

Adult safeguarding for housing staff: Guidance for local authority social care staff



This guide is for local authority social care staff, to promote joint working with housing to improve safeguarding practice.

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First published in Great Britain in April 2014
by the Social Care Institute for Excellence

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Acknowledgements

- This guide draws on the work of Imogen Parry, who has written extensively on this subject. Many of the practice examples are from her own dissertation research which was conducted for the MA in Safeguarding Adults: Law, Policy and Practice at Keele University.
- Thanks to Renny Wodynska, Director of Supported Housing, Bournville Village Trust for her support in the guide's development.
- Professionals in housing, social care and the police as well as people living in social housing with care and support needs have also helped to shape this resource.

Introduction

Housing staff have a key safeguarding role to play, alongside their colleagues in social care, health and the police, in keeping people safe. They are well placed to identify people with care and support needs, share information and work in partnership to coordinate responses.

This guide aims to raise awareness about safeguarding in the housing sector, at management and frontline levels, for all housing staff, not just those in sheltered or supported housing. We have produced the guide in three versions – each written for a specific audience. You can use the version that most closely links to your role.

This section of the guide is for local authority social care staff, to promote joint working with housing to improve safeguarding practice. It aims to improve communication and joint working between housing and contracted staff and their safeguarding partners, particularly local authority social services staff with safeguarding responsibilities.

The guide offers case studies and examples of what others are doing in practice. It does not provide information specific to services for homeless people or local authority responsibilities for ensuring the safety of tenants in the private rented sector, but people working in those sectors may find some of the content useful. The content is based on [SCIE's knowledge base on safeguarding](#), including key research and policy.

The forthcoming Care Act

The Care Bill will pass into law in 2015 and will be supported by statutory and practice guidance. It will modernise the law so that people's wellbeing is at the heart of the care and support system.

The modernisation of care legislation will in time change practice, attitudes and terminology. This guide includes terminology currently used by the various sectors involved in safeguarding adults, so that people can find and understand the information they need. Following the implementation of the Care Act, we will update the guide to reflect new and shared language.

Recommendations

Sharing information and joint working between safeguarding partners

Housing and social care should:

- work together to resolve issues where the individual may not be eligible for social care support, refuses support or self-neglects
- ensure links between public protection forums such as safeguarding boards, multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs), multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPAs), health and wellbeing boards and community safety partnerships
- help partner agencies to understand the role of housing staff in safeguarding
- develop a common understanding of language and definitions regarding people with care and support needs and safeguarding
- provide clarity for staff on the law relating to sharing information, confidentiality and data protection
- ensure inclusion of housing staff in strategy meetings and investigations
- agree processes for keeping referrers informed of progress on safeguarding referrals.

Training and raising awareness

Housing agencies should:

- raise awareness of abuse for all frontline staff
- arrange joint training with other safeguarding partners
- ensure housing staff have an adequate understanding of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA)
- work with social care to provide training for people with care and support needs to better enable them to protect themselves
- support perpetrators of anti-social behaviour (ASB) to reduce such behaviour
- work with social care to ensure adequate support for carers.

Key findings from research

- Housing staff are well placed to identify people at risk of abuse.
- Regular and sustained joint working between housing and adult social care is essential to protect people who may be at risk of abuse.
- Serious case reviews have indicated that housing providers could or should have played a more effective role in adult safeguarding.
- Some housing staff have false perceptions about needing the person's consent to make a safeguarding referral.
- Some housing staff report negative attitudes towards them from social care professionals.
- There is no national agreement on the threshold for housing referrals to local authority safeguarding procedures.
- Difficulties are caused by complex networks; housing providers may have to work with numerous local authorities in their area and vice versa.
- Some housing providers have IT systems that are inadequate to store sensitive data and to facilitate 'customer profiling' for effective safeguarding.

Key definitions

The forthcoming Care Act

The Care Bill will pass into law in 2015 and will be supported by statutory and practice guidance. It will modernise the law so that people's wellbeing is at the heart of the care and support system.

Safeguarding is currently governed by No Secrets [3] which is statutory guidance. A Department of Health (2013) [Statement of Government Policy on Adult Safeguarding](#) acts as a bridge between No Secrets and the Care Bill. Changes in the bill that are relevant to safeguarding are set out in a [Department of Health Factsheet](#).

The modernisation of care legislation will in time change practice, attitudes and terminology. This guide includes terminology currently used by the various sectors involved in safeguarding adults, so that people can find and understand the information they need. Following the implementation of the Care Act, we will update the guide to reflect new and shared language.

Vulnerable adult/adult at risk/person with care and support needs

The use of the term 'vulnerable' is not popular as it may suggest that all people with care and support needs are vulnerable and attaches vulnerability to people rather than looking at the risks that face them. To rectify this, SCIE and others have used the term 'adult at risk'. The definition of an adult at risk is not clearly or consistently agreed upon across sectors and terminology in the law is changing, in particular as a result of the Care Bill. Local discussion and agreement is currently essential if front-line staff are to understand the various definitions.

The Care Bill refers to 'people with care and support needs' and we have used this term throughout this resource. All staff that come into contact with people who may be vulnerable to abuse and neglect should understand that safeguarding procedures apply to this group. This is the case even if the person does not reach the eligibility threshold to qualify for care services, or if they are paying for their own care and support. This is clarified in the Care Bill: [22]

Where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there)

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it, it must make (or cause to be made) whatever enquiries it thinks necessary to enable it to decide whether any action should be taken in the adult's case (whether under this Part or otherwise) and, if so, what and by whom.

Until the Care Bill passes into law in 2015 the definition of a vulnerable adult, as defined by the Department of Health in 'No Secrets' is: 'a person aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'. [3]

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 person with care and support needs 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. [2]

Adult safeguarding is the process of protecting adults with care and support needs from abuse or neglect. [4] This may include empowering and enabling people to protect themselves.

Domestic abuse. The cross-government definition [7] of domestic violence and abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- financial abuse
- emotional abuse.

Housing providers (also known as registered providers, RPs, or registered social landlords, RSLs) are registered with the Homes and Communities Agency. They include local authority landlords and arm's-length management organisations, housing associations and voluntary sector providers such as alms houses. All providers are required to 'set out their policy on taking into account the needs of those households who are vulnerable by reason of age, disability or illness'. [5] Private landlords may provide accommodation for some people with care and support needs. The local authority has inspection powers under the Housing Act 2004 regarding the standard and safety of privately rented accommodation. Guidance refers to consideration of vulnerable age groups, meaning older people and children. [6]

Mate crime is when people are befriended or groomed for exploitation and abuse.

Multi-agency safeguarding policy and procedures are developed by local authorities to set out local arrangements for safeguarding people with care and support needs. Key agencies including the local authority, health, care providers, housing and the police are expected to follow the procedures.

Serious case reviews (to become known as **safeguarding adults reviews** when the Care Bill passes into law in 2015) are performed when there are major concerns about adult protection and/or system failures that have resulted in people not being cared for or safeguarded adequately. They are held in order to determine what went wrong and what lessons may be learned about the way in which staff and agencies work together to safeguard people at risk of harm. [2]

Recognising the safeguarding role of housing staff

You should:

- recognise that housing staff have a key role to play in safeguarding
- take referrals from housing seriously and work jointly to resolve issues where the individual may not be eligible for social care support
- work jointly to develop approaches to working with people who refuse support and those who self-neglect
- involve housing staff in strategy meetings and investigations, keeping them informed of progress
- involve housing staff in support and protection planning for those at risk
- ensure there is a framework for joint working, including information sharing protocols and housing representation on the safeguarding adults board
- ensure housing providers are included in joint safeguarding and Mental Capacity Act training
- understand the limitations in terms of finding suitable alternative accommodation for either those at risk or abusers.

The evidence from serious case reviews clearly shows that joint working is key to reducing the danger of abuse to people with care and support needs. Housing staff report difficulties in engaging with social care staff over concerns about risk, and being left out of joint working arrangements. [24] A high proportion of people with care and support needs live in social housing, [37] previously estimated at almost half. [10] Housing staff have a key role to play in safeguarding this group. They may, for example, receive information on anti-social behaviour that can highlight a person's vulnerability to abuse.

The Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Adult Social Services [21] recommend that directors of adult social services 'make sure safeguarding is embedded in corporate and service strategies across the council and partners'. This includes all social housing providers. There should be local arrangements in place to ensure that the knowledge, skills and position in the community of housing staff are recognised and utilised. Joint training and information sharing protocols may be helpful in developing better understanding of the roles of different professionals.

Housing representation on the safeguarding adults board

Housing representation on the safeguarding adults board is important for sharing information, but accommodating numerous housing associations on the board may be unworkable. Some local authorities have numerous housing providers in their area and it is not possible to include them all on the safeguarding adults board. Equally, some housing associations operate in many different areas and so cannot attend all safeguarding adults boards. It is important therefore to ensure clear lines of communication across complex networks of organisations. Some local authorities have

a housing forum or a housing sub-group to ensure there is communication between the board and various housing providers.

The 'No secrets' consultation report [23] outlined what housing professionals want from this interaction:

- a clear, well communicated remit
- a board that responds to concerns and queries within an agreed timeframe
- benchmarking activity to highlight local safety issues
- targets for improvement and progress monitoring
- a 'no blame' approach
- a strong partnership model of working
- independent scrutiny for concerns about investigations
- accountability.

The government has not included housing as a statutory partner on safeguarding adults boards in the draft Care and Support Bill. It has, however, warned that:

we would be most concerned if safeguarding adults boards did not address the role, contribution and responsibilities of housing providers in adult safeguarding. We would expect safeguarding adults boards to draw on the housing sector for input, collaboration and advice. The government will not dictate how this happens, as this will depend on local circumstances, which vary widely across the country. For example, in some areas the safeguarding adults board may operate sub-groups, including one devoted to housing-related issues that reports back to the main board. [38]

A survey of independent safeguarding adults board chairs found that the benefits of housing representation on boards included:

- contributing to wider agendas including: prevention and awareness-raising, domestic abuse, crime, hate crime, self-neglect, hoarding, anti-social behaviour and poverty
- reaching into local communities
- addressing professional boundaries
- reinforcing the message that safeguarding is everyone's business
- contributing funding
- helping to develop multi-agency policies, procedures and improvement plans
- implementing core safeguarding policies across housing commissioners and providers. [39]

Examples from practice

- A number of local authorities, including **North Yorkshire, Lancashire, Bradford and Gateshead**, involve housing providers in their multi-agency safeguarding training.
- The **London Borough of Lewisham** has a [Housing Safeguarding Agreement](#) that sets out the expectations between safeguarding partners.
- **Circle Housing** gave a presentation at a local safeguarding children's board event to help social care staff build up awareness about the registered provider's role in safeguarding, following recommendations from a serious case review. The presentation and discussion focused on what policies and training are in place and how to develop collaborative working. The feedback from the event showed that there is a need for more general awareness about the role of housing in safeguarding, and how social care staff can contribute at different stages of the safeguarding process.
- **Alliance Homes** has a dedicated 'champion' on a policy subgroup to the safeguarding adults board. They monitor referrals and provide an annual report to supporting people commissioners.
- **Kirklees Council**, among others, has a housing forum that has safeguarding as a standing item on the agenda and representation to the safeguarding adults board.
- **Sutton Housing Partnership** represents housing on the London Borough of Sutton safeguarding adults board.
- **Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council** has a housing safeguarding network that includes housing associations that operate in the area. Each association was asked to identify one key contact who would distribute information within their organisation. An email distribution list of contacts was established so that key messages, information and training opportunities could be communicated across organisations. Most of the work will be done by email. The network covers eight of the largest housing associations in the borough. There are 40 nominated officers from the various organisations who attended training on preventing illegal money lending/loan sharks in February 2014.
- **Thurrock Council** has a housing safeguarding subgroup to the safeguarding adults board.

Responding to safeguarding concerns from housing staff

Senior social care staff should ensure:

- that safeguarding training helps local authority staff to understand the roles of housing staff and addresses negative attitudes
- joint working protocols are in place
- referrals from housing staff are taken seriously
- there is a joint approach to supporting people who are not eligible for social care support
- there are effective policies and training on service refusal and self-neglect
- that an individual's choice to remain in a risky situation is met by gentle persistence to offer support rather than withdrawal
- housing staff are involved following referral, invited to strategy meetings and kept up to date on progress
- housing staff are included in protection planning where appropriate.

Negative attitudes of housing staff from adult social care can lead to exclusion. [24] Housing staff report a number of problems in getting appropriate responses to some safeguarding referrals. These include eligibility criteria and issues relating to assessment of risk, mental capacity, diagnosis and individual choice. [39] It is important that social care staff take referrals seriously and seek to jointly address concerns about risk and safeguarding. People left without the right support may become more vulnerable to abuse as a result and the consequences can be very serious.

Where the view from social care is that a safeguarding alert from housing is inappropriate, then it should be discussed with housing managers and a joint approach to the right solutions sought – it should not be simply rejected. Referrals that are not appropriate may be a good source of information from other perspectives – for example, building a wider picture of abuse patterns. Outright rejection of concerns may lead to an appropriate referral not being made. It is important to work together with all safeguarding partners to address safeguarding concerns. Local voluntary sector services may be able to provide support to people who are not eligible for social care services.

Examples from practice

- In **central Bedfordshire**, social workers invite housing staff to accompany them, when appropriate, on joint visits to investigate safeguarding referrals or assess mental capacity. Housing tenancy liaison officers have attended Mental Capacity Act training; joint assessments are carried out when there are concerns affecting housing. This enables housing staff to learn more about

assessments of mental capacity and enables safeguarding staff to better understand the role of housing.

- The **Solihull adult safeguarding team** established a multi-agency sharing information hub to address sharing information problems between housing and social services staff and concerns that low-level safeguarding issues were not being dealt with effectively. A multi-agency conference was convened to involve all housing providers in this and other new systems.
- **Sutton Housing Partnership's** director of neighbourhoods was invited to present and run a development workshop for the social work practitioner's forum in Sutton. The aim was to enable social and housing workers to understand each other's challenges and the barriers to inter-agency working, and to identify how they can work more effectively together.
- **Kirklees Council** is developing 'safeguarding champions' in housing and social care to develop better understanding of roles and perspectives.

Sharing information, joint working and communication

You should:

- work in partnership with housing safeguarding leads to ensure appropriate responses to referrals
- work jointly to resolve any disagreements about referrals and eligibility
- promote mutual professional respect
- understand that sharing information, joint working and communication are essential in keeping people safe
- share a common language and understanding with safeguarding partners
- understand the parameters of confidentiality
- ensure there is an effective communication loop between housing and the local safeguarding adults board
- ensure there is allocated time in team meetings to discuss current safeguarding concerns
- ensure protocols are in place for sharing safeguarding information within and between organisations
- ensure there are local mechanisms for sharing information on cases involving domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour and hate crime, where people with care and support needs may be at risk
- ensure housing staff are included in meetings, kept informed about referrals and, where appropriate, involved in protection planning.

Failure to share information and poor communication have been key features in serious case reviews. As most local authorities now have a number of housing providers operating in their area, the complexity of sharing and coordinating information on people with care and support needs who may be at risk of abuse and those who pose a risk cannot be underestimated.

It is important that adult social care and housing staff work together to safeguard people with care and support needs. This will require them to share information between themselves and possibly with others, including carers, care and support services, the police and probation services, child protection, and health and mental health services.

Managers must ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities with regard to sharing information and have a basic understanding of their common-law duty in respect of confidentiality, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the right to respect for private and family life under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998. They should also be aware that, without overriding these responsibilities, any person may disclose information to a relevant authority under Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act

1998 'where disclosure is necessary or expedient for the purposes of the Act (reduction and prevention of crime and disorder)'. [13]

Joint working and sharing information with voluntary care and support agencies is also important as they may be better placed to provide specialist support to individuals and to spot signs of abuse. For example, domestic abuse charities can provide counselling and support. Mental health charities can support treatment and provide activities, such as at-risk workshops and calming exercise classes, to support people with depression and anxiety that may be related to abuse. Fall care and support services can provide an extra form of monitoring by trained professionals. Relevant safeguarding information should be shared with such agencies in the interests of keeping people safe.

Sharing information within an organisation

Information shared within your organisation does not come under the Data Protection Act. The Information Commissioner has published guidance that sharing information between two separate local authorities is clearly subject to disclosure rules under the Act. However, sharing information between two departments in the same local authority does not come under the Act, unless the second department is going to use the information for a secondary purpose, different to the purpose for which the information was initially shared. [28]

Find out more about how [data protection](#), [Caldicott principles](#), [human rights](#) and the [Mental Capacity Act](#) affect the work of frontline housing staff.

Resources

[Adult safeguarding resource \(eLearning resource\)](#)

[Protecting adults at risk in London: good practice resource \(SCIE resource\)](#)

Confidentiality

The review of 'No secrets' [23] found that housing staff placed a great deal of importance on confidentiality and consent 'in all interactions with tenants and very rarely would they want to breach that'. But it is important that all housing and social care staff understand when information should be shared to prevent or reduce the risk of abuse.

In each case it is important to find the right balance to keep people safe without overriding their rights to privacy and autonomy. In some cases – for example, where others are at risk – it may be necessary to share information without a person's consent. This does not mean sharing information without the individual's knowledge; this may only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances where letting the person know might increase the risk to them or others.

If others are not at risk and the person has the capacity to make choices about the particular issue, then it may be hard to justify a breach of confidentiality. Where a person has mental capacity to make a decision about their safety, it is important to consider whether they may be subject to duress or intimidation. If a person lacks the mental capacity to make a decision about their safety, housing officers should seek support from social care. Professionals have a duty to act in the person's best interests

under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. In all cases it is important to record the decision-making process:

'From a legal point of view, if public interest in terms of risk is to justify the overriding of confidentiality, the justification must be shown in the decision-making process (and its documentation or recording). The process needs to be consistent with legal rules, have taken account of the relevant evidence and factors for and against disclosure, and employed a reasoning process to explain the decision reached.' [13]

Examples from practice

- **Sutton Housing Partnership's** director of neighbourhoods was invited to present and run a development workshop for the London Borough of Sutton social work practitioners' forum to enable social and housing workers to understand each other's challenges and the barriers to inter-agency working. The aim was to identify how they could work more effectively together in the future. Sutton Housing Partnership is involved in a number of task and finish groups set up by the safeguarding adults board. The aims are to improve the sharing information protocol, develop mental capacity and self-neglect protocols and develop the high-risk multi-agency panel.
- The **Birmingham Social Housing Partnership** comprises over 30 housing associations working in collaboration with around 40,000 properties, and has a safeguarding subgroup. The Partnership is managed by an elected board of chief executives and senior directors. The group aims to ensure that housing associations in Birmingham work as effectively as possible with Birmingham's adults, communities and children's departments, in respect of safeguarding adults and children at risk in the city. It meets regularly to share learning and good practice, highlight themes and look at concerns. The group has been able to highlight common concerns and begin to make links with the adults' and children's safeguarding boards.
- The **Bournville Village Trust** has a 'Safer Estates Agreement' with local police that facilitates the gathering or sharing of safeguarding information.
- **Catalyst Housing Ltd** has a safeguarding lead responsible for advising staff and improving joint working with local authorities. [10]
- **St Leger Homes** in Doncaster has a dedicated manager leading on child and adult protection, hate crime, domestic abuse and mental capacity.
- In **Croydon** the problems caused by departmental barriers have been addressed by putting health, housing and social care in one department.
- **The Home Office** identified a range of multi-agency models to support sharing information around safeguarding responses for people at risk, primarily through

multi-agency safeguarding hubs (see (see [Multi-agency working and Sharing information project: early findings](#). [29]

- **Waltham Forest Housing Association** has regular meetings with social care and is directly involved in safeguarding investigations. [10]
- In Birmingham a partnership approach to tackling anti-social behaviour has been developed by the **Safer Birmingham Partnership**. The [Safer Estates Agreement](#) is used by all social landlords in Birmingham to enable sharing information.

Working with safeguarding partners to support carers

You should:

- provide adequate, suitable, flexible support for carers
- ensure that all relevant agencies, including housing, are aware of procedures for signposting carers to support and services
- ensure that an offer of assessment is made on a regular basis (e.g. at the cared-for person's annual review or following a change of circumstances)
- consider the use of professional [mediation or family group conference](#) services to reduce abuse within families.

There are a number of reasons why those caring for people with care and support needs may also abuse them. It may be that there has always been abuse in the relationship or the carer may be struggling with the stress of caring and unable to cope. Carers may have their own difficulties caused by mental illness, drug or alcohol problems that impact on their ability to cope as a carer and could be the underlying cause of abuse.

Resources

[SCIE resources on carers](#)

Supporting perpetrators of anti-social behaviour

You should:

- ensure that the needs of perpetrators of anti-social behaviour, who may themselves have care and support needs, are identified
- work jointly with safeguarding partners to support perpetrators of anti-social behaviour to reduce such behaviour
- offer support to people with mental illness or substance misuse problems that may put others at risk
- work with other emergency services to identify frequent users who may need support from social care.

The courts have referred to the importance of supporting people with care and support needs and anti-social behaviour. [13] Previous Government guidance [40] advises against 'drastic interventions' in favour of other methods such as supporting people with anti-social behaviour, in particular if their behaviour is related to drug or alcohol use, mental illness or disability. While this guidance is no longer in force, its advice remains sound.

It is vital that housing, social care, health and the police work together to provide the right support for people who may present a risk to people with care and support needs because of their own inability to cope. Cullen [41] argues that when individuals have not been able to access local authority support because do not meet the eligibility criteria they place demands on emergency services. These demands can be minimised by joint working to assess risk and early intervention.

The 'No secrets' consultation [23] noted inclusive housing responses to anti-social behaviour perpetrators:

For many housing officers perpetrators were just one of the categories of people who needed housing, and they had the same housing rights as anyone else. The landlord responsibility was to try and help keep them safe in the community and to keep the other tenants safe from any of their offending behaviour. Other supported housing organisations went further and said it was important to work with them. "Unless work takes place with abusers, they will continue to abuse".

In all cases it is important for agencies to work together to ensure that people identified as a possible risk to others as a result of their own circumstances receive the support they need to reduce their behaviour and the risk they pose to others. The danger of ignoring people with such complex needs was graphically illustrated in the serious case review into the death of Steven Hoskins, where one of the principle perpetrators, Darren Stewart, was clearly in need of support himself.

Case study

Darren Stewart: extracts from the serious case review into the death of Steven Hoskins [15]

The chaotic contours of Darren's early life were defined by neglect, discord, assaults, truanting from school and thefts. He was a 'runaway' child who went on to live in an unknown number of care homes and secure services. He was sent to prison for arson and later was convicted of a street robbery. His misuse of alcohol and amphetamines and being 'on the move' came to characterise his adult life. Between 1998 and 2006 he had five children with three teenage partners, all of whom were vulnerable. These were volatile relationships.

Darren self-harmed and was aggressive towards others. He was thought to have a borderline personality disorder. A serious case review was held into the serious harm of one of his own children.

He moved frequently and prior to Steven's murder his life was 'characterised by referrals followed by non-attendances, unplanned crisis attendances, "overdoses", arrests and detentions under the Mental Health Act. However, Darren's engagement with the service was poor'.

Between January 2005 and Steven's murder on 6 July 2006, Darren made seven visits to minor injury units; and at least eight to accident and emergency services. He consulted his GP on 15 occasions and out of hours GP services on 21 occasions. In addition, he made 24 calls to the ambulance emergency call out, at least eight of which were to Steven's bedsit.

Between December 2004 and 6 July 2006, there were 49 police contact logs [in Cornwall alone] in respect of Darren and his girlfriends.

Looking back over Darren's life there appears to have been a marked tendency to under-respond to the gravity of his aggressive acts and no account appears to have been taken of the destabilising factors of his alcohol and substance misuse. He had an uncanny gift for identifying those who were vulnerable and lonely and became violent when they sought to disengage from him.

Resources

[Social Care TV: Safeguarding adults: lessons from the murder of Steven Hoskin](#)

Examples from practice

- **Stockport Council** has made case studies publicly available for training purposes based on a serious case review. The case involved a young man who had been associated with anti-social behaviour and was murdered.

Learning about safeguarding from experience

You should:

- evaluate the outcomes of safeguarding cases, including whether the person feels safer
- share learning within the organisation and with partner agencies
- in the most serious cases ensure a Safeguarding Adults Review takes place.

Serious case reviews (to become safeguarding adults reviews and a statutory requirement under the Care Act) offer a way of examining evidence vital to the improvement of safeguarding practice. There is little evidence to date that multi-agency systems are changing as a result of available data, and so there is clearly room to improve by learning from mistakes. [42]

Learning Together

SCIE's [Learning Together](#) initiative presents a 'systems' model of organisational learning that can be used across agencies involved in safeguarding. Initially developed in children's services, the model is proving helpful in adult safeguarding. The approach supports an analysis that goes beyond identifying **what** happened towards explaining **why** it happened. This helps the safeguarding network generate new ideas about how to improve safeguarding practice.

Parry [27] highlights the lessons that have arisen from serious case reviews involving housing:

Internal: Housing providers should improve:

- data bases of all tenants ensuring that vulnerabilities are identified
- support and contract monitoring involving tenants with care and support needs
- awareness of safeguarding by all staff and ensure effective reporting of abuse.

External: Housing providers are inhibited in their effectiveness in adult safeguarding due to:

- barriers to information sharing, often caused by negative attitudes towards housing staff
- adult social care setting high thresholds for safeguarding referrals
- failures of risk and capacity assessment and diagnosis by adult social care.

Useful information

Key safeguarding principles

The government has identified **six guiding principles** which serve as a firm foundation for safeguarding people with care and support needs.

- **Empowerment:** presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent.
- **Protection:** support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Prevention:** it is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality:** proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Partnership:** local solutions through services working with their communities – communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability:** accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding. [1]

Useful safeguarding organisations

[Action on Elder Abuse](#): campaigning to safeguard older people. Helpline 08088 808141

[Action Fraud](#): report fraud and internet crime. 03001 2302040

[Care Quality Commission](#): regulation of care providers. 03000 616161

[Ann Craft Trust](#): safeguarding vulnerable adults and disabled children

[Independent Age](#): advice and support for older people. Advice line 0800 3196789

[Women's Aid](#): working to end domestic violence against women and children. Helpline 0808 2000 247

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Adult safeguarding for housing staff: Guidance for local authority social care staff

This guide aims to raise awareness about safeguarding in the housing sector, at management and frontline levels, for all housing staff, not just those in sheltered or supported housing. We have produced the guide in three versions – each written for a specific audience. You can use the version that most closely links to your role.

This section of the guide is for local authority social care staff, to promote joint working with housing to improve safeguarding practice. It aims to improve communication and joint working between housing and contracted staff and their safeguarding partners, particularly local authority social services staff with safeguarding responsibilities.

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