**Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Procedure**

**A. Considering whether to raise a safeguarding concern**

When deciding whether a safeguarding concern should be raised, consider the following key questions:

1. Is the person an ‘adult at risk’ as defined within this policy/procedure?

2. Is the person experiencing, or at risk of, abuse and neglect?

3. What is the nature and seriousness of the risks?

Consider:

* The person’s individual circumstances
* The nature and extent of the concerns
* The length of time it has been occurring
* The impact of any incident
* The risk of repeated incidents for the person
* The risk of repeated incidents for others

4. What does the adult at risk want to happen now?

Wherever possible, consider what the adult at risk wants to happen next, what do they want to change about their situation, and what support do they want to achieve that. On some occasions, it may be necessary to raise a safeguarding concern even if this is contrary to the wishes of the adult at risk. Any such decision should be proportional to the risk, for example:

* It is in the public interest e.g. there is also a risk to others, a member of staff or volunteer is involved, or the abuse has occurred on property owned or managed by an organisation with a responsibility to provide care
* The person lacks mental capacity to consent and it is in the person’s best interests
* The person is subject to coercion or undue influence, to extent that they are unable to give consent
* It is in the person’s vital interests (to prevent serious harm or distress or life threatening situations)

If you remain unsure whether to raise a safeguarding concern, you can:

* Contact your organisation’s safeguarding adults lead for advice
* Seek advice from a safeguarding officer by contacting North Yorkshire County Council Customer Service Centre and asking to talk to a safeguarding officer by phone on 01609 780780 12
* Contact the department of your local authority responsible for safeguarding

**B. Considering whether to report a concern to the police**

If a crime has been or may have been committed, seek the person’s consent to report the matter immediately to the police. This will be in addition to raising a safeguarding concern with the local authority. If the person has mental capacity in relation to the decision and does not want a report made, this should be respected unless there are justifiable reasons to act contrary to their wishes, such as:

* the person is subject to coercion or undue influence, to the extent that they are unable to give consent, or
* there is an overriding public interest, such as where there is a risk to other people
* it is in the person’s vital interests (to prevent serious harm or distress or in life threatening situations)

There should be clear reasons for overriding the wishes of a person with the mental capacity to decide for themselves. A judgement will be needed that takes into account the particular circumstances. If the person does not have mental capacity in relation to this decision, a ‘best interests’ decision will need to be made in line with the Mental Capacity Act.

**Preserving evidence**

If a crime has occurred, try to preserve evidence in case there is a criminal investigation.

* try not to disturb the scene, clothing or victim if at all possible
* secure the scene, for example, lock the door, if possible,
* preserve all containers, documents, locations, etc.
* evidence may be present even if you cannot actually see anything
* if in doubt, contact the police and ask for advice. The police should be contacted for advice wherever required.

**C. Who else to inform**

If you are a service provider and a safeguarding concern has been raised, notify your regulatory body and the authority that commissions your service for the adult at risk. You may also need to inform:

* relatives of the adult at risk according to their wishes, or in their ‘best interests’ where they lack the mental capacity to make this decision for themselves
* • child protection services, if children are also at risk from harm
* the Charities Commission, if your service is a registered charity
* your line manager (and safeguarding adults lead if different) of your decisions and actions in line with this procedure
* your human resources manager if allegations/concerns relate to a member of employee or volunteer
* staff delivering a service on a need-to-know basis so that they do not take actions that may prejudice an enquiry

**D. Document the concern and any actions or decisions taken**

Ensure all actions and decisions are fully recorded. It is possible that your records may be required as part of an enquiry, be as clear and accurate as you can. Record the reasons for your decisions and any advice given to you in making these decisions. Ensure that appropriate records are maintained, including details of:

* the nature of the safeguarding concern/allegation
* the wishes and desired outcomes of the adult at risk
* the support and information provided to enable the adult at risk to make an informed decision
* assessments of mental capacity where indicated
* the decision of the organisation to raise a concern or not.

**E. How to raise a safeguarding concern:**

To raise a safeguarding concern under the safeguarding adults procedures:

Contact your local authority safeguarding team. The person you speak to will ask you for details about the allegation/concern. If you have reported the incident to the police, tell the person this as well. Then complete the safeguarding adults concerns form.

**REMEMBER: If you suspect that someone is being abused and they are in immediate danger you should ring the police on 999. The safeguarding concern will be allocated to an appropriate team, who will then contact you to discuss the concerns further. Information should be provided to the individual. This could be about other sources of help or information that could enable them to decide what to do about their experience, enable them to recover from their experience and enable them to seek justice.**

Adult Social Care Customer Services: [insert reporting contacts for your local authority]

Contact the police if the person is in imminent danger phone: 999 (emergency service)

If you need to report a crime, but the person is not in imminent danger phone: 101 (non-emergency service)

To notify regulators:

Care Quality Commission phone: 03000 616161

Charities Commission phone: 0300 065 2199

Whistleblowing advice services:

Mencap [**www.mencap.org.uk/organisations/whistleblowinghelpline**](http://www.mencap.org.uk/organisations/whistleblowinghelpline) Helpline: 08000 724 725

Care Quality Commission: [**www.cqc.org.uk/contact-us**](http://www.cqc.org.uk/contact-us) phone: 03000 616161

Public Concern at Work [**www.pcaw.org.uk**](http://www.pcaw.org.uk) phone: 020 7404 6609

North Yorkshire Advocacy: [**www.nyadvocacy.org**](http://www.nyadvocacy.org) phone: 01609 778652

This procedure was updated on:

This procedure will be reviewed and updated on: