

## Raising an Effective Safeguarding Adults Concern about the Abuse of an Adult with Care and Support Needs (Adult at Risk) with the Local Authority

### Resource Background

This resource was produced to assist individuals and organisations to raise *effective* safeguarding adults concerns with the local authority, providing the right information at the right time. The document considers the type of information to include when submitting safeguarding adult concerns to the local authority with, or on behalf of the adult with care and support needs.

Any organisation working across Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin can refer to this document prior to raising a concern with the local authority to aid decision making - is it something to raise as an adult safeguarding concern or is there an alternative?

This resource was produced by the Safeguarding Adults Lead, Partners in Care with input from the Team Leader and Assistant Team Leader (Adult Safeguarding, Telford and Wrekin Council), Team Manager (Adult Safeguarding, Shropshire Council), and the Designated Adult Safeguarding Lead (ICB, NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin).

### Before Raising a Safeguarding Adults Concern with Local Authority

**Before contacting the local authority to raise a safeguarding adults concern, to ensure appropriate safeguarding concerns are raised:**

- Consider whether your concerns are about the abuse of an adult with care and support needs or whether the adult needs to be referred for a Care Act Assessment (to determine if the individual needs care and support), a referral to mental health services, other support or signposting.
- Refer to the 7 essential adult safeguarding questions [Shropshire](#) or [Telford and Wrekin](#)
- Consider the statutory safeguarding principle of **proportionality**, the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

**Involving the adult in raising the concern:**

- Making Safeguarding Personal seeks to engage the adult, enhance involvement, choice and control (Lawson, 2017). This applies to considerations about raising a safeguarding adults concern.
- There is an expectation that the safeguarding concern is discussed with the adult prior to contacting the local authority.
- You should ask them what outcomes they want, unless this will impact on their safety or the safety of others.

**Be aware of the reporting process for the local authority you are contacting as their processes will differ:**

- **Telford and Wrekin Council** - via Family Connect 01952 385385 option 3, you may be asked to complete a 'Safeguarding Adults Concerns Form'.
- **Shropshire Council** - via phoning First Point of Contact 0345 678 9044.
- *Reporting processes may change, refer to the relevant Safeguarding Partnership website for the most up to date information in [Shropshire](#) or [Telford and Wrekin](#)*

## What should you *include* in your referral information?

<p><b>State if the adult is currently safe</b></p> <p><b>Identify any risks to other adults or children</b></p>	<p>Importantly, explain what you have done to safeguard the adult (aside from raising a safeguarding adults concern with the Local Authority or completing a Safeguarding Adults Concern Form).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Have you been in contact with the police if required?</li> <li>➤ Has medical attention been sought if needed?</li> <li>➤ How have you minimised the risk to the person?</li> <li>➤ Are other adults or children at risk? If yes, what action have you taken?</li> </ul> <p><b>Include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Whether the adult feels safe?</li> <li>➤ How have they been involved in any actions to keep themselves safe?</li> <li>➤ What have you done to support them around immediate safety?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Provide detailed information regarding your concerns about abuse</b></p> <p><b>This may include supporting documents such as care plans or risk assessments</b></p> <p><b>Include any actions have you already taken to address the situation and any risks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What are your concerns?</li> <li>➤ What was the incident?</li> <li>➤ Why do you think the adult is <b>experiencing</b> or <b>at risk</b> of abuse or neglect?</li> <li>➤ What are your concerns based on?</li> </ul> <p>Try and be as descriptive as possible –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What happened <b>or</b> why do you think they are at risk of abuse?</li> <li>➤ What type of abuse are you supporting the adult to report (or reporting on their behalf)?</li> </ul> <p>Referrals that do not outline the concerns due to a lack of detail can delay a response as more information will be required at an early stage to determine if it is a safeguarding concern.</p> <p>The adult should be involved in discussions regarding the above where it is safe to do so.</p> <p>Detailed information or supporting documents, such as care plans or risk assessments enable early decisions by Safeguarding about meeting the threshold for safeguarding or whether appropriate actions have already been taken. If appropriate action has already been taken and it doesn't progress to a Section 42 Enquiry the provider should complete either the Telford and Wrekin Provider Record for Alternative Actions to Raising a Safeguarding <a href="#">Concern</a> or the Shropshire Alternative Actions <a href="#">Proforma</a> for their records.</p>
<p><b>If known, what are the adults care and support needs?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ State the adults needs.</li> <li>➤ Who is meeting those needs?</li> <li>➤ Is the adult unable to protect themselves, if 'no' why are they not able to?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Describe the impact on the person</b></p>	<p>For example, if the allegation was an adult experiencing psychological abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How is it affecting the adult?</li> <li>➤ What are the risks?</li> <li>➤ How does the adult feel about the abuse they are experiencing or experienced?</li> <li>➤ How did they respond after the abuse?</li> <li>➤ How is or was their emotional response or physical health?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Outline the impact on the adult, using their own words in the referral</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Record information, including the impact on the person in their own words. It is important to hear the voice of the adult throughout safeguarding conversations.</li> <li>➤ If the adult cannot communicate the information to you, describe the incident and the impact rather than leaving that information out.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Record the adult at risks consent to raise the concern</b></p>	<p>It is essential that you understand the expectation that the adult should be involved in raising a safeguarding concern, they should know about a safeguarding concern being raised if they are not raising it.</p> <p>The adult should be supported to raise the concern where possible. This should be discussed with them (<i>unless it is not safe to do so</i>). Consider the questions below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Does the person have capacity to consent to the safeguarding referral?</li> <li>➤ Have you discussed raising the concern with the adult and explored their view?</li> <li>➤ What are the adults' expectations regarding the concern being raised?</li> <li>➤ Do they know you are contacting the local authority about safeguarding concerns (if they are not raising the concern themselves)?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Consent: It is best practice to seek consent from the adult before raising a safeguarding adults concern where safe to do so. If it is not safe to do so this will override the need to seek consent</b></p>	<p><b>You should only be raising the concern without consent if there is an overriding public or vital interest concern.</b></p> <p>If raising the concern without consent, you will therefore need to be clear about your rationale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Is it in the public interest? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are other adults or children at risk?</li> <li>○ Are you acting to prevent a serious crime being committed?</li> <li>○ Do you believe the adult is subject to coercion or control and is not making decisions freely?</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Does the situation involve potential harm from someone in a Position of Trust (PoT)* such as a care worker or healthcare worker (risk to others) in such cases there is a wider interest to report the concern. You may need to refer to the West Midlands Adult Position of Trust <a href="#">framework</a>.</li> <li>➤ Are you raising it without their consent because you are concerned about the level of risk?</li> </ul> <p>If you are raising the concern without the adult's consent, have you explained that to the adult and the reasons for your decision (if safe to do so)?</p> <p><i>* a PoT is usually a person who works with adults with care and support needs in a position of trust, whether an employee, volunteer or student (paid or unpaid).</i></p>
<p><b>Capacity to make a decision about raising a safeguarding adults concern</b></p>	<p>If you believe the adult lacks capacity to make decisions around raising the safeguarding adults concern, you should make a best interest decision consulting relevant individuals to make the decision.</p> <p>If you believe the adults lacks capacity to make decisions around raising the safeguarding adults concern ascertain if they have a Power of Attorney (POA), Deputy or Appointee (Department for Work and Pensions).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If so, provide details of the POA, Deputy or Appointee and how they can be contacted.</li> </ul>

<b>Advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If the adult has an advocate provide their contact details.</li> <li>➤ When raising the concern or supporting the adult to do so outline if you believe they require an Advocate (Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA), Care Act Advocate or other advocate).</li> </ul>
<b>Contact Details</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide full contact details for the adult you are concerned about.</li> <li>➤ Provide details for others in the adult's support network, including family, neighbours, GP, District Nurse, other services or organisations that may need to be contacted.</li> </ul>
<b>Contacting the adult at risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ State if it is safe to contact the adult at risk.</li> <li>➤ Can the Local Authority Safeguarding Team contact the person and how.</li> </ul>
<b>Be clear about the source of any information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is the information?</li> <li>➤ Can the Local Authority Safeguarding Team contact the person providing information and is it safe to do so?</li> </ul>
<b>The 'potential source of risk' or 'person alleged to have caused harm'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ State who the 'potential source of risk' or 'person alleged to have caused harm' is.</li> <li>➤ What is their relationship with the adult you are concerned about?</li> <li>➤ Provide their contact details if known.</li> </ul>

### **What should you *avoid* in your referral information?**

<b>Providing vague information</b>	Recording very vague 'concerns' or not highlighting any specific concerns may result in delay or inability to progress the concern.
<b>Use of abbreviations</b>	Social care, housing, health and other services all use abbreviations. Please do not assume these are known outside of your service area. Use of abbreviations can delay a response whilst they are being deciphered.
<b>Omitting contact information</b>	Omitting contact details for the adult at risk whom you are raising the concern with or about will make it challenging to progress the safeguarding concern.
<b>A lack of information about consent</b>	Failing to record the adult at risks consent to raise the concern may result in delay or a lack of clarity about whether it is safe to contact them. Lack of involvement with safeguarding discussions at an early stage can be a barrier to the adult's engagement with safeguarding.
<b>Lack of detail about your rationale when raising a concern with the local authority without the adults consent</b>	<p>Failing to record or state the rationale for raising a concern without the adult's consent and whether they are aware you are taking this action may be problematic in determining if it is safe to contact them.</p> <p>In addition, it does not evidence the application of making safeguarding personal and the statutory safeguarding principles.</p>
<b>Putting multiple names on one safeguarding referral</b>	<p>For example, a care worker is alleged to have fallen asleep during a waking night shift; all of the adults using that service were/are at risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ You then record all the names of <i>all of the adults</i> using that service on the safeguarding referral.</li> </ul> <p>This makes it difficult for the safeguarding team to redact other adult's names and add information to an individual's file, especially if in pdf format (Telford and Wrekin).</p>

Reference: Lawson, J. (2017) *Making Safeguarding Personal for Safeguarding Adults Boards*. London: LGA and ADASS  
<https://www.adass.org.uk/media/6137/msp-resources-2017-for-safeguarding-adults-boards.pdf>