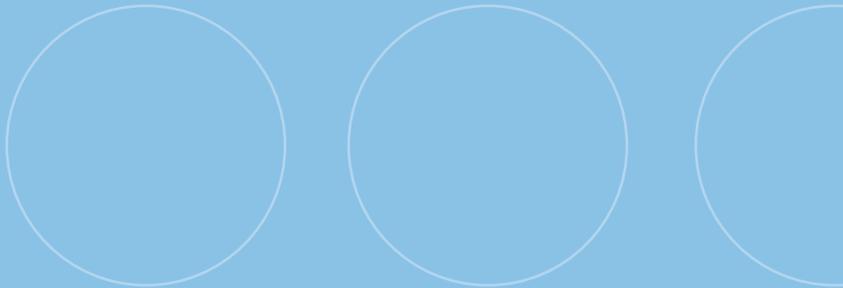


# Safeguarding Adults from Abuse

## Staff Handbook

Southend | Essex | Thurrock





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# introduction

This guidance booklet has been produced to help people working directly with vulnerable adults to understand how to raise concerns they may have about abuse. This booklet supplements the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding Adult Guidelines.

- \* It is the responsibility of **everyone** to recognise suspected or actual abuse and to take appropriate action in line with the procedures in this document. **IGNORING ABUSE IS NOT AN OPTION**
- \* All individuals regardless of age, ability, race, gender, sexual orientation, faith or beliefs should have the greatest possible control over their lives.
- \* People should be able to live as independently as possible and to make informed decisions about their own lifestyles, including the opportunity to take risks if they choose to do so, without fear of harm or abuse from others.

Your understanding of adult safeguarding and your actions can make a positive difference to vulnerable people



The key message is that we have a responsibility to safeguard vulnerable adults from abuse. It is recommended that you should read and understand this practice guidance as it sets out the responsibilities you have to promote the safety of vulnerable adults.

Many people find it hard to understand why another person (or persons) would want to abuse and cause harm to a vulnerable person. However someone who is vulnerable can often be the perfect target. Why? Because often:

- \* They can't defend themselves
- \* They may not be able to get away
- \* Even if they can tell, often they are not believed
- \* Sometimes our staff and organisation do not believe that it can happen
- \* It may be forgotten that vulnerable people have a human right to be safe (as we do)

Abuse of vulnerable people does not have to be deliberate, malicious or planned. It sometimes happens when people are trying to do their best but do not know the right thing to do. Sometimes the person who causes harm does so because of frustration even in caring context. However, irrespective of why the abuse might happen, the abusive action of another on a vulnerable person causes harm.

# what is expected of me?

1. **Ignoring abuse is not an option** – if at anytime you think that a vulnerable person is being abused or is at risk of abuse you must report your concerns so that they can be looked into.
2. If you come across a situation where you think a vulnerable person is at risk of abuse you must not ignore the information. Do not assume that others know what you know. **You must tell** so that others can help.
3. Remember that vulnerable adults have human rights. **You have a duty** of care to ensure the rights and needs of the vulnerable person is your main consideration.
4. If at any time you feel the person needs urgent medical assistance call for an ambulance or arrange for a doctor to see the person at the earliest opportunity.
5. If at the time you have reason to believe the vulnerable person is in immediate and serious risk of harm or that a crime has been committed call the police.

6. If you see something that concerns you or you are given information that causes you to be concerned about a vulnerable person then:

**\* Keep calm; this will help the vulnerable person**

**\* Make sure that the person is safe**

**\* Listen carefully to what is said**

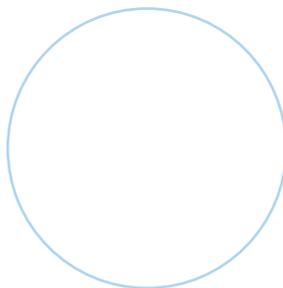
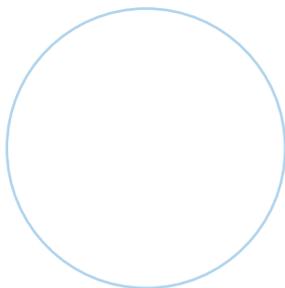
**\* Observe what you see around you, if possible**

**\* Reassure and take care of the person**

**\* Get help as soon as possible**

7. Remember you will need to record everything that you saw, heard and did. Record the facts of what happened.

8. Remember it is expected that you pass on any concerns immediately to your manager.



# who are vulnerable adults?

A vulnerable adult is any person aged 18 or over who

**1.** *is or maybe in need of a community care services by reason of mental, physical or learning disability, age or illness*

## ***And who***

**2.** *is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation*

They may include:

- \* People with a mental health problem or mental illness (including dementia)
- \* People with a physical disability
- \* People with a sensory impairment
- \* People with a learning disability
- \* People who are frail and/or experiencing a temporary illness

Abuse can take place in any setting – this policy is applicable to all settings; an individuals private home, care home, hospital, day service, public transport, police station or college. This list is endless.

# what is Abuse?

“Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons

“Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.”

(No Secrets, Department of Health 2000)

**The Southend, Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding Adult Guidelines also define seven different categories of abuse as follows:**

**Physical abuse:** including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, misuse of restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

**Sexual abuse:** including rape and sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent , or where pressure was applied to secure their consent.

**Emotional abuse:** including verbal abuse, psychological abuse, threats, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

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

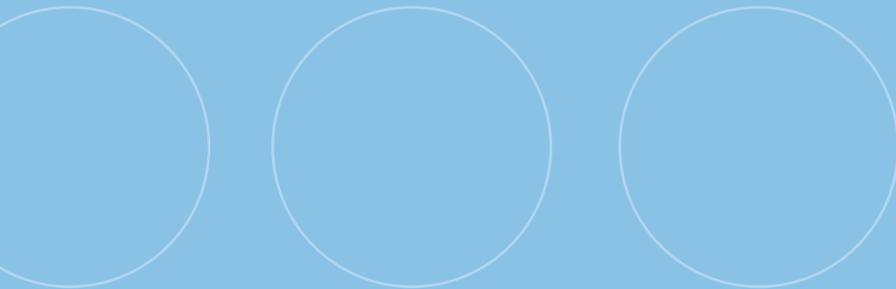
**Neglect (including acts of omission):** including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, food, drink and heating.

**Discriminatory abuse:** including racist or sexist remarks or comments based on a person's impairment, disability, age or illness, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

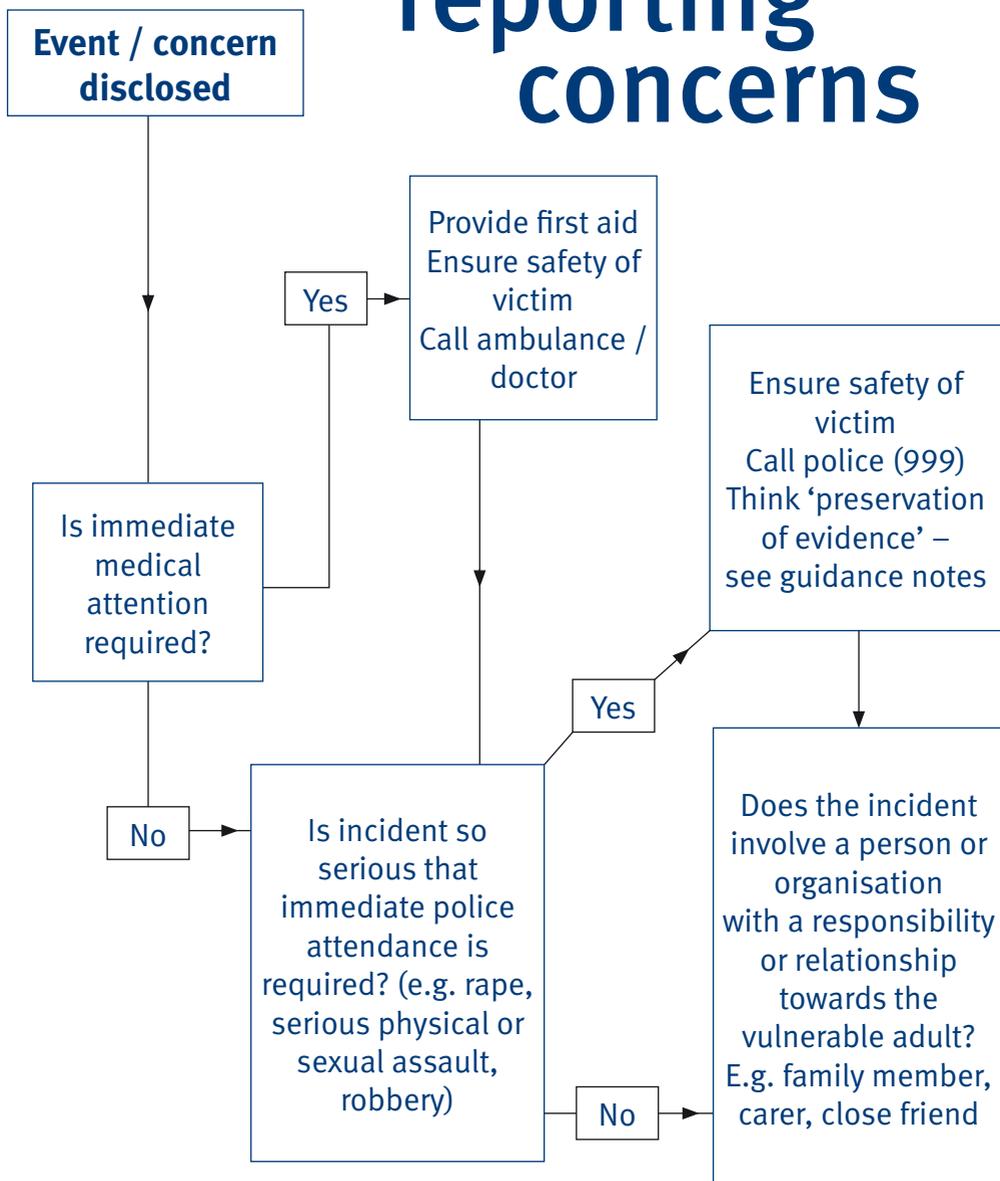
**Institutional abuse:** involves the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to vulnerable people. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping. It includes a failure to ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to protect vulnerable adults and maintain good standards of care in accordance with individual needs, including training of staff, supervision and management, record keeping and liaising with other providers of care.

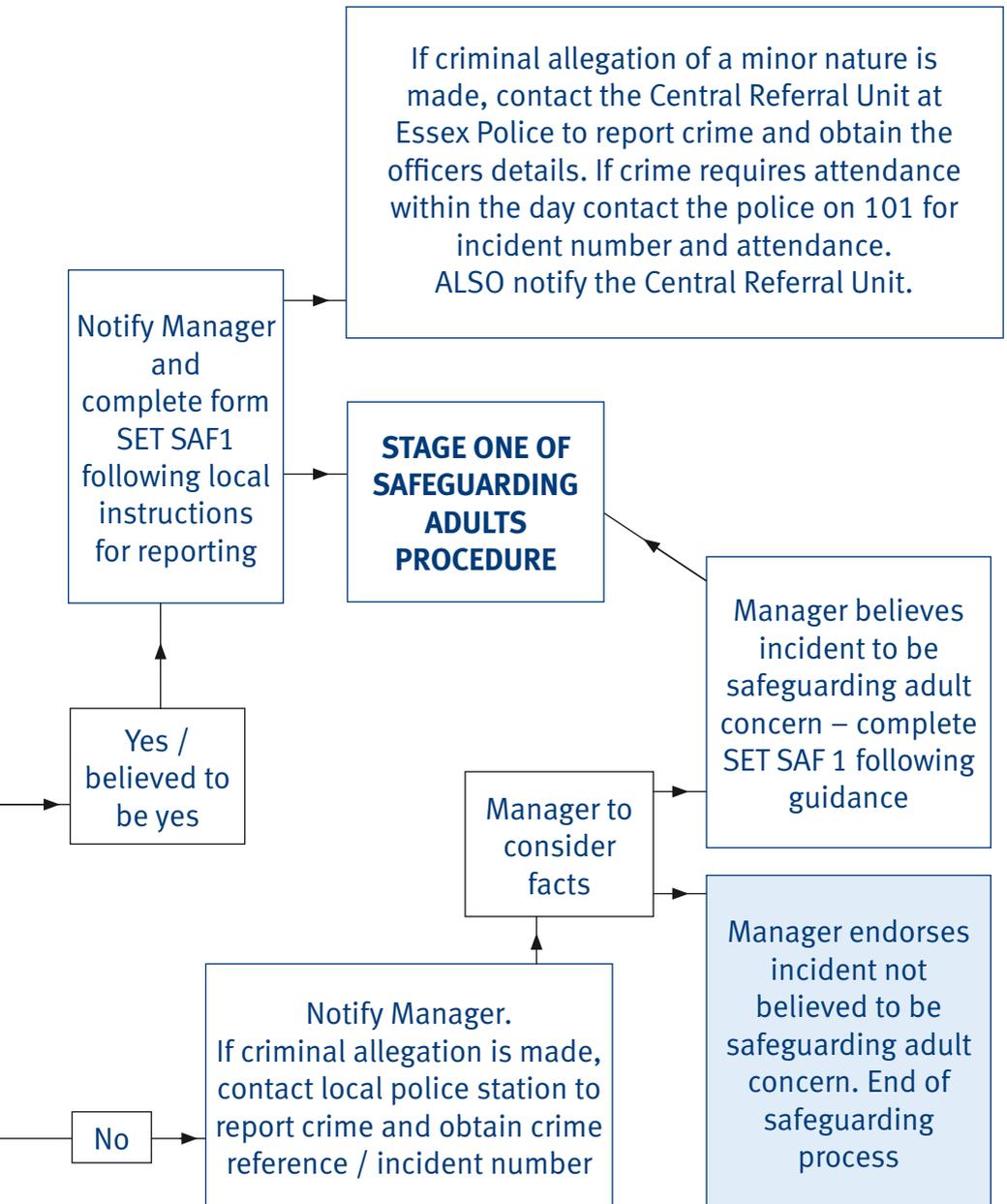
## **Ignoring abuse is not an option –**

Any person or organisation with knowledge of, or suspicion that a vulnerable adult may be at risk of abuse or is being abused must report their concerns.



# reporting concerns





# if someone discloses to you

People have the right to expect that information shared with a member of staff should be treated as confidential.

**However, it should be made clear that where the staff member has a reason to be concerned for the welfare of a vulnerable person and/or others they have to share the information with someone who is in a position to take action or responsibility.**

The vulnerable adult should be told with whom the information will be shared, and that their views and wishes will be taken into account. Any views or wishes expressed by the vulnerable adult should be recorded and reported with their concerns by the staff member. Concerns should be reported at the earliest possible opportunity. Ensuring the safety of the vulnerable adult and any other people at risk is the primary responsibility of staff when they become aware of a serious incident.

## If someone discloses to you then:

- \* Stay Calm
- \* Ensure that any immediate needs are addressed
- \* Remember that this is an important conversation with someone and they will probably be more anxious than you. Keep conversation flowing by use of non-verbal prompts, verbal prompts, and echoing by repeating the last one or two words spoken
- \* Show empathy when listening
- \* Let them speak – do not interrupt them
- \* Reassure the person e.g. tell them that they have done the right thing in speaking to you and that you believe them
- \* Become an active listener -concentrate, try to comprehend what it is they are saying, sustain the conversation by verbal and non-verbal prompts and summarise
- \* **Do not question except to clarify** and ensure that you understand what is being said
- \* Ascertain the wishes of the alleged victim/witness about what they want to do or what they would like to happen
- \* Do not make promises that you cannot keep
- \* Do not promise confidentiality, as you cannot keep the information to yourself
- \* **Explain that you will need to pass this information on to your manager**
- \* If it is a matter that you must report, inform them that you are duty bound to do so

# preserving evidence and recording

In most circumstances when preserving evidence you may not need to do anything except record the events that have given rise for concern. However, there may be occasions when it is important to follow certain rules:

- \* Ensure written records (notes, letters, bank statements, medication records etc.) are kept in a safe place
- \* Make a written record of messages (e.g. answer-phone) to ensure they are not lost. Include the date and time and sign them
- \* In cases of physical or sexual assault encourage the person not to wash bathe or shower where you think they might need a medical examination
- \* Don't tidy up, wash clothes, bedding or other items
- \* Try and ensure that other around do not interfere with any items that maybe important for the police
- \* If there is any suspicion that there may be forensic evidence, inform the police and preserve the evidence. The person may not tell you all the facts on the initial disclosure – do all you can to anticipate what may be needed as evidence, and do all you can to preserve it

It is important that you write down why you are concerned about a person as simply and clearly as you can, and as soon as you can after an event. In some cases this will mean writing in a person's records or notes, in others it might be on a separate record sheet. All original notes must be retained.

- \* It is important that you record all relevant information including what you saw, what you heard, and why you acted as you did
- \* Sign and date your records and make sure they are kept in a safe place
- \* Record any physical signs or injuries using a body map; make sure you sign and date it
- \* Write down what is said to you, who said it including their relationship to the vulnerable adult or role and how they can be contacted, if appropriate. Include any questions you have asked, make sure you sign and date it
- \* Include any details about what the vulnerable person wants to be done at this stage

# Whistle blowing

It is good practice and it is a duty of care to draw attention to bad/poor practice in the workplace. This includes practice that may be abusive and/or neglectful. Staff who work with vulnerable adults have an individual responsibility to raise concerns with someone who has the responsibility to take action. Sometimes it may be necessary to go outside the immediate work environment or the immediate organisation, for example social services or the police.

**It is the responsibility of all organisations to promote a culture which values good practice and encourages whistle blowing.**

# Confidentiality

Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is preserved, this will be governed by what may be an overriding need to protect a person who has been or is at risk of abuse.

**All those working with vulnerable adults must be clear that it is not possible to keep information about suspected or actual abuse confidential.**

The needs of the vulnerable person and the potential risk to others requires you to share the information with your manager.

# Area Directory

## Southend

### **Making a referral/enquiry by telephone:**

Access Team: 01702 215008

By Fax to: 01702 534794

### **Secure email only:** [accessteamGCSX@southend.gov.uk](mailto:accessteamGCSX@southend.gov.uk)

Please note you can only send emails to the secure address if you are sending from a secure email address

### **Non Secure email:** [accessteam@southend.gov.uk](mailto:accessteam@southend.gov.uk)

### **Out of hours Referrals:**

General Public: 0845 606 1212

Statutory Agencies: 0300 123 0778

Fax: 0300 123 0779

## Thurrock

### **Secure email only:** [SafeGuardingAdultsTeam@thurrock.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:SafeGuardingAdultsTeam@thurrock.gcsx.gov.uk)

Please note you can only send emails to the secure address if you are sending from a secure email.

### **Non Secure email:** [SafeguardingAdults@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:SafeguardingAdults@thurrock.gov.uk)

**By Fax to:** 01375 652760

### **Making a referral/enquiry by telephone:**

Community Solutions Team: 01375 652868

Out of hours: 01375 372468 (Fax 01375 397080)

## **Essex**

**By Post to:** Essex Social Care Direct, Essex House,  
200 The Crescent, Colchester, Essex, CO4 9YQ

**Secure email only:** [essexsocialcare@essex.GCSX.gov.uk](mailto:essexsocialcare@essex.GCSX.gov.uk)  
Please note you can only send emails to the secure address if you are sending from a secure email address

**Non Secure email:** [socialcaredirect@essex.gov.uk](mailto:socialcaredirect@essex.gov.uk)

**By fax to:** 0845 601 6230

**Making a referral/enquiry by telephone:** 0845 603 7630

### **Out of hours Referrals:**

General Public: 0845 606 1212

Statutory Agencies: 0300 123 0778

Fax: 0300 123 0779

## **Essex Police**

In an **emergency** dial 999

To report a crime or incident which requires police attendance (not an urgent situation) call: 101

**For more information on obtaining additional copies of the Handbook please contact:**

Southend –  
**Southend-on-Sea Borough Council**  
**Business Support Team 01702 212076**

Essex –  
**Essex Safeguarding Adults Board**  
**esab@essex.gov.uk or 01245 430085**

Thurrock –  
**Thurrock Council 01375 652224**

The information contained in this document can be made available in alternative formats: large print, Braille, audio tape, or disk.

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