

Adult Safeguarding Levels and Competencies for healthcare professionals

Inter Collegiate Document 2016

(Guide- a GP would be expected to be at Level 3 and undertake 6 hours training over a 3 year period)

Safeguarding competences are a set of abilities that enable staff to work effectively in order to help recognise and prevent abuse and neglect, as well as supporting people who are at risk of abuse or neglect or are actually experiencing it. The UN Convention on human rights (1948) has particular articles that relate to adult safeguarding, these are:

Article 2 The right to Life.

Article 3 The right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way.

Article 5 The right to liberty.

Article 8 The right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

These clearly identify the requirements that adults live in a safe environment, are protected from harm, and enjoy personal freedom and privacy.

Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults at risk of harm and abuse under Sections 42 to 48 of the Care Act 2014 was published in April 2015. Under the Care Act, health organisations now have a statutory duty to cooperate with Social Services in the safeguarding of individuals.

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from direct or indirect discrimination for people with a 'protected characteristic' that relate to:

☐ Disability.

☐ Gender reassignment.

☐ Pregnancy and maternity.

☐ Race.

☐ Religion, belief or non-belief.

☐ Sex.

☐ Sexual orientation.

☐ Age.

Level 1 Competence

Competence at this level is about individuals knowing what things to look out for which may indicate possible harm or abuse, and knowing who to contact and seek advice from within their organisation if they have concerns, and identifying when patients are at risk of abuse or are being abused within their usual environments.

It comprises:-

- ☐ Awareness of potential types of adult abuse and how they might be recognised, including; physical abuse, emotional, sexual, psychological, financial, material abuse and neglect.
- ☐ An appreciation of the form and context abuse can take place in. This will most often be domestic abuse but it includes honour based violence, modern day slavery, organisational abuse, discrimination, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), radicalisation into violent extremism, internet grooming and bullying.
- ☐ Awareness of the potential impact of stress on the physical and mental health of individuals and their carers.
- ☐ The role of the Local Authority in the safeguarding of individuals at risk of harm or abuse.
- ☐ An awareness of the rights of the individual in the adult safeguarding context, including the importance of autonomy and empowerment, the right of adults to take risks, the principles of making safeguarding personal, and a basic knowledge of consent and mental capacity.
- ☐ An awareness of the Prevent agenda and how it may affect them.
- ☐ Confidence and knowledge to take any necessary immediate action, seek advice and report any safeguarding concerns appropriately within their organisation or, if necessary, through local safeguarding procedures.

Level 1 Knowledge

- ☐ Know that adult abuse can take different forms (including physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect / self-neglect) including human trafficking, FGM and radicalisation, including prevalence and impact as defined by the Care Act 2014.
- ☐ Know about relevance of family including any child or children and carer factors such as domestic abuse, mental and physical ill-health and substance and alcohol misuse.
- ☐ To know how to identify an adult at risk as defined by the Care Act 2014
- ☐ Know what to do and who to contact if they have concerns about an adult, including local authority policies and procedures around who to contact, where to obtain further advice and support, and have awareness of the referral process.
- ☐ Know about the importance of sharing information when appropriate (including the consequences of failing to do so) in line with DH guidance on sharing information (Information: To Share or not to Share Government Response to the Caldicott Review)
- ☐ Know what to do if they feel that their concerns are not being taken seriously or they experience any other barriers to referring an individual.
- ☐ Know the risks associated with the internet and online social networking.

Level 1 Skills

- ☐ Able to recognise possible signs of abuse in an individual.
- ☐ Able to support individuals during face to face contact.

☑ Able to seek appropriate advice and report concerns and know when they have been listened to.

Level 1 attitudes and values

☑ Willingness to listen to individuals and to act on issues and concerns.

☑ Be able to keep an open mind / take a non-judgemental approach in relation to the individuals concerned.

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Level 1 criterion for assessment

☑ Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of what constitutes adult abuse.

☑ Demonstrate an awareness, understanding and recognition of the risk of abuse involving a staff member, volunteer or visitor within their organisation.

☑ Demonstrate an understanding of appropriate information sharing and referral mechanisms i.e. knows who to contact, where to access advice and how to report a concern. Level 2:

Level 2 should be the minimum level of competence for all qualified healthcare staff.

Level 2: competences

Competence at this level is about individuals starting to report on the information which may indicate possible harm or abuse and knowing who to contact and seek advice from within the care team if they have concerns. It comprises:-

☑ Uses knowledge and understanding of what constitutes adult abuse to identify any signs of harm or abuse including Domestic Abuse.

☑ An understanding of the MCA / DoLS and to apply the principles of MCA and DoLS.

☑ Recognise where the individual should be considered for an independent advocate under the Care Act 2014.

☑ Able to identify and refer an adult suspected of being a victim of trafficking or sexual exploitation; or a victim of FGM, or at risk of exploitation by radicalisers.

☑ Acts as an effective advocate for the adult at risk of harm or abuse.

☑ Recognises the potential impact of the individual's physical, mental capacity and mental health on the well-being of an individual, including possible speech, language and communication needs.

☑ Clear about own and colleagues' roles, responsibilities, and professional boundaries, including professional abuse and raising concerns about the conduct of colleagues.

☑ As appropriate to role, able to refer to social care if an adult safeguarding concern is identified

☑ Know that sharing concerns is always part of their job even though it may not be part of their job description.

☐ Documents safeguarding concerns in order to be able to inform the relevant staff and agencies as necessary, maintains appropriate record keeping, and differentiates between fact and opinion.

☐ Shares appropriate and relevant information within their team and when appropriate, other teams.

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☐ Understands the individual's right to privacy and autonomy and to make decision that are or seen unwise, but also understand the limited circumstances in which those rights can be overridden.

☐ An understanding of the Prevent agenda as it affects their work.

☐ Acts in accordance with key statutory and non-statutory guidance and legislation including the Human Rights Act and the Care Act 2014.

Competences should be reviewed annually as part of staff appraisal in conjunction with individual learning and development plan.

Knowledge, skills, attitudes and values

All staff at Level 2 should have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values outlined for Level 1 and should be able to demonstrate the following:

Level: 2 Knowledge

☐ **Understand that certain factors may make an individual more at risk of adult abuse, such as learning disabilities, mental health problems, other long-term chronic conditions, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and environmental factors such as social isolation, inadequate housing and cognitive impairment and sensory deficit.**

☐ To be aware of the modern slavery act and the duties under Prevent.

☐ To have an awareness of the legal, professional, and ethical responsibilities around information sharing, including the use of directories and assessment frameworks.

☐ Know best practice and statutory duties in documentation, record keeping, and understand data protection issues in relation to information sharing for safeguarding purposes.

☐ Understand the purpose and guidance around Safeguarding Adults Reviews/case management reviews, individual management reviews/ agency reviews/internal management reviews.

☐ Understand the concept of best interests in respect of adults who lack mental capacity as set out in legislation and key statutory and non-statutory guidance, including the MCA and its Code of Practice and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).

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Level: 2 Skills

☐ To be able to document adult safeguarding concerns, and maintain appropriate record keeping, differentiating between fact and opinion.

☐ To be able to contribute to a section 42 enquiry.

☐ To be able to share relevant information as appropriate within and between teams - in writing, by telephone, electronically, or in person.

☒ To be able to identify, where further support is needed and appropriate, when to take action and when to refer to managers, supervisors or other relevant professionals, including social services.

Level: 2 attitudes and values

☒ Recognises how own beliefs, experience and attitudes might influence professional involvement in safeguarding work.

☒ The desire to improve the circumstances of others and to share values and insights in debrief situations.

Level: 2 criteria for assessment

☒ Demonstrates awareness of when there is a need to alert Primary Care Professionals (such as the individual's GP) and community services (such as the District Nurse / Social Worker) of concerns.

☒ Demonstrates accurate documentation of concerns.

☒ Demonstrates an ability to recognise and describe a significant event in adult safeguarding to the most appropriate professional or local team.

Level 3:

All staff who regularly investigate and / or contribute to supporting adults at risk of abuse and/or their families / carers. This includes through multiagency safeguarding procedures and assessing, planning, intervening and evaluating the needs of an adult where there are safeguarding concerns.

Level: 3 core competences

Competence at this level is about individuals starting to act on the information which may indicate possible harm or abuse and advise other members of the care team if they have concerns. It comprises:-

☒ Draws on professional knowledge and expertise to identify signs of harm or abuse.

☒ Ability to document and report concerns of abuse in a manner that is appropriate for safeguarding and legal processes.

☒ Is able to undertake or contribute to enquiries, assessments and the gathering and sharing of information in line with local multiagency safeguarding adult's policies and procedures.

☒ Works with other professionals and agencies, along with individuals when there are safeguarding concerns.

☒ Undertakes regular documented reviews of own and/or team's safeguarding practice as appropriate to role (in various ways, such as through audit, case discussion, peer review and supervision and as a component of refresher training).

☒ Contributes to Safeguarding Adults Reviews/case management reviews, internal partnership and local forms of review.

☒ Maintains knowledge and awareness of the Mental Capacity Act and its Code of Practice, the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and Care Act 2014, along with their impact on safeguarding adults and managing all related functions as appropriate.

- ☒ To be able to highlight issues relating to individuals at risk in relation to the Prevent agenda.
- ☒ Where role includes conducting detailed assessments of adults at risk of harm or abuse, demonstrates ability to apply in depth knowledge of safeguarding issues in the assessment and examination of the adult at risk and how to provide reports with an opinion.
- ☒ Applies the lessons learnt from audit and Safeguarding Adults Reviews/case management reviews to improve practice.
- ☒ Advises others on appropriate information sharing.

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Knowledge, skills, attitudes and values

Level 3 professionals should have the knowledge, skills and attitudes as outlined for Levels 1 and 2, and should be able to demonstrate the following:

Level: 3 Knowledge

- ☒ Knowledge of local multiagency safeguarding adults' arrangements and procedures.
- ☒ Awareness of the implications of legislation, inter-agency policy and national guidance.
- ☒ Understanding of the importance of the individuals rights in the safeguarding context, and related legislation.
- ☒ Understand coercion and control in personal relationship and its impact upon the individual's decision making ability.
- ☒ Understanding of the principles of information sharing, confidentiality, and consent related to adults at risk of harm or abuse.
- ☒ Aware of the role and remit of the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB).
- ☒ Have knowledge (as appropriate to their role) of court and criminal justice systems, the role of different courts, the burden of proof, and the role of a professional witness in the stages of the court process.
- ☒ Understand relevance of multi-agency audits and own role in multi-agency inspection processes, what constitutes forensic procedures and practice required in adult safeguarding, and how these relate to clinical and legal requirements.
- ☒ Understand the assessment of risk and harm.
- ☒ Understand the effects of carer behaviour and family factors on individuals, and appropriate inter-agency responses.
- ☒ Have awareness that individuals may become victims of radicalisation.
- ☒ Know when to liaise with expert colleagues about the assessment and management of the individual where there are concerns about safeguarding.
- ☒ Detailed knowledge of principles of consent, mental capacity and best interest decisions.
- ☒ Understanding of 'grooming' techniques and how people causing harm gain power and control over others.

- ☐ Know how to share information appropriately, taking into consideration confidentiality and data-protection issues.
- ☐ Understand the impact of an individual's cultural and religious background when assessing risk to an individual.
- ☐ Understand principles of effective clinical supervision and peer support.
- ☐ Understand processes for identifying whether an individual is known to professionals in social care and other agencies.
- ☐ Aware of resources and services that may be available within the NHS and other agencies, including the voluntary sector, to support families.
- ☐ Know what to do when there is an insufficient response from organisations or agencies.
- ☐ Know the long-term effects of abuse and how these can be detected and prevented.

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- ☐ Know the range and efficacy of interventions for adult abuse / harm.
- ☐ Understand the organisational procedures for proactively following up on individuals who miss outpatient appointments or patients under the care of adult mental health services who miss outpatient appointments.
- ☐ Understand and contribute to processes for auditing the effectiveness and quality of services for safeguarding, including audits against national guidelines.
- ☐ Understanding of how to manage allegations of abuse by professionals and how to take appropriate action to escalate concerns to the organisation and multi-agency partners.

Level: 3 skills

- ☐ Able to work with individuals and their families where there are adult safeguarding concerns as part of the multi-disciplinary team, such as adult mental health, when assessing an individual.
- ☐ Understanding of and ability to make appropriate referrals to a Multiagency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).
- ☐ Able to present safeguarding concerns verbally and in writing for professional and legal purposes as required and as appropriate to role, including case conferences, court proceedings, core groups and strategy meetings.
- ☐ Able to make and contribute to considered judgements about how to act to safeguard an adult at risk of harm or abuse.
- ☐ Able to communicate effectively with individuals.
- ☐ Able to assess mental capacity and make decisions as to the best interests of people without capacity or know who to refer to make/assist in those decisions.
- ☐ Able to give effective feedback to colleagues.
- ☐ Able to identify (as appropriate to specialty) associated medical conditions, mental health problems, and co-morbidities, which may increase the risk of abuse, able to take appropriate action.

- ☑ Able to assess the impact of carer and family issues on individuals, including mental health, learning disabilities, substance misuse and Domestic Abuse.
- ☑ Able to challenge other professionals when required in conjunction with supporting evidence.
- ☑ Able to make judgements and take the appropriate action about when to escalate safeguarding concerns when the individual does not consent to this action and is understood to be capacitated for this decision.
- ☑ Able to provide clinical support and supervision to junior colleagues and peers.
- ☑ Able to contribute to inter-agency assessments and to undertake an assessment of risk when required.
- ☑ Able to identify and outline the preventive management of individuals in need, but not as yet at risk.
- ☑ Able to act proactively to reduce the risk of adult safeguarding incidents occurring.

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- ☑ Able to contribute to and make considered decisions on whether concerns can be addressed by providing or signposting sources of information or advice.
- ☑ Able to apply lessons learnt and effective change to embed learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews/case management reviews / DHR / MHR.
- ☑ Able to contribute to risk assessments.
- ☑ Able to write chronologies and reviews that summarise and interpret information about individuals from a range of sources.
- ☑ Contribute to a management plan.
- ☑ Formulate/contribute to/ and communicate effective management plans for adults at risk of harm or abuse.
- ☑ Able to complete an audit cycle and/or research related to safeguarding as part of an appropriate clinical governance and quality assurance processes.
- ☑ Obtain support and help in situations where there are problems requiring further expertise and experience.
- ☑ Understand forensic procedures and practice required in adult abuse, how these relate to clinical and legal requirements.
- ☑ Understands the importance of clear and sequential evidence of concerns and actions taken.
- ☑ Able to assess the impact of issues on individuals, and the family, including Mental Health, Learning Disabilities, Substance Misuse and Domestic Abuse.

Level: 3 attitudes and values

- ☑ Understands the importance and benefits of working in an environment that supports professionals.
- ☑ Understands the potential personal impact of safeguarding work on professionals.

☑ Recognises when additional support is needed in managing presentations of suspected adult abuse, including support with all legal and court activities (such as writing statements, preparing for attending court) and the need to debrief in relation to a case or other experience.

☑ Recognises the impact of an individual's cultural and religious background when assessing risk and managing concerns.

☑ Recognises ethical considerations in assessing and managing adults at risk of harm or abuse.

☑ Understand the possible lifelong impact of abuse on adult survivors.

Competence should be reviewed annually as part of staff appraisal in conjunction with individual learning and development plan.