

Factsheet 3

The stages of the Safeguarding Adults process

February 2016

Reviewed August 2018, June 2021, March 2023

Review Date March 2025

This information sheet describes the stages of a safeguarding adult's enquiry. Further details of each of the stages can be found in other information sheets in this series, or in the multi-agency adult safeguarding policy and procedures, all of which are available at www.rochdalesafeguarding.com

Introduction

The Care Act 2014 (Section 42) requires that each local authority must make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if it believes an adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and because of their care and support needs they are unable to protect themselves. An enquiry should establish whether any action needs to be taken to prevent or stop abuse or neglect, and if so, by whom.

The scope any enquiry, who leads it and its nature, and how long it takes, will depend on individual circumstances. It will usually start with asking the Adult their view and wishes, which will often determine the next steps to take. Everyone involved in an enquiry will focus on improving the Adult's well-being and work together to that shared aim.

Adults will be supported to define the outcomes they desire from their personal circumstances of abuse and neglect. The process is personalised and flexible and can conclude at any stage as appropriate. This factsheet outlines the stages in the full enquiry process – it must be understood that not all enquires will necessitate the full process.

The objectives of an enquiry into abuse or neglect are to:

- establish facts;
- ascertain the Adult's views and wishes;
- assess the needs of the Adult for protection, support and redress and how they might be met;
- protect from the abuse and neglect, in accordance with the wishes of the Adult;
- make decisions as to what follow-up action should be taken with regard to the person or organisation responsible for the abuse or neglect; and
- enable the Adult to achieve resolution and recovery.

Reporting a concern

Anyone who first becomes aware of concerns of abuse or neglect must report those concerns as soon as possible and in any case within the same working day to the relevant manager (or responsible person) identified in their internal agency procedures. As a general rule, concerns should be raised as soon as abuse or neglect is witnessed or suspected.

This should always be the case if the adult remains in or is about to return to the place where the suspected/alleged abuse occurred, particularly if the person alleged to have caused harm is likely to have access to the adult or others who might be at risk. On receiving the concern, the person responsible must decide whether to make

a referral to Rochdale Adult Care (0300 303 8886 Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.45pm, or 0300 303 8875 at all other times).

However anyone can report a concern:

- if discussion with the manager would involve delay in a high-risk situation
- if the person has raised concerns with their manager and they have not taken action.

A concern may be prompted by:

- a direct disclosure by the adult
- a concern raised by staff or volunteers, others using the service, a carer or a member of the public
- an observation of the behaviour of the adult, of the behaviour of another person(s) towards the adult or of one service user towards another.

Once the concern is received

A safeguarding concern will be reviewed in consultation with a Safeguarding Adults Manager. A Safeguarding Adults Manager is a person within the NHS or Adult Social Care with overall responsibility for the safeguarding enquiry. The Safeguarding Adults Manager will be a senior person, often they will be a Team Manager or Senior Practitioner.

The Safeguarding Adults Manager will need to decide whether the best way of helping the adult is by using the safeguarding procedures, if so they will refer the concerns into the safeguarding adult procedures and they may ask other agencies to help. Alternatively they may advise the adult of a more appropriate way to provide them with support.

They will also consider if any actions are needed urgently to help keep the adult safe from harm.

Strategy discussion

At this stage an initial strategy discussion will be held between the Safeguarding Adults Manager and the Worker.

This is to consider what action needs to be taken immediately, such as:

- Ensure that the adult is safe, that medical attention has been sought if required and that emergency services are involved if necessary.
- To discuss the need for immediate Police involvement.
- To consider the involvement of other Partners at this stage and the need to consult relevant professional advisors.
- To discuss the need for immediate Safeguarding actions to protect the Adult from further abuse.
- To consider the Mental Capacity of the Adult and the person who may be causing harm and implications this may have.

- To decide who is best placed to carry out the enquiry and allocate an Enquiry Practitioner as appropriate.
- To consider if an appropriate individual or independent advocate is required.
- To discuss the need for immediate action under Disciplinary Procedures or other management action.

The safeguarding worker will visit the adult or speak to them on the phone. This is to:

- Assess the Adult's capacity to engage in the process and consider advocacy.
- To find out what the adult wants to happen.
- Consider any risks there may be.
- To check any records and documents.

Strategy meeting

In some cases a strategy meeting may be needed. It will be necessary to decide whether there is evidence that abuse has occurred, to assess risk to the adult (and others) and to review their Protection Actions. Any plan about the adult's support or welfare will need to be agreed with them.

Sometimes the Safeguarding Adults Manager will be responsible for these decisions, taking the adult's views and wishes into account. On other occasions another meeting may be needed. Any plan about support or care will need to be agreed with the adult.

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

Safeguarding Protection Actions

These will apply where there are concerns that the adult may experience, or be experiencing, further abuse and will consist of risk reduction and support strategies.

Central to these actions will be the views of the adult and their desired outcomes.

The aim is to remove both immediate and/or potentially ongoing risks to the adult. Where risks cannot be removed or avoided because the risk conflicts with the views/wishes of the adult, protective measures to reduce the risk will be maximised.

Formal Investigation processes may apply in circumstances of very serious safeguarding concerns. These include criminal or disciplinary processes.

It may not be necessary to pursue information further where the Protection Actions are in place and the adult and/or their representative is satisfied with the outcome.

Feedback and outcomes

Feedback to the adult and/or their representative and others as appropriate, will be given at all stages so that the process is understood and expectations are clear.

Ending the Enquiry

You will be involved throughout the Safeguarding Enquiry. At the end of the process, we will check with you that the Enquiry has achieved your safeguarding outcomes and that you now feel safer. This may be in person or by telephone, depending on what is best for you. We will help you arrange any ongoing support you may need. If everyone is in agreement, the Safeguarding Enquiry will end.

Other Information

This is one of a series of factsheets produced by the RBSAB. The factsheets available are:

Factsheet 1: What happens when abuse is reported – Information for adults who may be being abused or neglected

Factsheet 2: Safeguarding Adults – Information for family and friends

Factsheet 3: The stages of the Safeguarding process?

Factsheet 4: What is a Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiry?

Factsheet 5: What is a Section 42 Strategy Meeting?

Factsheet 6: Safeguarding Adult Reviews – Information for families and carers

Factsheet 7: Information for a person alleged to have caused harm

Factsheet 8: What happens after you report a safeguarding adults concern?
Understanding the Safeguarding Process

All the factsheets are available at
www.rochdalesafeguarding.com

Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Adults Board Business Unit,
Number One Riverside,
Smith Street,
Rochdale OL16 9NP
rbsb.admin@rochdale.gov.uk

**Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Adults Board
is committed to Safeguarding Adults
and will continue to establish a society
where there is zero tolerance to adult abuse.**