



Safeguarding Adults

Fact Sheet: Number 4

What is a Safeguarding Adult Enquiry?

Information for Adults at Risk

What is Safeguarding Adults?

When abuse is suspected, the Bath and North East Somerset Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults' procedures will be followed by all partner organisations to support you to be safe.

An Enquiry, sometimes known as an Investigation, is undertaken to find out what has happened. An agreement as to what this will include will usually be done at the Planning meeting or discussion.

The findings from the Enquiry are used to decide whether abuse has taken place, whether you, and sometimes others, are at risk, and whether you need a protection plan. A protection plan is a list of arrangements that are required to keep you (and others) safe. A protection plan will not be needed in all cases e.g. where concerns are not founded.

Key Roles

The Enquiry will be undertaken by an Enquiry Lead, this will usually be a Social Worker, Care Manager, a Nurse or the manager in the service where the concerns have arisen. This person can sometimes be different from the Safeguarding Lead Worker who is there to support you through the process. However, sometimes they may take on both roles.

What does a safeguarding Enquiry involve?

The purpose of undertaking a safeguarding enquiry is to help you identify ways to protect you from abuse. As the concerns raised may also involve other adults at risk then it will consider ways in which they can also be protected.

Its aims are to:

- establish the facts about an incident or allegation
- understand the risk of further harm
- understand how to support you to be safe in the future

The enquiry may involve a wide range of activities depending on the circumstances. It will include interviewing people who have witnessed or been involved in the incident. It might also involve reviewing records or policies and procedures.

Sometimes other investigations 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 also be required. An internal incident investigation may also be needed.

A safeguarding enquiry is separate from these, but often it is possible for organisations to work together so that people do not need to say the same thing to a number of different people.

Fairness

Care must be taken to make sure 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

- a person must have the chance to respond to allegations made about them
- both you, and any person or organisation alleged to have caused the abuse, will need to be able to respond to the findings of the enquiry

You may want to be supported by a friend, family member or advocate. If you are being spoken to about the suspected abuse you can have someone sit in with you for support if you find that helpful. If you have particular communication needs these will be taken into account.

Reviewing the findings of the enquiry

The findings of the enquiry will be reviewed and a decision made as to whether there is evidence, on the balance of probabilities, as to whether abuse has occurred.

Your views on the findings are important in this decision. You will be informed of decisions made.

Throughout the safeguarding enquiry, decisions will need to be made as to whether any actions are needed to keep you or other people safe. Any plan about your support or care will need to be agreed with you. These decisions will need to be reviewed once the enquiry has finished.

If the enquiry has involved a member of staff and they have been found to have caused harm in some way, one outcome may be for the employee's organisation to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The DBS may make a decision as to whether the member of staff should be prevented from working with vulnerable adults in the future.

If I have questions about the investigation, who can I speak to?

Wherever possible you should speak to the Safeguarding Lead Worker. Alternatively you could talk to your Social Worker/Nurse or any other person who can assist you with passing on the information to the Safeguarding Lead Worker.

You can use this space to record details of your Safeguarding Lead Worker or anything you want to raise with them:

This is one of a series of Fact Sheets, these are:

No.1: What happens after abuse is reported?

No.2: Easy read: What happens after abuse is reported?

No.3: What is a Planning Meeting/Planning Discussion?

No.4: What is a Safeguarding Adult Enquiry?

No.5: What is a Review Meeting?

No.6: Information for relatives and friends

No.7: Safeguarding Adults Enquiry - information for those alleged to have caused harm

Further Information

The Fact Sheets and the Bath and North East Somerset Safeguarding Adult Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures are available for anyone to read at:

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/care-and-support-and-you/safeguarding-and-legal-information>

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