


# What do I do if I have a safeguarding concern about an adult?

A guide for staff and volunteers  
working with adults with care and  
support needs

**RBSAB**

ROCHDALE BOROUGH  
SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD



## A guide for staff and volunteers working with adults with care and support needs

### 1. What is safeguarding

### 2. Who are adults with care and support needs?

**Safeguarding Adults is about stopping or preventing abuse or neglect of adults with care and support needs.**

**Adults with care and support needs could be someone over the age of 18 who:**

- has a learning disability
- has mental health needs including dementia or personality disorder
- has a long term illness/condition
- who misuses substances or alcohol
- who is elderly and frail due to ill health, disability or cognitive impairment.



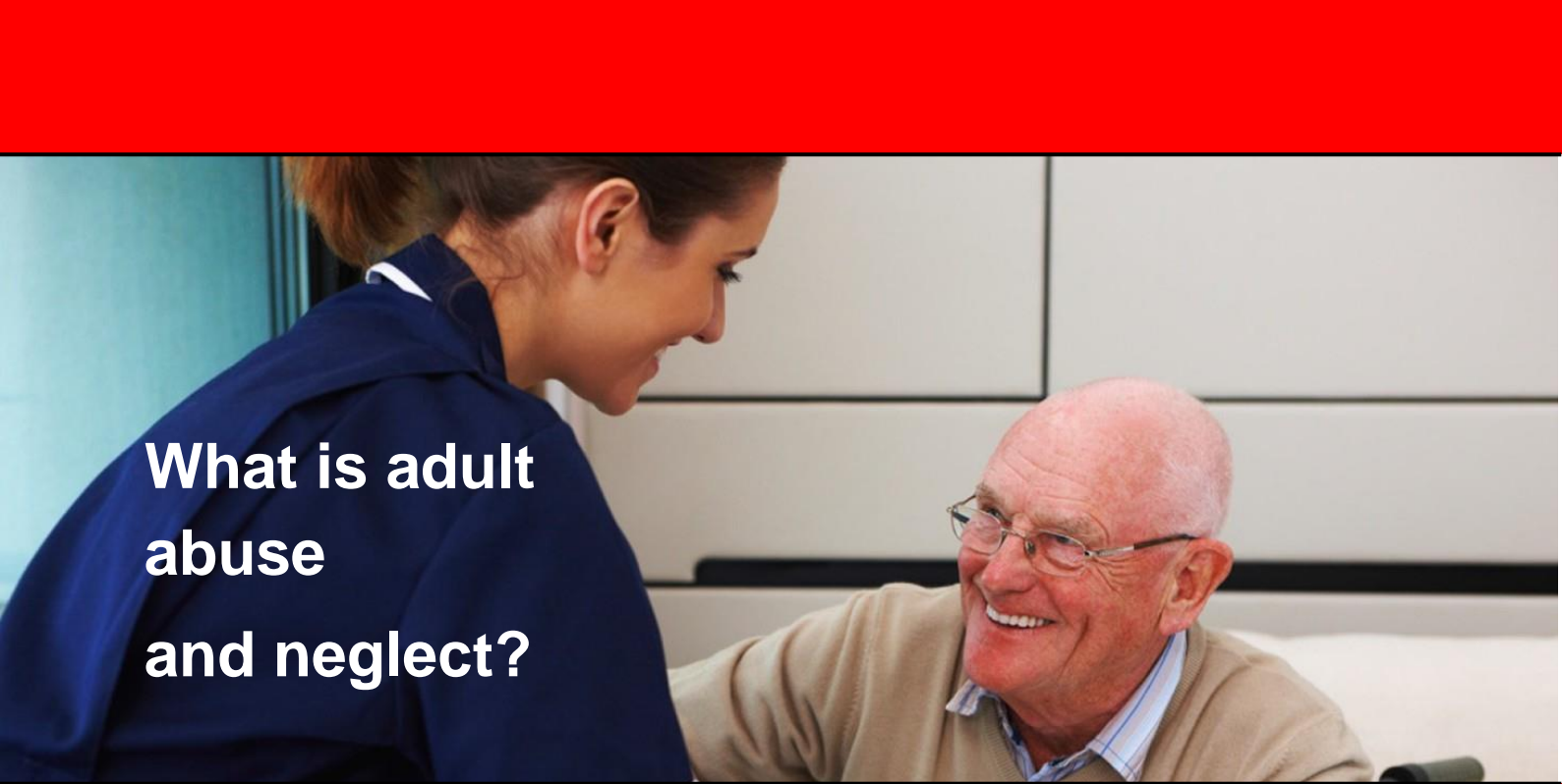




**Whose job is it to  
safeguard adults  
with care and  
support needs?**

**Anyone could be the first person to spot abuse. Everyone has a duty to take appropriate action if they become aware of an adult with care and support needs who may be experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.**





## What is adult abuse and neglect?

**Adults with care and support needs can be victims of many types of abuse or neglect, including:**

### **Domestic abuse**

Controlling and coercive behaviour, forced marriage, female genital mutilation or “honour”-based violence

### **Discriminatory abuse**

Ill-treatment or harassment based on a person’s age, sex, sexuality, disability, religious beliefs or ethnic group; disability hate crime

### **Physical abuse**

Hitting, burning, pushing or kicking someone, rough handling, unreasonable restraint (including misuse of medication), locking someone in a room

### **Financial or material abuse**

Theft, fraud, coercion over wills, misusing someone’s money, property or other belongings without their agreement

### **Organisational abuse**

Through rigid regimes, systemic poor care, poor organisational culture, lack of resources, denial of choice, lack of dignity and respect for service users



**Adults with care and support needs can be victims of many types of abuse or neglect, including:**

**Neglect or acts of omission**

by people responsible for giving care; including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

**Sexual abuse**

Rape, inappropriate touching or forcing someone to take part in or witness any sexual act against their will

**Psychological or emotional abuse**

Intimidation, bullying, shouting, swearing, taunting, threatening or humiliating someone, or radicalisation

**Self-neglect**

Neglecting to care for oneself or environment

**Slavery**

Trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude





**Listen to their views, including  
the risks they face and what  
they would like to see happen  
next...**

# What do I do if I have a concern that an adult is being abused or neglected or is at risk of this?

1. If the adult is in immediate danger, take action at once such as calling emergency services or medical assistance.

2. Report any concern about a child to Children's Social Care (0300 303 0440). This includes where you know a child lives in the same home as an adult you think may be experiencing or at risk of abuse.

3. Unless it is not safe to do so, speak to the adult to get their views about the concern and the risks you think they face.

*I am asked my opinion if people around me think I am at risk of abuse or neglect*

Listen to their views, including the risks they face and what they would like to see happen next. (They may see the concern differently; some safeguarding concerns can be minor and easily resolved; others can be very serious and affect lots of people.)

*I feel listened to and what I say is taken seriously*

Consider the person's ability to understand the concern (mental capacity). If they are not able to understand, you will need to decide what to do in their best interests. If you are in any doubt, refer the matter to Rochdale Adult Care.

If the person declines support, consider if this is because they are scared of someone who may be trying to control what they say or do. That could be a sign of domestic abuse.

*I know that decisions are made in my best interest when I lack capacity*

Discuss the concern and what to do with your supervisor/manager/person you report to, unless this would cause a delay that places the person at greater risk (but then make sure you inform them as soon as you can).

*My views directly  
informs what  
happens next*

#### 4. Take the action you have agreed to safeguard the adult. This could be:

The actions the adults wants that resolves a problem in the way they want.

If a crime has or is being committed, report this to the police. (Take action to protect any evidence of a crime.)

*I get help and  
support to report  
abuse and neglect*

Where the person agrees (or where you have decided that for their safety you must act,) report the safeguarding adult concern to Rochdale Adult Care

Always record what you have done and the reasons for doing it.

### Why is it so important to speak to the adult when I have a safeguarding concern about them?

The 2014 Care Act says that safeguarding an adult from abuse or neglect has to be done with their involvement to the greatest extent possible. Everyone has the human right to be involved in the decisions that affect their lives.

*My right to make  
choices about the  
risks that I face and  
to have control over  
the decisions that  
affect my life are  
respected*

This approach is known as “***making safeguarding personal***”.

Adults with care and support needs have said that when people act to protect them without including them, this often makes things worse, not better.

*I know that no  
decisions that affect  
me will be made  
without including  
me in making them*

Remember:

***“No decision about me without me”.***

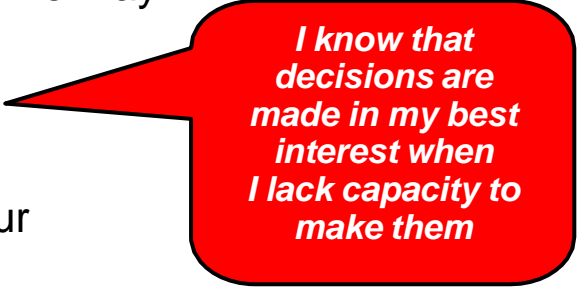


# Should I report a safeguarding concern without the person's consent; and what if they tell me not to do anything?

You should always listen and take account of what the person says. But there may be occasions when you need to report a concern without the person's consent; for example:

- \* If you suspect the adult is being coerced or bullied into refusing support
- \* If waiting to get their consent would put them at further risk
- \* If there is a risk of harm to the adult or others,
- \* If it is necessary to prevent crime or if a crime may have been committed,
- \* If the adult lacks mental capacity to understand the risks they face

In these circumstances you **must** report your concern.



*I know that decisions are made in my best interest when I lack capacity to make them*

The adult should always be told of your decision to report the concern and the reasons for this, unless telling them would put their safety, or the safety of others, at risk.

The key issue in deciding whether to report a concern without their consent will be the level of risk of harm to the adult (or to any other adults who may have contact with the person or organisation causing the risk of harm.)

If you are not sure what to do, report your concern to **Rochdale Adult Care**

**Confidentiality and sharing information** – sharing information on a “need to know” basis is essential to safeguard adults. There is a duty to share information to stop or prevent abuse or neglect. But this needs to be balanced against your duty to protect the adult's confidentiality.

## **You should:**

Wherever possible gain permission of the adult to share information if consent cannot, or is not given, if you judge this is essential to protect the adult, and is in their best interests; or to protect others from harm.

Only share the information necessary to protect the adult; and only with people who need to know.

# Four steps to protecting adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect

## See It

Recognise what you are seeing or hearing could be abuse or neglect.

If the person is in immediate danger take action at once, such as calling emergency services or medical assistance.

## Talk to the adult

Make safeguarding personal.

Share your concerns with the adult, unless it is not safe or possible to do this.

Listen to their views and ask them what they would like to see happen next.

## Decide what to do

### Consider:

- What the person wants
- Their mental capacity to understand the concern;

If they are not able to understand, you will need to decide what is in their best interests to do.

- The level of risk to the adult or to others
- Who else may need to be informed

## Take the agreed action

Take action that resolves the concern in the way the person wants.

This could be ... (see next page)

If a child is at risk of abuse or neglect.,  
contact Children's Social Care

If a child is in immediate danger, phone  
999

*Refer any child  
identified at risk  
to CSC 0300  
303 0440*

Speak to the adult and ascertain their views  
and the risks they face, their wishes and  
their desired outcome.

*REMEMBER:  
No decision  
about me  
without me*

If the adult refuses support, consider if this is a  
sign of coercion by a perpetrator (domestic  
abuse) and if you need to act without their  
consent

Discuss the concern and what to do with your  
supervisor/manager/person you report to,  
unless this would cause a delay that places the  
person at greater risk.

*If you are not  
sure what to do,  
report your  
concern  
to Rochdale  
Adult Care*

Report a crime to the Police **101**

If an adult is in immediate danger call **999**

Report a safeguarding concern to Rochdale  
Adult Care **0300 303 8886**  
AdultPreventionTeam@rochdale.gov.uk.

*Remember to  
record what you  
have done and  
the  
reasons why*





ROCHDALE BOROUGH  
SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD

To report a safeguarding concern contact Rochdale Adult Care

Mon-Fri 8am – 4.45pm; except Bank Holidays: **0300 303 8886**

At all other times: **0300 303 8875**

Alternatively, in a non-emergency, they  
can email, leaving contact details:

**[adult.care@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:adult.care@rochdale.gov.uk)**

Non-emergency police number: **101**

In an emergency, dial: **999**

For advice in relation to a  
safeguarding adults concern, ring: **0300 303 8886**

*This guide is about safeguarding adults: people over the age of 18.*

*If you are concerned someone under the age of 18 is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, you should contact Children's Social Care on 0300 303 0440*

*If you feel a child or young person is in immediate danger please contact the police on 999*

*Alternatively you can contact the NSPCC 24/7 on 0808 800 5000*

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