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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

This policy and guidance document exists to ensure that the Birmingham Parent Carer Forum implements appropriate arrangements, systems and procedures to ensure that the organisation has the right knowledge, skills and resources to protect and safeguard adults at risk of harm and that committee members, staff and volunteers know what to do if they become aware of abuse.

1.2. What is 'Adult Safeguarding'

The Care Act 2014 provides a definition and framework for Safeguarding Adults

“Safeguarding means protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances”.

1.3. What are the aims of Adult Safeguarding

The aims of adult safeguarding are to:

- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible
- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs
- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live

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- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned
- Raise public awareness so that communities as a whole, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect
- Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult
- Address what has caused the abuse or neglect

2. POLICY

2.1 Policy Statement

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum recognises safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect and we take our responsibility seriously to promote safeguarding within our organisation and with any groups or organisations with whom we work.

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum will ensure staff, volunteers, and committee members are fully informed regarding defining the parameters surrounding the Safeguarding Adult agenda.

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum staff, volunteers and committee members may spot abuse and neglect; the adult may say or do things that hint that all is not well. It may come in the form of a complaint, or an expression of concern. Everyone within the organisation should understand what to do, and where to go locally to get help, support and advice. It is vital that everyone within the organisation is vigilant on behalf of those unable to protect themselves, including:

- Knowing about different types of abuse and neglect and their signs
- Supporting adults to keep safe
- Knowing who to tell about suspected abuse or neglect and
- Supporting adults to think and weigh up the risks and benefits of different options when exercising choice and control.

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum will support adult safeguarding by:

- Ensuring that we follow safe recruitment & selection procedures and that all of our staff volunteers and committee members are carefully selected and trained to ensure their awareness of safeguarding issues relating to adults.

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- Having a Safeguarding Adult policy and procedure which is clearly understood, so that any member of staff, volunteer or committee member has an appreciation of the appropriate guidance to follow, should a concern be raised.
- Reviewing our Safeguarding Adult policy and procedure annually in order to ensure it is in line with national and local policy. This will be done as part of our ongoing practice of annual reviewing of all policies with the committee.
- Ensuring that a dedicated officer is appointed, to hold a specific role in relation to advising staff and volunteers, whereby advice and a clear course of action can be offered in relation to any safeguarding adult concerns. In the event of the lead officer not being available at the time the issue arises, a deputy lead officer will be appointed and will deputise in this role for advice and guidance. If both officers are unavailable, and the situation warrants a swift response, the matter will be referred directly to the relevant local authority Safeguarding Adult Team.
- Ensuring that staff and volunteers, who work with 'adults at risk of harm' and their carers, develop practice which ensures they know how to report their concerns about a 'adult at risk of harm', staff member or volunteer. This will be achieved by ensuring an appropriate induction is carried out, which will include information on our Safeguarding Adult policies and procedures.

2.2 Key Safeguarding Principles

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum will be guided in the implementation of this policy by the safeguarding principles set out in The Care Act 2014 and aim to demonstrate and promote these principles in our work.

- Empowerment – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- Prevention – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- Proportionality – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- Protection – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- 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.

3 GUIDANCE

3.1 Who is at risk & in what way?

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Birmingham Parent Carer Forum recognises that we have a duty to act on reports, or suspicions of abuse/neglect, including allegations made against staff, volunteers and Committee members. This will be done in accordance with this guidance, the relevant local area multi agency procedures and if necessary, in conjunction with and guidance from, the relevant local authority Safeguarding Adult Team.

Staff, volunteers & committee members must be familiar with this guidance and know what to do and where to obtain further support and guidance if they become aware of abuse or neglect.

The statutory adult safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

Is 18 and over;

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- is experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect

3.2 Who may have Care & Support Needs?

Whilst the following list is not exhaustive it should serve as a guide as to who may have:

Care & Support needs, it may be a person who:

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

Any or a combination of the above factors may indicate someone has care and support needs that may make them more vulnerable to abuse or neglect and this is when the local authority statutory duty applies.

3.3 What Constitutes Abuse and Neglect?

The Care Act 2014 statutory guidance defines the following 10 areas of abuse and neglect; they are not exhaustive but are a guide to behaviour that may lead to a

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safeguarding enquiry. A more detailed explanation including signs and symptoms can be found at Appendix A.

The Care Act places the types of harm caused by people on 'adults at risk' into 10 different categories; the table at Appendix A provides a fuller explanation to the types of abuse.

- Physical
- Organisational
- Psychological
- Financial
- Neglect
- Modern Slavery
- Self-neglect
- Sexual
- Discriminatory
- Domestic Abuse

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but an indicative guide as to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to a safeguarding concern. We should not limit our view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, as they can take many forms and the circumstances of each individual case should always be considered.

3.4. Adult Abuse and the Police

The abuse of 'Adults at Risk of Harm' can sometimes involve the police, on occasions the abuse may also be a crime and a criminal investigation will be necessary. The lead for Adult Safeguarding is the local authority but when a crime is suspected the lead agency will be the police. The local authority and the police have arrangements in place that ensure they work closely together in such incidents.

3.5. Who May Potential Abusers Be?

Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly and may be a single act or repeated acts. People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be staff members, carers, doctors, nurses, social workers, advocates, volunteers or others in a position of trust. They may also be relatives, friends, neighbours or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse, people who deliberately exploit vulnerable people and strangers.

3.6 In What Circumstances Can Abuse Occur?

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Abuse can take place in any context. It may occur when an adult at risk lives alone or with a relative; it may also occur within nursing, residential or day care settings, in hospitals, in community settings, social situations custodial situations, support services into people's own homes, and other places previously assumed safe, or in public places.

3.7. Patterns of Abuse

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more. Professionals and others should look beyond single incidents or individuals to identify patterns of harm. Patterns of abuse and abusing vary and reflect very different dynamics. These include:

- serial abusing in which the perpetrator seeks out and 'grooms' vulnerable individuals. Sexual abuse usually falls into this pattern as do some forms of financial abuse
- long term abuse in the context of an ongoing family relationship such as domestic violence between spouses or generations
- opportunistic abuse such as theft occurring because money has been left around
- situational abuse which arises because pressures have been built up and/or because of difficult or challenging behaviour;
- neglect of a person's needs because those around him or her are not able to be responsible for their care, for example if the carer has difficulties attributable to such issues as debt, alcohol or mental health problems;
- unacceptable 'treatments' or programmes which include sanctions or punishment such as withholding of food and drink, seclusion, unnecessary and unauthorised use of control and restraint
- failure of agencies to ensure staff receive appropriate guidance on anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice
- failure to access key services such as health care, dentistry, prostheses
- misappropriation of benefits and/or use of the persons money by other members of the household
- fraud or intimidation in connection with wills, property or other assets.

3.8 Making Safeguarding Personal

The Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) programme has been running since 2010. The Care Act 2014 guidance required adult safeguarding practice to be person led and outcome focused, aiming towards resolution or recovery. It engages the person

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in a conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.

In its simplest form MSP means putting the person at the centre of everything we do during a safeguarding enquiry from the very beginning to the very end.

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum recognises the importance of the MSP way of working and will ensure that any safeguarding concerns that are raised by their staff volunteers or Committee member follow this approach.

We will:

- ask if the person who has or may have been abused if they require any immediate support to keep themselves safe
- explain how safeguarding works
- ask what the person would like to happen
- support the person in a way to give choice and control to improve their quality of life, wellbeing and safety
- be open and honest with the person if we feel we must share our concerns with someone else

3.9 Promoting Adult Safeguarding within Birmingham Parent Carer Forum

To assist in the prevention of adult abuse the following areas of practice are highlighted as priority areas and must be followed:

- rigorous recruitment practices (including volunteers)
- training for all staff, volunteers and committee members
- internal guidelines for staff

3.10 Safe Recruitment & Selection

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum have a Safe Recruitment & Selection procedure which covers all potential staff. We ensure that all potential new staff;

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- complete an application form or a letter of application. This includes: address, evidence of relevant qualifications paid work and voluntary work experience and all criminal convictions.
- provide two pieces of identification which confirm both identity and address.
- undergo an interview (formal or informal) involving at least two interviewers.
- provide at least two references which are followed up before a post is offered. One reference is from the last employer or an organization that has knowledge of the applicant's work.
- if undertaking a regulatory activity or if the is post eligible obtain consent to a Disclosure and Barring Service check (formally CRB check) to and sign up to the update service and agree to Birmingham Parent Carer Forum requesting updates.

We ensure all volunteers:

- complete an application which includes address and any experience and all criminal convictions
- undergo an induction and probationary period.

3.11 Disclosure and Barring

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. It replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

DBS are responsible for:

- processing requests for criminal records checks
- deciding whether it is appropriate for a person to be placed on or removed from a barred list
- placing or removing people from the DBS children's barred list and adults' barred list for England, Wales and Northern Ireland

The Disclosure & Barring Service search police records and, in relevant cases, barred list information, and then issue a DBS certificate to the applicant.

DBS recognise that information released on DBS certificates can be extremely sensitive and personal. Further information regarding the code of practice for recipients of criminal record information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about>

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3.12 Managing the Recruitment & Selection Process

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum:

- understand that a person who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults is breaking the law if they work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer with these groups.
- understand that an organisation which knowingly employs someone who is barred to work with those groups will also be breaking the law.
- understand that if our organisation dismisses a member of staff or volunteer because they have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or would have done so if they had not left, we must make referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum are committed to minimising and preventing abuse and recognise the importance of safe recruitment policies and practices for paid staff, volunteers and Committee members. We recognise it is important to be robust in emphasising appropriate safeguarding measures when screening potential Committee members, staff and volunteers to work with Adults at Risk of Harm.

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum has the following items in place for managing its staff and volunteers:

- all staff and volunteers are requirement to comply with the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and Code of Conduct.
- staff and volunteers will have a period of induction where they will complete any induction training which includes relevant information on all the organisation's policies and procedures.
- staff and volunteers will be subject to a probationary period (6 months for staff, 3 months for volunteers) during which they will be supervised and overseen by a committee member.
- all paid staff complete a role review at the end of their induction period before being confirmed in post. Inductions will be completed within 6 months.
- all volunteers have a review with a director at the end of 3 months.
- all volunteers are supported during their induction by the chair/co-chairs
- all committee members, paid staff and volunteers attend regular safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- all staff and volunteers read and understand the Safeguarding Adult Policy and for this to be reviewed to ensure up-to-date knowledge

3.13 Training

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Birmingham Parent Carer Forum will promote awareness of Adult Safeguarding issues, to its Committee, Staff, volunteers, broader membership and service users. Committee members, staff and volunteers all receive Adult Safeguarding training appropriate to their role. This will enable them to:

Develop an Understanding of Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Harm within Birmingham alongside key legislation and National & local guidance including:

- The Care Act 2014
- Making Safeguarding personal
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- State what Adult Safeguarding is and be able to identify relevant legislation
- Explain who may abuse, who may be abused and why abuse might occur
- Identify different types of abuse and their signs and indicators
- Respond appropriately to abusive situations
- Report their concerns in the most appropriate manner.

4 HANDLING THE DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE AND RAISING A CONCERN

4.1. Urgent Actions

In most situations there will not be an immediate threat and the decision about protecting the person with safeguarding needs will be taken in consultation with themselves your designated adult safeguarding lead and/or Adult Social Care.

However, there are some cases that may require an urgent response.

- If you suspect a serious criminal act has taken place, telephone 999. Tell them if you think it might be adult abuse.
- If the individual is injured seek immediate medical treatment. Tell the ambulance personnel or A&E staff that this is a potential adult abuse situation.

4.2 Initial Response to safeguarding concerns

Any member of staff or volunteer who becomes aware that an adult is or is at risk of, being abused or has safeguarding needs should raise the matter as soon as is possible with the designated safeguarding lead. A check list of actions can be found at Appendix B.

Early sharing of information is the key to providing an effective response where there are emerging concerns. To ensure effective safeguarding arrangements no member

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of staff, director, or volunteer should assume that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to the safety and wellbeing of the adult.

You will need to inform your designated lead of:

- name of the person subject of the concern, their address if known and where they are currently located
- nature of the concern, including time, day date when it happened,
- if known, the name of the person or organisation who may have caused the person harm
- what you or someone else may have done to protect the adult from further harm
- has the person harmed already consented to you raising this concern beyond your supervision?

More detailed guidance on further actions to protect the adult can be found at Appendix B of this guidance.

4.3. Consent and Capacity

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum recognises the importance of gaining consent within its safeguarding adults at risk of harm policies and procedures. If a disclosure of alleged abuse is received, we will ensure that consent is gained to share the information and or raise a safeguarding concern.

If an individual agrees to share information about them to others, they have given consent. If individuals do not consent, then on occasions this has to be accepted; however, this does not prevent you discussing your concerns with your designated lead, and this should be done as a matter of procedure. Equally we understand that there will be occasions where decisions not to consent can be overridden. It may be that an individual is not able to give informed consent because they lack capacity or others might be at risk of abuse from the same person, (public interest) on these occasions it will be appropriate to raise your concerns without the consent of the person concerned, however every effort should always be made to obtain their consent if this is at all possible; if you decide it is necessary to share information without consent you should on most occasions inform the person concerned that you intend to do this and why.

Further guidance on the actions that should be taken when a concern is raised can be found at Appendix B.

4.4 Recording

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A written record must be kept in regard to any concern regarding an adult with safeguarding needs. This must include details of the person involved, the nature of the concern and the actions you have taken to protect the adult at risk of harm.

The recordings must be signed and dated. All records must be securely and confidentially filed.

4.5 What might not be a safeguarding concern?

On occasions you may become concerned that someone needs more help at home, this would not be considered safeguarding. However, if you are concerned that someone needs help and support to look after themselves at home, a referral may need to be made to one of the adult care management teams. In most cases a referral will need the knowledge and/or consent of the person concerned. To access the most appropriate team or social care service you should contact Customer Services, who based on the information you provide will discuss the most appropriate option with you.

Birmingham City Council contact details - **0121 675 4806**

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50285/how_to_get_adult_care_or_support/115/how_to_contact_us_about_adult_social_care_services_and_support

4.6 How to raise a concern?

In the first instance you should raise your concerns with the Birmingham Parent Carer Forum designated officer.

Birmingham Parent Carer Forum designated officers for Adult Safeguarding is:

Designated Officers: Amanda Gardner & Ayisha Bennett

Contact email: amanda@birminghampcf.org & ayisha@birminghampcf.org

The designated officer or their deputy will discuss your concerns with you and ensure the initial actions listed at Appendix B have been completed or considered. If a safeguarding concern is to be raised, it will be done immediately or within 24 Hours. Concerns should be reported to the local authority in the area where the abuse is happening.

4.7 Local Safeguarding Adults Teams Contact Details

The Safeguarding Adult Teams are central teams which receive concerns about suspected abuse and coordinate any enquiry. It is important that all Committee

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members, volunteers and staff are aware of who to contact in case of raising a concern or any other matter relating to keeping adults at risk of harm safe.

4.8 Whistleblowing

An important part of promoting dignity in any organisation ensuring a working environment that encourages employees to challenge poor or dangerous practice. Good leadership and an open and honest culture can enable individuals to feel comfortable about raising concerns with their colleagues or managers.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 provides a framework for whistleblowing across the private, public and voluntary sectors. Birmingham Parent Carer Forum staff, Committee and volunteers have a duty to share concerns regarding culture and practice from within the organisation. Without this challenge and scrutiny, there is a potential for safeguarding concerns to arise for our services users, their needs may go unmet, and they become at an increased risk of harm.

A variety of feelings and concerns may be generated by the discovery that a member of staff, volunteer or Committee member is or may be abusing a vulnerable person and this may raise concerns amongst other staff and volunteers. Birmingham Parent Carer Forum makes it clear that we will fully support all members of staff, director, volunteers or Committee members and protect anyone who, in good faith and without malicious intent, reports his or her concern about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a person may be being abused without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage.

Members of staff, director, volunteers or Committee members are encouraged to speak to designated safeguarding officer regarding concerns; if it is the designated safeguarding officer, they have the concerns about or are implicated through friendship with the person of concern, then staff are encouraged to speak to the chair if the suspicion or allegation concerns the DSO.

Approved 12/06/2026

Responsibility of: Committee

Next review date 12/06/2027

Appendix A

Type of Abuse	Signs/Indicators
Financial or material abuse is the use of a person's funds and belongings without their permission. This could be theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection to wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bills not being paid• Loss of assets such as a house being sold and the money from the sale disappearing• Expenditure higher than the living conditions suggest• Not having enough food or clothing
Sexual abuse is when a person becomes involved in sexual relationships or activities that they do not want to be	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain, sores and bruising around the inner thighs and genital, anal or breast areas

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Type of Abuse	Signs/Indicators
<p>Physical abuse is an individual's body being injured or hurt due, for example, to assault, hitting, slapping or pushing. It can also be the wrong use of restrictive practices.</p> <p>Examples could be the misuse of medication or using inappropriate restraint such as locking someone in a room, tying them to a chair or using inappropriate physical sanctions</p>	<p>Injuries that are unexplained or haven't been treated. There could be a number of injuries of different ages and in different places.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken bones • Bruises • Unexplained loss of clumps of hair • Bite, burn or scald marks.
<p>Domestic violence is any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. It includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse, and so-called 'honour-based' violence.</p>	<p>Signs of domestic violence can be any of those relating to the different types of abuse or neglect that can occur in any incident.</p>
<p>Modern slavery – this encompasses slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse</p>	<p>Signs of physical or psychological abuse, malnourished or unkempt, appearing withdrawn. Rarely allowed to travel on their own, seem under the control and influence of others, rarely interact or appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or</p>

Type of Abuse	Signs/Indicators
<p>Self-neglect is the term used to refer to those who fail or refuse to take care of their own basic needs. Neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings can include a wide range of behaviours such as hoarding.</p>	<p>Indicators of neglect by others and self neglect are similar. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malnutrition • Dehydration • Bedsores • Dirty clothing and bedding • Taking the wrong dosage of medication.
<p>Psychological abuse results in a person feeling worthless, unloved or uncared for. It includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety • Lack of confidence • Low self-esteem • Disturbed sleep.
<p>Organisational abuse happens where services provided are focused on the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor care standards

Appendix B - Actions to take when you become aware of a safeguarding concern

Initial Action

- These actions can normally be undertaken by anyone who becomes aware of abuse and neglect.
- Remain calm and non-judgemental
- Take whatever action is required to ensure the immediate safety or medical welfare of the adult
- Do not discourage the adult from further disclosure
- Listen to the adult, clarify the main facts and summarise what has been said to you
- Remain sensitive, supportive and attentive
- Give reassurance but do not press for more detail or make promises
- Retain, record and report information
- Ensure all potential evidence has been preserved
- You will need to inform the designated safeguarding person or their deputy

Further Action

- The actions in this section will normally be taken by the designated safeguarding person or their deputy. It is important that this person ensures the initial actions have been completed or at least considered.

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- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the adult is in no immediate danger of further harm
- Explain that you cannot keep information about alleged or suspected abuse confidential.
- Seek permission to share information with others.
- Consider the importance of; Capacity, Consent, Best Interest and Public Interest
- Offer future support from yourself or others.
- Review any records that have been made and or make a record of what has occurred, and the action taken so far.

Follow Up Actions

- These actions will normally be carried out by the designated safeguarding person or their deputy
- Review the actions taken to ensure the adult is in no immediate danger of further harm
- Ensure all potential evidence has been preserved
- Review or if appropriate develop a protection plan to protect the adult
- Review any records made and ensure they are factual/accurate and correspond to the account given
- Discuss any remaining concerns you have with the local councils safeguarding adults' team
- When necessary and appropriate complete and forward the safeguarding adults concern form to the local authority safeguarding adults' team.

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