



A guide for pharmacies to support Safeguarding Adults in Newcastle

Pharmacies are an essential community resource that are especially well placed to support the identification, reporting, and monitoring of those at risk of abuse and neglect and also a role in sharing information with professionals when asked under Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) processes.

Professional duty

Pharmacists have a professional, moral, and social duty to protect vulnerable adults in addition to a legal duty to protect children and young people from abuse or neglect. They also have a duty to work with other organisations and authorities to safeguard vulnerable adults, children, and young people. This is supported in guidance for pharmacies provided by the [Royal Pharmaceutical Society](#). The [General Pharmaceutical Council](#) also provides signposting to additional general safeguarding advice and factsheets.

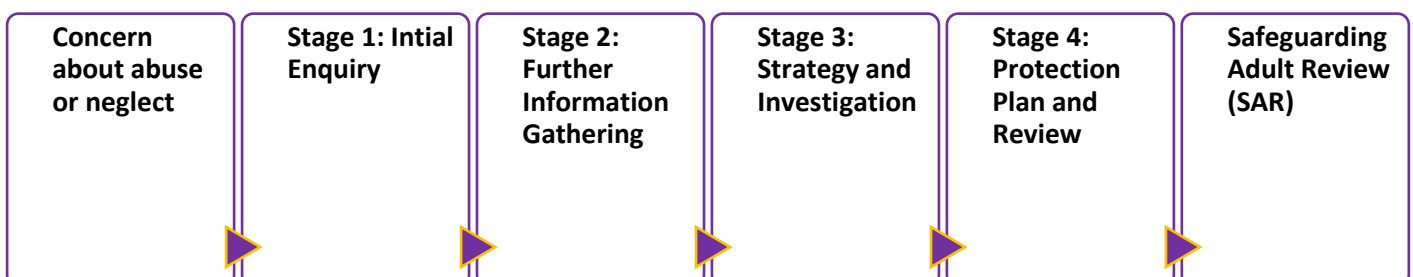
Key Message

This reference guide is aimed at pharmacies operating in Newcastle to support improved understanding and active participation from the sector to safeguard adults in Newcastle. This should be read and considered alongside your pharmacy's policy, procedures, and practice guidance.

Safeguarding Adults

This information is to help staff working in pharmacies to understand what happens when someone is worried that an adult may have been abused or neglected.

The diagram below provides a useful overview of the elements of this guide, which you can click to take you to that section if you require.



Statutory criteria for Safeguarding Adults (Care Act 2014)

A Safeguarding adults concern should be raised if a person aged 18 years or over:

- has or may have needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs); and
- 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.

Care and support needs

These are needs linked to a physical or mental impairment. This includes conditions as a result of either physical, mental, sensory, learning or cognitive disabilities or illnesses, substance misuse or brain injury. A formal diagnosis of the condition is not required.

Definition of Abuse

Abuse or neglect may be deliberate, or the result of negligence or ignorance.

Unintentional abuse or neglect arises, for example, because pressures have built up or a person does not have the correct knowledge, training or support.

Abuse can be a crime.

What is abuse?

- Abuse is an action or a lack of action that causes harm to a person.
- Abuse can be an accident or it can be done on purpose.
- Abuse can be a crime, but it is not always.
- Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, self-neglect, financial, discriminatory, organisational, domestic violence or Modern Slavery.

What happens when there is a concern about abuse or neglect?

Each safeguarding adults enquiry will be different. It will depend on how serious the concern is and what the adult (or their representative) wants to happen. Every safeguarding adults enquiry must involve the adult who is at risk or someone who can represent them. If the person does not have an appropriate person to represent them and they would have substantial difficulty in being involved, then Adult Social Care must arrange an independent advocate. They will help to support and represent the adult through the safeguarding adults enquiry.

The safeguarding adults enquiry can end at any stage, as long as it is agreed that the person is as safe as they possibly can be. Whenever this happens, there will be an agreed plan in place to keep the person safe.

This is called a Safeguarding Adults Plan.

Before making a safeguarding adults referral

Consider the following:

- Have you discussed your concerns with the adult (or a suitable representative) where it is safe to do so?
- What is the adult's (or representative's) views about the concern?
- Have you asked the adult what they would like to happen?
- Have you sought consent from the adult (or their representative) to report a safeguarding adults concern? Is there a need to override consent?
- What do you need to do to manage the immediate risks? e.g. call Police or other emergency service, get the person to a place of safety, inform management of a service, support the person with a basic safety plan (e.g. who (and how) they could contact for help in the short-term) etc.
- Have you collected all the information you need to raise a Safeguarding Adults Concern? You can find out what information you need to raise a concern on the [Newcastle Safeguarding website](#).

The following is an explanation of how a safeguarding adults enquiry may progress and how pharmacies can contribute to each stage.

Stage 1: Initial Enquiry

A safeguarding adults referral is made to Adult Social Care when there is a concern that an adult at risk might have been the victim of abuse or neglect. *This referral can be made by anyone.* We request professionals, including pharmacies, use the [online referral form](#) to submit a Safeguarding Adult's concern. Safeguarding Adults is everyone's responsibility, and pharmacies are well placed to be able to spot the signs of abuse or neglect. Timely, accurate and well-constructed referrals help agencies work together to keep adults with care and support needs safe.

Unless it increases the risk to the adult(s) - or is a risk to your own personal safety – then consent of the adult(s) at risk (or their representative if they are unable to consent) should be sought. However, don't let the issue of consent get in the way if you are worried (and there will be circumstances when consent has to be overridden). Having consent is best practice and you should always endeavour to inform the person, or their representative, you are making a referral, but if this has not been possible please explain this within your referral. This is similar practice covered in the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's safeguarding guide.

There is further information on how to submit a good safeguarding adult referral [here](#).

Adult Social Care will do an initial triage to determine if the safeguarding adult concern criteria has been met. If someone is in immediate danger, then action will be taken to make sure they are safe. A number of concerns are closed at a Stage 1 but are closely monitored for repeating concerns being submitted about an individual therefore it is always important to consider submitting a concern where you have suspicions.

Stage 2: Further Information Gathering

If it is determined that the referral is about an adult with appearance of care and support needs, and they are at risk or experiencing abuse or neglect then it will continue to Stage 2 where more information will be gathered by Adult Social Care. This will usually involve speaking to the adult who is at risk, their family or representative and other professionals or services who are involved. A decision will be made about whether a formal investigation or assessment is needed.

Pharmacies continue to be a valuable source of additional intelligence when a concern is being investigated at Stage 2. Adult Social Care will contact a pharmacy where it is indicated they may be known there/have a connection i.e. where they may have collected regular prescription medication and likely to be known by staff in the pharmacy where (for example) any recent changes to behaviour, appearance, or unusual presence of others may be noticeable to staff during their exchange, for example, those on a methadone script are likely to have regular interaction with pharmacy staff.

Stage 3: Strategy and Investigation

If an investigation or assessment is required a discussion or meeting will be held to plan this. A professional or agency will be asked to complete the investigation or assessment and provide a report with their findings. The investigation or assessment will be carried out by the best placed person or agency e.g. the police, health, social care, housing, regulator, or service provider.

Depending on the Stage 2 information gathering a pharmacy representative or pharmacist may be asked to participate in a discussion or meeting at this stage where valuable intel and further knowledge of the adult at risk was known. The Safeguarding Adults Manager will discuss this with the pharmacy if required.

Stage 4: Protection Plan and Review

If people continue to be concerned about the risks, a meeting will be held to review the findings from the investigation or assessment. Everyone will agree how risks will be monitored and managed. The need for pharmacy involvement at this stage would be discussed with the Safeguarding Adults Manager where required.

Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR)

Newcastle's Safeguarding Adults Boards is required to undertake a Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) when an adult with care and support needs has died or suffered serious harm, because of abuse or neglect, and there is a cause for concern about how agencies have worked together to safeguard that individual.

A Safeguarding Adults Review is a multi-agency process that considers what lessons can be learnt. This includes highlighting areas of best practice which are shared with partners to enable the partnerships to improve services and prevent abuse and neglect in the future.

SARs are not used to apportion blame, and as such, promotes a culture that values professional expertise, shares responsibility, develops professional expertise and supports effective practice, strengthens accountability, and creates a learning system.

The purpose of holding a Safeguarding Adult Review is to:

- Establish the facts.
- Establish what lessons can be learnt from the circumstances of the case about the way in which local professionals and agencies (or any other person involved in the care of the adult) work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults.
- Review the effectiveness of procedures (both multi-agency and those of individual organisations).
- Inform and improve local inter-agency practice and commissioning arrangements.
- Improve practice by acting on learning and developing best practice.
- Highlight good practice identified in the course of the review.
- Provide an overview report which brings together and analyses the findings of the various reports from agencies in order to make recommendations for future action.

It is acknowledged that all agencies will have their own internal/statutory review procedures to investigate serious incidents. This protocol is not intended to duplicate or replace these.

Once a SAR referral is received the [Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Review Policy and Procedure](#) takes effect.

If the initial review of the SAR highlights there may be information to indicate the inclusion of a specific pharmacy in the review the pharmacist lead from the NHS Northeast & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (who is a member of the SAR Committee) will make direct contact to discuss and provide guidance and support as to the SAR process.

For further information the SAR policy and procedures can be accessed on the [NSAB website](#).

More information

Further information about safeguarding adults in Newcastle can be found on our [website](#) – the [resources for practice section](#) is particularly helpful with information on a range of safeguarding topics.

You can report a concern using the [online referral form](#)

There is a Safeguarding Advice Line for Professionals available between 9.00am-4.30pm Monday to Friday. The phonenumber is available on 0191 2788156 where a message will be taken and the Safeguarding Adults manager on cover will return the

July 2023

call. Please note that this is an advice service only and safeguarding adults referrals are not to be made directly to this phonenumber.

We also offer a range of free [multi-agency Safeguarding Training](#) that pharmacy staff can access to ensure all frontline staff have an understanding of the key themes of abuse and neglect and the frameworks in place to manage concerns.