or someone else are being abused or neglected?

You should tell someone you trust as soon as you can.

This could be a member of your family, a friend, a police officer, a doctor or nurse, or a council or social worker.

You can report the abuse of an adult with care and support needs to Leicester adult social care:

- by telephone: 0116 454 1004 (operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- in person: Customer Service Centre, 91 Granby Street, Leicester LE1 6FB

If a crime has been committed, you can report it via website www.leics.police.uk or call Leicestershire Police on 101. If it is an emergency phone 999.

What happens when abuse or neglect is reported?

If you or someone else reports abuse or neglect, it's called raising a safeguarding **alert**. Once the alert is made a social worker will then work with the person alleged to have been abused or neglected and other key people to understand the risks to their safety to keep them safe.

If we discover that the issue is not safeguarding related, we will guide people to other services that can help them resolve their issue.

If the issue is an adult safeguarding matter the alert becomes a **referral** and a social worker is appointed who will gather information to make a safeguarding plan with the person being abused or neglected. The **plan** will cover three main things:

- understand the views of the person being abused and what they want to happen
- a plan to keep them safe
- an enquiry into the concerns.

To make this plan the social worker may arrange a **strategy meeting** or hold a discussion with people who will be able to assist with the enquiry or they may decide to contact people individually instead. We will include the views of the person being abused or neglected within any plans made.

What is a strategy meeting/discussion?

The purpose of a strategy meeting/discussion is to share, discuss and consider the evidence and agree protection and safeguarding enquiry actions.

The discussion will consider any potential criminal element to the abuse or neglect or any potential disciplinary action that may impact a support plan.

A strategy meeting may be called at any time during the safeguarding process where the health and safety of the adult concerned is at risk or if the risk becomes greater than originally thought.

Discussions will also consider:

- any potential criminal element and disciplinary action
- mental capacity of the adult and those involved
- views of the adult and what they want any safeguarding action to achieve
- potential risks to children
- potential impact on residents of other local authorities
- health, social care, communication, cultural or other specific needs of the adult involved
- if changes to support or care are needed and what support the adult wants or needs.

A strategy meeting may be called at any time during the safeguarding process where the health and safety of the adult concerned is at risk or if the risk becomes greater than originally thought.

If the safeguarding plan involves changes to any support or care for the person involved, this will be agreed with them and they will have the opportunity to say what support they want and need.

If it is clear that the person involved does not have the mental capacity to make decisions about their safety, an independent advocate or other suitable person will be identified to support the person involved and future decisions will then be made in their best interests in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Once the plan has been agreed the social worker will make a safeguarding **enquiry**.

What is involved in a safeguarding enquiry?

When an allegation about abuse or neglect has been made, an enquiry is undertaken to find out what, if anything, has happened.

The findings from the enquiry are used to decide whether abuse has taken place and whether the adult at risk needs a protection plan. A protection plan is a list of arrangements that are required to keep the person safe.

The purpose of a safeguarding enquiry is to decide what action is needed to help and protect the adult. Its aims are to:

- establish the facts about an incident or allegation
- find out the adult's views and wishes on what they want as an outcome from the enquiry
- assess the needs of the adult for protection and support and how they might be met
- protect the adult from the abuse and neglect, as the adult wishes
- establish if any other person is at risk of harm
- make decisions as to what follow-up actions should be taken with regard to the person or organisation responsible for the abuse or neglect
- enable the adult to achieve a positive outcome.

The enquiry may involve a wide range of activities such as:

- interviewing people who have witnessed or been involved in the incident
- reviewing records, policies and procedures
- a police investigation if a criminal offence is suspected
- a disciplinary process and internal investigation if an employee has caused harm.

Sometimes other enquiries will also be needed under other procedures. For example, if a criminal offence is suspected the police may undertake an investigation, and if so, this will take priority. If the person is an employee, then a disciplinary process may be required. There may also be a need for an internal incident investigation.

We will take care to ensure the safeguarding enquiry is conducted in a way that is fair to all concerned.

The following principles apply:

- an enquiry will be carried out impartially
- an enquiry will be undertaken with an open mind as to what has or has not happened
- an enquiry will base its findings on the established facts
- if concerns have been raised about a person's actions then they will have a chance to respond to these allegations
- a person alleged to have caused harm will have an opportunity to respond to the findings of the enquiry.

If people are involved in a discussion about their case they can have someone sit in with them for support if they find that helpful and we will provide for any particular communication needs.

We will review the findings of the enquiry and decide if there is evidence that abuse or neglect has taken place. When the enquiry is completed we will also review decisions taken during the enquiry for keeping the adult or other people safe. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the allegations, a safeguarding **case conference** may be arranged and these decisions will be made at the case conference.

The safeguarding process explained

STAGE 2 – The safeguarding process once an alert has been made



What is a safeguarding case conference?

A safeguarding case conference meeting can be held after an enquiry has been completed. It meets to consider the following:

- the findings of the enquiry
- whether the adult continues to be at risk of harm or neglect
- the need for a protection plan to keep them safe.

Sometimes a meeting is not needed. If this is the case, the social worker will review the findings of the enquiry and agree plans with the adult or their representative to keep the adult safe, making sure their views and wishes have been respected.

The case conference meeting will consider what evidence has been found in the enquiry about the concern or allegation. Information about the enquiry will be shared with the adult.

A protection plan records any arrangements that have been agreed with the adult, to keep them safe...

At the case conference meeting we will also consider whether the adult remains at risk of abuse or neglect and whether they need a protection plan. A protection plan records any arrangements that have been agreed with the adult, to keep them safe and will include a defined review date.

The purpose of holding a case conference and producing a protection plan is:

- to ensure that the views, wishes and best interests of the adult have been central to the process
- to make sure effective risk management arrangements are in place
- to ensure allegations have been put to individuals alleged to have caused harm and they have been given an opportunity to respond
- to consider what legal or statutory actions or redress may be needed
- to identify any further actions and timescales
- if appropriate, close the enquiry.

How is the case reviewed?

We will review the case to monitor the effectiveness of the protection plan after an enquiry has taken place or if urgent action is required to protect the adult who is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect.

The review will be managed by the agency leading the safeguarding process and they will make sure all agencies involved in the case attend and contribute to the meeting.

The person leading the review will ensure that the adult involved in the case and a carer or representative can attend in the same way that they would at a case conference and that it will be held at a venue that enables full participation, which may include in their own home.

If it is decided that a review is not necessary the safeguarding adult's process will be closed. If a review is held and a new concern of abuse or neglect is raised this will be treated as a new alert.

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The review should establish to what extent the desired outcomes of the case conference have been met. We will also consider changes to the protection plan or any existing care plans in accordance with the wishes of the adult concerned or their representative. We will assign additional and ongoing actions within the protection plan to appropriate agencies and a decision will be made either to set a further review date or to close the safeguarding process.

When does the case get closed?

A case will be closed when the safeguarding enquiry is concluded, including all corresponding actions, and an effective protection plan is in place (where appropriate).

To close the case the adult concerned must know the outcome of the enquiry and whom to contact if they experience future concerns of abuse. Feedback must be given to any relevant parties, including the person who raised the alert, the person alleged to have caused harm and any other significant others and all parties should know how to refer should there be renewed or additional concerns.

The person leading the case must reach agreement to close the process with all organisations that have been involved in the enquiry and protection plan. Once they have reached agreement, the person leading the case will be responsible for signing off the case.

Closure may take place at any stage of the process if the allegation of abuse cannot be proven or if the level of harm has been assessed as low and an information gathering, sharing and protection plan is in place. The case may also be closed if the adult involved (subject to capacity) decides they do not want further intervention and no other adults or children are involved or if the status of the allegation has been determined and the adult is protected.

The decision to close a case is a multi-agency one and will be taken based on the potential risk of harm to the individual or others as relevant. Some cases may remain open if a support plan is in place which requires review.

At point of closure all relevant partner organisations must be informed, the referrer is notified, monitoring and data collection forms are completed and referral to appropriate agencies is made where necessary.

As part of the process, feedback will be sought from the adult concerned about their experience of the process and whether they feel safer and their wishes and outcomes have been met.

Our commitment to you

In accordance with our commitment to making safeguarding personal we will:

- ensure you are asked all the way through the process what you want from it
- make sure that if you attend meetings they will be held at a date, time and venue to suit you
- make sure meetings will be welcoming and easy to understand and we will introduce ourselves so you know who we all are
- use easy to understand language and we will not use acronyms
- support you in the best we can and get the best outcome for you.