



National Survivor User Network

Policy Name	Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy
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Associated Policies	Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Disciplinary and Grievance Policy Health and Safety Statement and Policy Privacy and Data Protection Policies Safeguarding Children Policy
Privacy	External

Contents

1. Overview, Principles and Scope
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Definition of an Adult at Risk of Harm
4. Categories of Abuse and Neglect
5. Individuals' Consent in Safeguarding Adults at Risk Procedures
6. Prevention and Detection
7. What happens if NSUN staff or volunteers suspect or become aware of abuse of an Adult at Risk
8. Reporting Incidents of Adult Abuse that are Criminal Offences
9. Recording Incidents and Allegations of Abuse of Adults at Risk
10. Disclosures of Past Abuse of Adults at Risk
11. What happens if an Alleged Abuser is NSUN Staff, Trustee, Associate or Volunteer
12. What happens if an Alleged Abuser is an NSUN Member
13. Immediate Physical Danger
- I. Appendix A: Resources and Information on Safeguarding Adults at Risk
- II. Appendix B: Further Resources for Signposting and Extra Support

1. Overview, Principles and Scope

- 1.1 NSUN believes that everyone has a right to a life free from fear, harm and exploitation. **We aim to work in ways that support adults at risk to stay safe, maintain their independence and make their own decisions.**
- 1.2 NSUN is a membership organisation bringing together individuals and groups of people with lived experience of mental ill-health, distress or trauma. NSUN's staff, associates and volunteers share that lived experience. NSUN strongly believes in furthering the agency and amplifying the voices of those who might otherwise be silenced due to their experiences of mental ill-health. This is recognised best practice as part of the 'Making Safeguarding Personal' approach.
- 1.3 The term 'adult at risk' is used instead of the previous term 'vulnerable adult'. The Care Act 2014 makes it clear that abuse of adults links to circumstances rather than the characteristics of the people experiencing the harm. Labelling groups of people as inherently 'vulnerable' can be disempowering.
- 1.4 This commitment to honouring the agency, consent and many voices of our communities can sit at odds with the language of 'adults at risk'. This language can feel patronising. It may not capture the diversity of experiences and needs amongst people who have lived experience of mental ill-health, distress and trauma.
- 1.5 We also recognise that people with lived experience of mental ill-health, distress and trauma can be more vulnerable to abuse, violence and exploitation for a variety of reasons. People with the above experiences can often have fewer resources, fewer places to turn to and fewer chances to be believed when speaking up about abuse; may have more difficulty identifying or describing other people's abusive behaviours; and/or may be unjustly assumed to be violent or abusive because of diagnoses or experiences.
- 1.6 NSUN acknowledges its role and responsibility as an organisation in preventing all forms of abuse and to have clear and robust measures in place to minimise the risk, deal with any incidents and preserve the dignity and autonomy of survivors of abuse.
- 1.7 This policy follows the definitions and legislation outlined in the Care Act (2014) and the Mental Capacity Act (2005). NSUN's responsibilities regarding employees and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) are outlined in the Employment Contract and the Staff Handbook.
- 1.8 This policy explains how NSUN staff, trustees, associates or volunteers will respond to potential abuse of adults at risk within our network. Our network is defined as NSUN staff, trustees, associates and volunteers, NSUN members (either individuals, or members of an NSUN member group) or individuals who attend NSUN events or are involved in NSUN's work.
- 1.9 While the Care Act's definition of safeguarding does not cover risk of suicide, this policy covers situations where an NSUN staff member is made aware of immediate risk of serious physical harm from self or others. This is because the nature of NSUN as a network of people with lived experience of mental distress means it is particularly important for us to have clear guidelines on when and how to intervene in relation to such risks, and how to consider these alongside our safeguarding duty.

2. Roles & Responsibilities

- 2.1 Everyone has a part to play in Safeguarding Adults. It is the responsibility of everyone within NSUN (trustees, staff, associates, contractors and volunteers) to tackle abuse and to take steps to deal with it within the guidelines of this policy. Everyone will:
 - 2.1.1 Read this policy, making sure they understand the contents and follow this guidance, seeking support from managers whenever needed
 - 2.1.2 Raise concerns, questions and suggestions relating to safeguarding best practice at NSUN openly with the DSLs as they arise
- 2.2 NSUN's Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are named at the beginning of this document. They will:
 - 2.2.1 Regularly review and update this policy and associated procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose and learn from any instances where it's been used
 - 2.2.2 Identify possible safeguarding risks to people connected to NSUN (including trustees, staff, volunteers, members and other service users)
 - 2.2.3 Continually aim to improve the safeguarding culture at NSUN through regular training and sharing of best practice among the team to ensure everyone knows how to recognise, respond to, raise, report and record a safeguarding concern
 - 2.2.4 Review which roles at NSUN must have a DBS check from the Disclosure and Barring Service
 - 2.2.5 Ensure there are risk assessments in place for all roles, regardless of whether they're in contact with adults at risk or not.
- 2.3 NSUN's Board of Trustees are ultimately responsible for ensuring there are measures in place to protect the people who come into contact with the charity from harm, which includes NSUN's Safeguarding duty. They will:
 - 2.3.1 Have clear oversight of how safeguarding and protecting people from harm are managed within NSUN
 - 2.3.2 Ensure at least one Designated Safeguarding Lead is appointed
 - 2.3.3 Make sure that NSUN: has appropriate policies and procedures in place, which are followed by all trustees, staff, associates, contractors and volunteers; is conducting appropriate checks for roles; has knowledge on how to identify and manage Safeguarding concerns; is quick to respond to concerns and investigate appropriately; keeps accurate records; complies with good practice and legislation
 - 2.3.4 Ensure enough resources, including trained staff/volunteers/trustees, are allocated to meet Safeguarding best practice
 - 2.3.5 Oversee and monitor Safeguarding practice at NSUN and hold the DSLs to account for this
- 2.4 NSUN DSLs will work with the relevant local authority Safeguarding Adults Boards (found by clicking on [this link](#)) as applicable, who are responsible for Safeguarding Adults procedures in their locality.
- 2.5 Islington Safeguarding Adults Partnership (further details can be found by clicking on [this link](#)) is the Borough of NSUN's registered address and it is important for NSUN to utilise their services and expertise for ongoing advice and support, regardless of whether NSUN need to make a referral about an 'adult at risk' to them.

3. Definition of an Adult at Risk of Harm

3.1 An adult at risk of harm (adult at risk) is defined by the Care Act as anyone aged 18 or over who:

- 3.1.1 Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- 3.1.2 Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and
- 3.1.3 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 Someone being defined as an 'adult at risk' does not automatically mean they lack the capacity to decide what to do if they're being abused

4. Categories of Abuse

4.1 The Care Act recognises 10 categories of abuse that may be experienced by adults. There are four additional types of harm listed that are also relevant to safeguarding adults. This list is not an exhaustive list of all types of abuse and neglect, and experiences of abuse and/or neglect may fit into more than one category.

- 4.1.1 Self-neglect - neglecting to care for your own personal hygiene, health, or surroundings e.g. hoarding.
- 4.1.2 Modern Slavery – when an individual is exploited by others, for personal or commercial gain e.g. slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, and domestic servitude.
- 4.1.3 Domestic Abuse – 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.

- 4.1.4 Discriminatory Abuse - abuse e.g. forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment that centres on a difference or perceived difference, particularly with respect to race, gender, disability, or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act,.
- 4.1.5 Organisational Abuse - neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting, such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in your home. Organisational abuse can range from one off incidents to ongoing ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- 4.1.6 Physical Abuse - hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, restraint, and misuse of medication. It can also include inappropriate physical sanctions.
- 4.1.7 Sexual Abuse - rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented, or was pressured into consenting.
- 4.1.8 Financial or Material Abuse - theft, fraud, internet scamming, and coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions. It can also include the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.
- 4.1.9 Neglect and Acts of Omission – including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failing to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services, and/or withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating.
- 4.1.10 Emotional or Psychological Abuse – including threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation, or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- 4.1.11 Cyber Bullying – the use of the internet and/or mobile technology to harass, intimidate or cause harm to another person. It can include harassment, denigration, flaming (purposeful extreme offensive language to cause distress), impersonation, outing and trickery (sharing or tricking someone into sharing personal information), cyber stalking, and exclusion.
- 4.1.12 Forced Marriage - a marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will. A forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties consent to the assistance of a third party in identifying a spouse. The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 make it a criminal offence to force someone to marry.
- 4.1.13 Mate Crime - when adults at risk “are befriended by members of the community who go on to exploit and take advantage of them” (Safety Network Project, ARC). It may not be an illegal act, but it still has a negative effect on the individual. A mate crime is carried out by someone the adult knows, and it often happens in private. In recent years there have been a number of Serious Care Reviews relating to people with a learning disability who were seriously harmed, or even murdered, by people who purported to be their friend.
- 4.1.14 Radicalisation – the process through which people come to support extreme ideologies or beliefs, and/or terrorist groups and activities, possibly including violent extremism. The aim of radicalisation is to inspire new recruits, embed extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals to the legitimacy of a cause. This may be directly through a relationship, or online via e.g. social media, private messaging platforms, gaming platforms or forums.

5. Individuals' Consent in Safeguarding Adults at Risk Procedures

5.1 NSUN respects people's right to make their own decisions about their present and future circumstances and will support them to make informed choices about how to protect themselves. We will, wherever possible, act upon their wishes. In certain circumstances, NSUN may have a legal responsibility to act against the wishes of an adult at risk.

5.2 If an adult at risk has the capacity to make their own decisions, they have the right to choose not to be supported through further action under NSUN's safeguarding procedures; to make the decision they feel is right for them. If this is the case and there is no responsibility on our part to take further action (see 5.5), NSUN will take no further action. In this circumstance, NSUN will make sure that the person knows we will support them in any other way that we can, and that they can change their mind and ask for support via our safeguarding procedures at any time.

5.3 Responding to safeguarding concerns must be a whole-organisation effort. When abuse or neglect is suspected or disclosed to an NSUN staff member, trustee, associate or volunteer, they will bring this to an NSUN manager to ensure an appropriate response. This does not mean that the information will be referred outside of NSUN without careful consideration of the individual situation, only that no staff member, volunteer or associate should have to make a safeguarding decision without support from their manager.

5.4 When NSUN managers have to make a decision about taking further action without consent, we will follow the following principles:

5.4.1 Any adult at risk who has been, or is suspected of being abused will be treated as able to make their own decisions about how to proceed unless it is shown that they cannot, as set out by the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

5.4.2 Their ability to make a decision will be established at the time that it needs to be made.

5.4.3 The person will always be asked for their consent to proceed with any action that is agreed with them, or which might have to be taken. If they do not have capacity to consent, they will still be helped to participate in decision making as much as possible and asked about their preferences, which will be taken into account.

5.4.4 If choice has to be denied to an individual, it must be clear on what grounds this is justifiable and this will be explained to them where possible without increasing the risk to them.

5.5 The circumstances in which staff must take some form of further action (i.e. reporting or referring) without consent include where:

5.5.1 The alleged abuser is an NSUN staff member, associate, trustee or volunteer

5.5.2 An adult at risk is in danger of serious harm and NSUN is in a position to avert or mitigate this or the person lacks mental capacity to consent to further action and the indication is that further action would be in their best interests

5.5.3 Other people are at risk

5.5.4 Local Safeguarding Adult procedures require reporting or further action

5.5.5 NSUN has partnership agreements or statutory obligations which require us to take further action.

5.6 In general, we will not take action without consent in cases where people express suicidal feelings or intentions to us, unless:

5.6.1 The person does not seem to understand the risks, cannot remember the situation they are in, or loses consciousness during our contact

5.6.2 We have reason to believe the person is in active, current or ongoing danger.

6. Prevention and Detection

6.1 NSUN will aim to prevent and minimise risk of abuse, and detect abuse early through the following measures:

- 6.1.1 Developing a relationship with Islington Safeguarding Adults Partnership (further details can be found by clicking on [this link](#)). This is the Borough of NSUN's registered address and it's important for NSUN to utilise their services and expertise for ongoing advice and support, regardless of whether NSUN need to make a referral about an 'adult at risk' to them.
- 6.1.2 Where relevant, staff will be aware of local inter-agency Safeguarding Adult procedures. They will work in effective partnership with relevant agencies involved, so that, if abuse happens, the people involved have access to these procedures and the legal protection they provide.
- 6.1.3 Anyone who expresses concerns about abuse will be taken seriously and receive a validating response.
- 6.1.4 Information and support will be provided for members to enable them to be aware of all forms of abuse and the ways in which they can protect themselves and others.
- 6.1.5 We will practice recognised recruitment and selection procedures for staff, trustees and volunteers including DBS checks, conducting risk assessments for each role and thorough checking of relevant references and employment history.
- 6.1.6 Staff will be trained and well informed about signs of abuse and measures for dealing with incidents. They will be aware of relevant policies and procedures through the induction, supervision and line management process and training will be updated where appropriate.
- 6.1.7 NSUN will follow the reporting process outlined in Section 10, and where appropriate, will conduct internal investigations into allegations of abuse. This will include reflecting on policy and practice in order to identify any patterns of harm and abuse, particularly where it has involved staff, trustees, associates, volunteers or members.
- 6.1.8 We will deal with breaches of this policy and procedure in a consistent and systematic manner to ensure fairness and equity, as detailed by our Disciplinary & Grievance policy and procedures.

7. What happens if NSUN staff or volunteers suspect or become aware of abuse of an Adult at Risk

- 7.1 If abuse is disclosed to or suspected by NSUN staff or volunteers they will pass this information to the CEO who is the DSL as soon as possible. This does not mean that the information will be shared outside of NSUN.
- 7.2 They will consider what further information or action is needed in order to make decisions about how to proceed. The urgency to do this will be determined in each case.
- 7.3 Decisions about how to proceed and the level of urgency should take into account the issues relating to consent (see section 4) and:
 - 7.3.1 The wishes of the adult at risk, their right to self-determination and their capacity to make a decision at the time
 - 7.3.2 Any immediate health or support needs that the person has

- 7.3.3 The impact that the abuse has had/is having on the individual
- 7.3.4 Whether further action will make any positive contribution to the situation or not, vs the risk of no further action
- 7.4 The following actions may also need to be considered, in consultation with the appropriate senior staff:
 - 7.4.1 If the allegation is likely to lead to further action from the police or social services, the DSL must consult with these agencies via the local Safeguarding Adults Board
 - 7.4.2 Whether to refer the incident to the local Safeguarding Adults Board (you can find the most relevant one by clicking on [this link](#)), or the police. Please note: a referral to the Safeguarding Adults Board is only appropriate where the alleged victim meets the definition of 'adult at risk'. The Safeguarding Adults Board will provide advice and guidance on this.
 - 7.4.3 Any further referrals that may be needed to support the person's wellbeing and right to live free from abuse and neglect e.g. to the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) (which will be specific to the borough or council within which the project or event takes place), crisis team, emergency contact, other charities, or other people/organisations already included in the person's wider support network. NSUN will always ask for consent before making any of the above referrals.
 - 7.4.4 NSUN has a list of useful signposting resources on abuse and hate crime in Appendix A and B of this policy and we will signpost members to the most appropriate sources of support for their situation.
 - 7.4.5 If the alleged abuse took place at an event or during a project run by another organisation then NSUN will recommend and support the member to report it to the relevant person at the organisation.

8. Reporting Incidents of Adult Abuse that are Criminal Offences

- 8.1 Some incidents of abuse are criminal offences. These include, but are not limited to:
 - 8.1.1 Physical or psychological assault
 - 8.1.2 Rape/sexual abuse
 - 8.1.3 Theft
 - 8.1.4 Fraud
 - 8.1.5 Discrimination.
- 8.2 Anyone who has experienced abuse or neglect that constitutes a criminal offence is entitled to the protection of the law and access to justice. Staff will discuss with the person whether they want to report the incident to the police and will respect that choice wherever possible.
- 8.3 Where staff are unsure about reporting abuse to the police, they should seek guidance from the DSL and will consult with Islington Safeguarding Adults Partnership (further details can be found by clicking on [this link](#)). This is the Borough of NSUN's registered address and it's important for NSUN to utilise their services and expertise for ongoing advice and support, regardless of whether NSUN need to make a referral about an 'adult at risk' to them.

- 8.4 There may be times when the police have to be informed without an individual's consent. In these situations we will aim to provide as much information and support for that person as possible.
- 8.5 Where it is likely, or possible that there will be a criminal investigation, it is important to seek advice from the police on any measures that should be taken to protect evidence.

9. Recording Incidents and Allegations of Abuse of Adults at Risk

- 9.1 The staff member who witnessed or was first informed of the abuse should complete NSUN's incident form, with input from the DSL, and any other staff or volunteers involved. They should follow the procedure for passing this on as soon as possible, or at least within 24 hours. This form can be found on SharePoint.
- 9.2 Where service agreements require further reporting to regulatory bodies, (e.g. the Care Quality Commission which you can find by clicking on [this link](#) under regulation 37 for registered services) these should also be completed.
- 9.3 Written reports should:
 - 9.3.1 Reflect the words or phrases used by the people involved
 - 9.3.2 Describe the circumstances in which the abuse was discovered, i.e. the context, setting, witnesses.
 - 9.3.3 Contain factual information rather than the opinions of the person completing the report. Where the report contains the opinions of others, it should be clearly identified as such.
 - 9.3.4 Give details of any action taken e.g. referrals or contacts made and justifications for decisions
 - 9.3.5 Include an action plan agreed with the individual and relevant staff member, including measures for prevention of further abuse, timescales, who is responsible etc. This should be reviewed at regular intervals with the member.
- 9.4 Signed and dated copies of all documents relating to the safeguarding concern and process should be kept securely on file.

10. Disclosures of Past Abuse of Adults at Risk

- 10.1 NSUN recognises that abuse that has happened in the past can have far-reaching consequences for the person who has experienced it and that this may need to be addressed in different ways to present or recent abuse. Where someone discloses past abuse, or it becomes known in other ways, staff will respect that person's choice about whether or not to discuss it further, apart from to ask whether any other children or Adults at Risk may still be at risk of harm.
- 10.2 If someone does want to discuss it further, the staff member involved will make sure that the person knows that it may be necessary to share what they tell them, and the reasons for this, which include:
 - 10.2.1 The need for a manager and/or the DSL to know to support the staff member involved with making safeguarding decisions
 - 10.2.2 The need for other staff to know in order to provide the best possible service for them

10.2.3 The need for other professionals to know in order to prevent further abuse.

- 10.3 If this leads to the person changing their mind about proceeding, staff will respect their right to do so. NSUN recognises that people cannot be forced into speaking about their experiences of abuse and neglect, and that doing so may be damaging to their wellbeing. We would also explore with them any support that they may need, such as counselling or other steps towards personal recovery.
- 10.4 Where information of past abuse has been disclosed or discovered, the same reporting and recording procedures will be used as detailed in this policy for current safeguarding concerns.

11. What happens if an Alleged Abuser is NSUN Staff, Trustee, Associate or Volunteer

- 11.1 The appropriate senior members of staff must be informed immediately. They will take a decision about whether the member of staff should be suspended during the investigation, as detailed in our Disciplinary and Grievance policy section 2.7. Further action will be decided in consultation with NSUN's CEO alongside external HR support and, if necessary, any regulatory bodies.
- 11.2 If the alleged abuser is a Trustee, this should be reported to the CEO. If the alleged abuser is the CEO, this should be reported to the Chair of the Board.
- 11.3 NSUN's DSL is responsible for reporting staff suspected of abuse to the Disclosure and Barring Service, which must be done in consultation with the CEO, or the Board of Trustees if the member of staff suspected of abuse is the CEO.

12. What happens if an Alleged Abuser is an NSUN Member

- 12.1 If the alleged abuse took place at an event or project organised by NSUN, the staff team will take steps to ensure that risk is minimised and the alleged victim is supported by NSUN's safeguarding procedures (taking into account consent, see section 3). This may include suspending the membership of an alleged abuser, or otherwise restricting their access to NSUN events or services while an investigation is carried out and an action plan drawn up. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, this may involve a permanent termination of membership. These will be recorded and relevant staff and volunteers involved. Copies will be kept on file.
- 12.2 If the alleged abuse took place outside of NSUN's work (for example at an event independently organised by an NSUN member e.g. a peer support group meeting), NSUN is not in a position to carry out an investigation or draw up an action plan in the same way because it was not an NSUN organised event or project. However NSUN still reserves the right to suspend the membership of the alleged abuser, and restrict their access to NSUN events or services depending on the nature and severity of the allegations. This applies even where we have provided small grants to unincorporated groups etc. due to the nature of the small grants programmes.
- 12.3 NSUN will take all appropriate measures to support any member who alleges abuse from another member. Should membership of the alleged abuser not be suspended, or subsequently be reinstated; NSUN staff will ensure they check-in with the member who alleges abuse ahead of, during and after any events or projects organised by NSUN, especially where the alleged abuser could also be there.

- 12.4 The informal and interlinked nature of many service user and survivor networks within and across local areas, while often a core part of the value such groups provide, can present an extra challenge in keeping our community safe. Incidents or allegations where such dynamics come into play are more likely to require NSUN to seek external advice, e.g. local authority safeguarding adult boards. This applies both to allegations of abuse taking place at NSUN events and by members in other settings.

13. What Happens If An Alleged Abuser is Another Organisation, Unrelated To NSUN

- 13.1 The nature of NSUN's work means that NSUN staff are likely to hear about grievances and allegations against other organisations, which may include allegations of abuse and/or neglect. These do not automatically count as Safeguarding Adults concerns, unless there are adults at risk involved (see Section 3 of this policy).
- 13.2 In these circumstances, NSUN will establish whether a Safeguarding Adults concern is present and will follow the Safeguarding Adults processes detailed in this policy if appropriate.

14. Immediate Physical Danger

- 14.1 If the person appears to be in immediate physical danger or needs urgent medical treatment in any of the following circumstances:

14.1.1 Someone contacts NSUN remotely (by email or phone) and says they or someone else is going to harm themselves or that they are about to be or have been immediately harmed by someone else

14.1.2 At a virtual event someone appears to be or says they are in immediate physical danger

14.1.3 Someone at a face to face NSUN event is in immediate physical danger

A member of staff should contact the appropriate emergency services (ambulance, police) straight away. Staff's own safety and that of others is important and if necessary, staff should leave the premises, in line with NSUN's procedures (see the Health and Safety Statement and Policy). It may be that in the case of 8.1.1 or 8.1.2 that NSUN only holds partial identifying information about the individual, in which case the referral will be made using the information to hand. NSUN will make it clear in all communications that we are not a service provider, cannot provide emergency support and are not available 24/7.

- 14.2 If the person is not in immediate physical danger or in need of urgent medical treatment, but has been injured, a member of staff should advise them to seek appropriate medical treatment and/or advice and help them to do this.
- 14.3 Once any immediate physical danger or injury has been attended to as above, NSUN will consider whether a safeguarding concern is also relevant, which will then be approached in line with this policy and procedures.

Appendix A: Resources and Information on Safeguarding Adults

Please click on the underlined text to go straight to the website:

- [The Care Act \(2014\)](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act \(2006\)](#)
- [Health and Social Care Act \(2012\)](#)
- [Equality Act \(2010\)](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act \(2005\)](#)
- [Human Rights Act \(1998\)](#)
- [The Care Quality Commission](#)
- ['Promoting the Safety and Security of Disabled People': The Equality and Human Rights Commission 2009](#)
- [Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations: Department of Health 2002](#)
- [The Social Care Institute for Excellence](#)
- [Charity Commission Guidance: Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees](#)
- [NCVO](#)
- [Ann Craft Trust](#)

Appendix B: Further Resources for Signposting and Extra Support

General Support and Advocacy

What is Advocacy?

If you find it difficult to understand your care and support or find it hard to speak up, there are people who can act as a spokesperson for you. They make sure you're heard and are called advocates.

How to get an advocate:

Contact **social care services at your local council** and ask about advocacy services. [Find your local social care services by clicking this link.](#)

POhWER is a charity that helps people to be involved in decisions being made about their care.

Call POhWER's support centre on 0300 456 2370 for advice.

Visit their website [on this link](#)

The Advocacy People gives advocacy support.

Call 0330 440 9000 for advice

Text PEOPLE to 80800 and someone will get back to you

Visit their website [on this link](#)

VoiceAbility gives advocacy support.

Call their helpline on 0300 303 1660 for advice

Use [VoiceAbility's online referral form](#)

Visit their website [on this link](#)

Your **local Age UK** may have advocates in your area.

Visit [Age UK online](#)

Call 0800 055 6112.

Victim Support provide support to people affected by crime; their services are free, confidential and available to anyone in England and Wales, regardless of whether the crime has been reported or how long ago it happened.

Free support line: 08 08 16 89 111.

There are details of local Victim Support services on their website and online support by clicking on [this link](#).

Try approaching your **local service user group**. At **NSUN** (the National Survivor User Network) we keep a directory of local member groups which you can access by clicking on [this link](#).

You can also contact NSUN in the following ways:

Email info@nsun.org.uk

Phone 0207 820 8982

Shaping Our Lives is a national organisation and network of user-led groups, service users and disabled people holds a directory of their member groups.

Access the directory by clicking on [this link](#).

You can also contact them in the following ways:

Phone 0845 241 0383

Your local **Healthwatch** can help you understand the system and find an advocate. They can also take up your concern themselves. Find your local Healthwatch in the following ways:

Online by clicking on [this link](#)

Phone 03000 683 000

Email enquiries@healthwatch.co.uk

Citizens Advice offer advice and information on a range of topics, including advising on your rights, what to do about abuse and discrimination, and how to make complaints about health and social care services. You can find your local centre using the following details:

Website click on [this link](#)

Adviceline (England): [03444 111 444](#)

Advicelink (Wales): [03444 77 20 20](#)

Textphone: [18001 03444 111 445](#)

The Patients Association highlights patients' concerns and needs. It provides advice aimed at helping people to get the best out of their health care and tells you where you can get more information and advice.

Contact the Patients Association's National Helpline on [0800 345 7115](#)

Find out more on their website by clicking on [this link](#).

Hate Crime

NSUN has a range of resources on hate crime and abuse in mental health, available in Easy Read, Bengali, Urdu, Gujarati and Arabic which you can find by clicking on [this link](#).

Stop Hate UK produce a number of resources to support the reporting of hate crime. Visit their website by clicking on [this link](#) or they have a 24 hour helpline 0800 138 1625.

Government Hate Crime provides help and advice on reporting a hate crime. Visit their website by clicking on [this link](#).

Rights

British Institute of Human Rights has a series of accessible guides to knowing your human rights which you can access by clicking on [this link](#). You can contact them on 020 7882 5850.

Help and advice for different communities experiencing abuse and hate crime

Galop provides Hate Crime, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence support services to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans + victims/survivors by telephone, email, text and WhatsApp.

Complete an online form by clicking on [this link](#) Email advice@galop.org.uk

Phone 0800 999 5428 (Mon to Fri 10am-5pm; Weds to Thurs 10am- 8pm).

The Monitoring Group is an anti-racist charity that promotes civil rights and offers a support helpline run by volunteers for people who are victims of racial violence. You can report racism online in the following ways:

Online by clicking on [this link](#)

Email office@tmg-uk.org

Phone 020 7582 7438 (Mon-Thurs 11am-6pm).

Respond is a national charity providing therapeutic and support services to people with learning disabilities, autism or both who have experienced abuse, violence or trauma. They provide therapeutic support as well as practical advice and information. Its helpline is for people with learning disabilities themselves as well as family, carers and professionals supporting them. You can contact them in the following ways:

Phone 0808 808 0700

Email admin@respond.org.uk

Find out more on their website by clicking on [this link](#).

National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV) provides a free, fast emergency injunction service to survivors of domestic violence regardless of their financial circumstances, race, gender or sexual orientation. You can contact them in the following ways:

Phone 0800 970 2070

For deaf people NCDV offers a minicom service dial 0800 970 2070 Find out more on their website by clicking on [this link](#).

Action on Elder Abuse is a charitable organisation giving help and information about the abuse of older people. You can contact them in the following ways:

Phone 0808 808 8141

Find out more on their website by clicking on [this link](#).

National Association for People Abused in Childhood offers support to adult survivors of all types of childhood abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

Phone the support line 0808 801 0331 (10am–4pm Mon/Weds/Fri, 2–9pm Tues/Thurs)

Find out more on their website by clicking on [this link](#).

Mental health and legal advice

National mental health charity **Mind** has a Legal helpline providing general legal advice that may be of help. You can contact them in the following ways:

Legal line: 0300 466 6463 Email: legal@mind.org.uk

Post: Mind Legal line, PO Box 75225, London, E15 9FS