



VERSION 1.0

SAFEGUARDING GUIDANCE

PREVENTION AND CREATING A
SAFEGUARDING CULTURE

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WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SAFEGUARDING?

Most adults live independent lives free from abuse or the harm caused by abuse. However, there are some adults who may have been abused or may be at risk of abuse.

Safeguarding is often thought of only in terms of the response to these concerns however safeguarding means much more than this. In its broadest meaning safeguarding has a significant preventative component and means protecting people's health, well being, and human rights. It is about enabling people to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.

Prevention is;

- Promoting the rights of adults at risk of abuse to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
- People and organisations working together to prevent the risk of abuse or neglect from occurring.
- Promoting the well being of adults at risk of abuse, taking their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs into account.

(Care Quality Commission 2016).

“Whilst safeguarding relates to the prevention of abuse and has a broad focus that extends to all aspects of a person’s general welfare, adult protection refers to investigation and intervention where it is suspected that abuse may have occurred”.

(Suzy Braye, David Orr and Michael Preston-Shoot), Vol. 14 No. 2 2012, The Journal of Adult Protection)

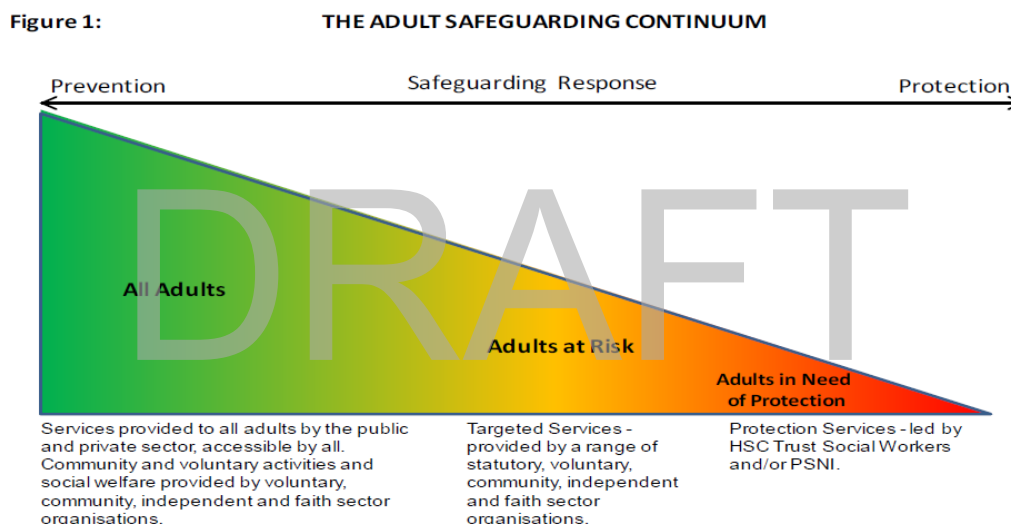
PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Prevention and early intervention approaches are vital in creating an environment that works to prevent abuse occurring in the first instance. Research has shown that if adults at risk of abuse are aware of their rights and are supported to exercise them in an effective way such as advocacy (see below) then abuse is less likely to occur. When appropriately supported, adults at risk of abuse are much more likely to report concerns and incidents earlier and to be more assertive in challenging people behaving inappropriately towards them. The Health and Social Care Council, Northern Ireland has defined preventative safeguarding as; “...a range of actions and measures such as practical help, care, support and interventions designed to promote the safety, well-being and rights of adults which reduce the likelihood of, or opportunities for, harm to occur. Effective preventative safeguarding requires partnership working, that is, individuals, professionals and agencies working together to recognise the potential for, and to prevent, harm. Prevention is therefore the responsibility of a wide range of agencies, organisations and groups” P5/6)



CONTINUUM OF ADULT SAFEGUARDING

The Health and Social Care Council has further depicted preventative safeguarding on a continuum as follows;



Safeguarding is not just a response to a concern of abuse being raised;

- It is also about all the things we do every day when we are supporting individuals in our work.
- It is about everything from the promotion of welfare (based on the rights of the individual) through to the safeguarding response we put in place when a concern is raised. Central to that is the need to develop, nurture and continue to work on a positive safeguarding culture.

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

The Commission for Social Care Inspection has identified the following building blocks for prevention and early intervention:

- People being informed of their rights to be free from abuse and supported to exercise these rights, including access to advocacy
- A well trained workforce operating in a culture of zero tolerance of abuse
- A sound framework for confidentiality and information sharing across agencies
- Good universal services, such as community safety services
- Needs and risk assessments to inform people's choices
- A range of options for support to keep safe from abuse tailored to people's individual needs
- Services that prioritise both safeguarding and independence
- Public awareness of the issues.

(Commission for Social Care Inspection report (2008a)

Safeguarding adults: A study of the effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard adults from abuse, London: CSCI).

A literature review by Alison Faulkner and Angela Sweeney for the SCIE (2014) identified the following themes as important factors in prevention in adult safeguarding:

Public awareness: campaigns can make a significant contribution to the prevention of abuse. They are more effective if backed up by information and advice about where to get help and training for staff and services to respond. The publication of the 'Protecting Our Future', a Working Group Report on Elder Abuse in 2002 strongly endorsed such awareness initiatives of elder abuse among the general public in Ireland.

INFORMATION, ADVICE AND ADVOCACY

Accessible information and advice are essential building blocks for prevention of abuse and for building on public awareness campaigns. However, one size does not fit all. Information about abuse and what to do about it needs to reach all different sectors of the community through a range of different routes. Advocacy can make a significant contribution to prevention of abuse through enabling adults at risk to become more aware of their rights and able to express their concerns.

Training and education: Some of the most common prevention interventions discussed in the literature are training and education. For both adults at risk and staff within services small group training approaches can raise awareness of abuse in adults at risk and enable them to build skills to protect themselves from abuse. Approaches may need to be different with different groups.

Policies and procedures: A range of policies and procedures within services, not just safeguarding, can support the prevention of adult abuse.

Community links: Services and individuals benefit from having contact with a range of people in the community. Reducing isolation through links with the community can mean that there are more people who can be alert to the possibility of abuse as well as provide links to potential sources of support for adults at risk and family carers.

Regulation and Legislation: Both have an important role in the prevention of abuse

Inter-agency collaboration: The importance of agencies working together with a common understanding and collaborative approach is vital for prevention of abuse

Empowerment and prevention: Enabling people to protect themselves from abuse is at the core of the principle of empowerment as identified in the report on the consultation on No secrets (DH 2009). If people are to protect themselves from abuse, they need to be aware of what abuse is, be informed about their rights and have the skills and resources to be able to deal with it. They need to have the information, knowledge and confidence to take action.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHOICE

An important feature of empowerment is to offer people genuine choice when it comes to the services and supports on offer. Without choice and the ability to exercise choice, the potential for abuse can become greater and the opportunity to escape it becomes harder. O'Dowd (2007), reporting on the Comic Relief/Department of Health research into the prevalence of abuse of older people (O'Keefe et al, 2007), suggests that better prevention procedures need to involve more choice for older people and to give them a stronger voice. This points to the importance of people at risk having regular practice in making independent decisions.

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PROMOTING A POSITIVE SAFEGUARDING CULTURE:

Culture can be thought of as “the way things are done around here”. A positive safeguarding culture is a key building block in the prevention work involved in safeguarding. The culture of an organisation can be a highly valuable asset which supports an individual’s human rights, life choices etc. The culture of an organisation can also be a toxic, highly potent factor which violates and undermines peoples’ rights, their choices and otherwise impacts very negatively on an individual’s life.

Culture is very powerful, more powerful than any policy or procedure or any value or mission statement. Key to safeguarding is the promotion of an open culture coupled with a genuinely person centred approach to care and support, underpinned by a zero tolerance approach towards abuse. A key requirement in the HSE Adult Safeguarding Policy is that safeguarding should be seen as everyone’s responsibility. Every member of staff regardless of grade or level has a responsibility to promote a working environment that works to prevent abuse from happening and works proactively to recognise and respond to abuse. As such it is vital for all staff to actively promote a working culture of “zero tolerance” in the area of abuse. These responsibilities form part of a moral and contractual duty of care towards service users.

Leadership should be shown at every level of the organisation. It is not just the responsibility of managers but rather each staff member, regardless of role, should be a leader in relation to safeguarding in their work.

A safeguarding culture prioritises the quality of the care being delivered, has strong leadership and employs a competent and safe workforce.

PROMOTING A POSITIVE SAFEGUARDING CULTURE:

rganisational culture can also work against a culture of raising and dealing with concerns of abuse. Consequently, abuse and neglect can thrive when organisational culture involves staff focusing on tasks, processes and procedures rather than service users' experiences and aspirations (Heath and Phair, 2009).

The HSE commissioned Review Group into the quality of care being provided in Áras Attracta also highlighted key importance of promoting a positive safeguarding culture in the prevention of abuse. The Review Group made three overarching recommendations for the future of the service which strongly endorse this principle:

- A rights based social model of service delivery
- The voice of residents needs to be facilitated, listen to, and promoted
- A Strengthening and enhancement of leadership and management

(Áras Attracta Swinford, Review Group Key Messages, HSE, 2016)

KEY MESSAGES IN BUILDING A POSITIVE SAFEGUARDING CULTURE

Building a positive culture requires:

- Leadership at every level
- Integrating whistle blowing into wider philosophies of good practice
- Challenging poor practice before it escalates
- Fostering an open culture
- Challenging dominant individuals who impact negatively on individuals they support.
- Effective induction for staff
- Organisational learning and reflection from adverse incidents or incidents of whistle blowing
- Support for staff to raise concerns without fear of consequences of raising that concern.

(Based on Calcraft 2007)

LINE MANAGERS/SERVICE MANAGERS RESPONSIBILITY

Strong leadership is essential to safeguard adults at risk of abuse. We know that poor governance structures are a major contributor factor in adverse incidents (National Standards for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Health and Children, 2008). Learning from serious case reviews and serious incidents recorded in healthcare organisations also suggest that the absence of leadership can result in poor practice.

Positive role modelling is important as managers may perpetuate the tolerance of abuse and bad practice by failing to deal with concerns. It is important that managers are willing to challenge powerful individuals who impact negatively on individuals they support. If managers fail to challenge powerful individuals they become complicit in the abuse (Calcraft 2007).

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IMPORTANCE OF ADVOCACY

Advocacy assumes an important role in the preventative work of safeguarding. It enables people to know their rights and voice their concerns. An advocate has a role to ensure that individuals have access to relevant and accurate information thus enabling them to make informed choices.

Adults at risk of abuse can be marginalised in terms of health, housing, employment and social participation. Advocacy is one of the ways of supporting and protecting adults at risk of abuse. Advocacy services may be preventative in that they can enable adults at risk of abuse to express themselves in potential or actual abusive situations.

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THE PURPOSE OF ADVOCACY IS TO:

- Enable people to seek and receive information, explore and understand their options, make their wishes and views known to others and make decisions for themselves
- Support people to represent their own views, wishes and interests, especially when they find it difficult to express them
- Ensure that people's rights are respected by others
- Ensure that people's needs and wishes are given due consideration and acted upon
- Enable people to be involved in decisions that would otherwise be made for them by others