



# **SAFEGUARDING PROTOCOL FOR RESPONDING TO SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT A SERVICE PROVIDED FOR ADULTS**

**Ensuring our safeguarding arrangements act to help and protect adults**

**2015-16**

**OCTOBER 2015**

# Safeguarding Protocol for Responding to Serious Concerns about a Service provided for Adults

## 1. When does the Protocol apply?

1.1 The Protocol should be applied if a situation arises that indicates there are serious safeguarding concerns about a service provided for adults.

1.2 This protocol should also be used in conjunction with children's services, when it is identified that there is an indication of a serious safeguarding risk to service provision by providers of both adults and children's services.

1.3 The range of circumstances includes:

- Serious concerns are raised following individual or multiple safeguarding investigations/assessments
- Contract compliance visits identify systemic issues within a care setting and there are significant concerns about the quality of care provided and the ability of the provider to improve the service
- Multi-agency concerns about systemic problems within a service/organisation
- A series of safeguarding alerts are made about the same provider indicating that the provider is not operating a safe service
- A safeguarding alert about a service/organisation raises serious concerns about a service/organisation
- A number of safeguarding allegations are made against more than one member of staff
- A cluster of alerts are received about similar issues e.g. pressure sores; individuals not properly nourished or hydrated
- It is alleged that a number of perpetrators are suspected of abusing or neglecting adults, experiencing, or at risk of abuse and neglect
- A whistle-blower makes serious allegations about the management or regime of a service
- An individual case of alleged abuse is serious or complex e.g. the alleged perpetrator holds a position of authority within a care setting/organisation.

1.4 Not all safeguarding assessments/investigations within an institution or involving a domiciliary care or nursing agency or supported living provider will lead to a wider investigation, although most cases could have implications for a larger group of adults than the individual at risk initially identified. The criteria above must be applied.

1.5 The safeguarding decision support tool may be used to assist Adult Social Care Services and other agencies to determine the most appropriate level of response to an initial safeguarding adult alert/s. It is important that the level of response to safeguarding alert/s is kept under constant review and is proportionate, as additional information comes available.

1.6 The protocol provides a structured multi-agency approach to managing serious concerns about a service provider. The protocol applies if organisational abuse is suspected. The Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Inter-Agency Policy defines Organisational Abuse: "Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation".

1.7 The distinction between abuse in institutions and poor care practice is difficult to define. Any conclusion reached should be based on the outcome of investigation/s

and advice/information received from appropriate professionals and regulatory bodies.

## **2. What is the purpose of the Protocol for Responding to Serious Concerns about a Service provided for Adults?**

2.1 The purpose is to bring professionals from relevant agencies together to:

- Share information and discuss concerns about a service provider, organisation or complex individual case of alleged abuse
- Plan the investigative framework
- Confirm the outcomes of any investigations
- Formulate a multi-agency action plan
- Conclude the process when the necessary changes/improvements have been made.

## **3. Who decides the Protocol applies?**

3.1 Senior Managers/Heads of Service/Assistant Directors within Adult Social Care Services, in consultation with other investigating authorities, will decide when the Protocol is applied.

## **4. Who should attend the multi-agency professional meetings?**

4.1 The following should attend **as appropriate**:

- An Adult Social Care Services Senior Manager responsible for managing serious concerns about a service or complex cases (chairperson)
- Dedicated Adults Safeguarding Manager (DASM)
- Officer/s responsible for any relevant individual safeguarding investigations/assessments
- Care Quality Commission Inspector
- Contracts Manager / Quality Assurance Officer
- Representatives from Health care providers (e.g. acute trusts and mental health trusts)
- Representatives from the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)
- Representatives from Local Authorities that fund placements with the service provider Police representative (following consultation as to whether it is appropriate to attend)
- Local Authority legal representative if appropriate
- Children's Commissioners (as outlined in 1.2).

4.2 The service provider, organisation or individual at risk of harm is not included in the initial multi agency professional meeting, but a decision has to be made about how to involve the service provider, organisation or individual at risk appropriately in future meetings.

## **5. What is the process?**

5.1 The initial meeting will:

- Share information and discuss concerns about a service provider, organisation or complex individual case of alleged abuse
- Share information from other meetings where concerns have been discussed, for example: Risk Summit Meetings, Assurance and Resilience Groups, Provider Review Group.
- Identify the concerns to be investigated
- Agree the investigative framework
- Clarify roles and responsibilities in any investigation

- Ensure action is taken to minimise the risk to individuals receiving a service.
- Identify and record named contacts for each agency

5.2 Where the concerns are about the poor care of service users a number of actions may be taken including:

- Assessing/reviewing individual cases
- Interviewing service users and/or family/carers
- Health investigations
- Liaising with other professionals with access to the service
- Liaising with other commissioning authorities
- Contract compliance checks
- CQC inspection findings
- Police investigations
- HR interviews
- Recommend suspension of new placements in a care home.

5.3 The Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Inter-Agency Procedure applies to the management of Individual safeguarding cases. If this Protocol has been instigated prior to the completion of any Individual safeguarding investigations/assessments then the initial meeting must decide:

- a) If a separate process is required to consider any individual cases
- b) How feedback will be communicated to the wider group.

Care must be taken to ensure individual adults at risk are not overlooked during the serious concerns process, and individual investigations should not be delayed whilst waiting for a serious concerns meeting to be convened.

5.4 Effective joint working is essential to ensure the process achieves its objectives. It will be important to clarify:

- Communication with the service provider
- Communication with adults at risk and their families/carers
- Liaison between agencies/professionals
- Contact with the media (subject to agreement)
- Legal advice as appropriate
- Security of records
- Maintenance of a central file of minutes of meetings/action plans/records of individual safeguarding cases.

5.5 Further meetings will receive feedback from the investigations/other actions and the purpose is to determine whether the initial concerns can be substantiated. The investigations/other actions may evidence serious care quality concerns but the concerns may not be so serious as to substantiate organisational abuse. However, in situations of exceptionally high risk, or if partner agencies fail to reach an agreement relevant Directors/Assistant Directors must be informed.

5.6 The action/improvement plan must identify any practice or policy changes, or improvements required, and, the agency responsible for assessing any changes or improvements including timescales for completion. Any criminal or enforcement actions must also be identified. Review meetings should be arranged at regular intervals to assess the extent of changes and improvements made according to the agreed action plan.

5.7 Lower level concerns which do not meet the criteria for invoking the Serious Concerns Protocol should be communicated to the relevant commissioner to ensure ongoing monitoring can take place and therefore prevent the concerns escalating any further. Further, the TSAB Business Unit should be informed of any lessons learned to enable this information to be disseminated through the various Sub-Groups.

5.8 Any additional concerns (both general concerns and concerns about specific individuals) that are raised during the process should form the basis of an immediate discussion amongst the key agencies and then a decision made about the action to be taken in consultation with the Senior Adult Social Care Manager involved (Chairperson).

5.9 The TSAB Business Unit will be informed of the outcome of the meeting and advised if the Serious Concerns Protocol has been invoked. The Business Unit will maintain a record of those services and providers who have been subject to the Serious Concerns Protocol and the actions taken.

## **6. What records should be kept of multi-agency meetings?**

6.1 Meetings should be managed and recorded in the following recommended format and standard documentation.

6.2 Initial meeting framework (Appendix One):

- Purpose of meeting
- Details of safeguarding referrals/outcome of safeguarding investigations
- Details of multi-agency concerns
- Information known about the service provider, including other services
- Outcomes from CQC inspections
- Multi-agency assessment of risk
- Issues requiring investigation
- Clarification of roles/responsibilities in investigation framework
- Resources required to support investigation/s
- Action required ensuring ongoing safety of adults at risk
- Identification of any individuals specifically at risk and whether the individual safeguarding procedures apply
- Timescales for further meetings
- Decide how to involve the service provider, organisation or individual at risk in future meetings
- Communication plan and responsibility for keeping people informed about the process.
- The Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board to be informed of the outcome of the meeting

6.3 Review meeting framework (Appendix Two):

- Purpose of meeting
- Details of any additional safeguarding referrals/multi-agency concerns
- Reports on the outcome of any investigations/actions
- Feedback from any individual safeguarding investigations/assessments
- Reach a conclusion as to whether the allegation of organisational abuse was substantiated/partly substantiated/not substantiated/not determined
- Review multi-agency assessment of risk
- Review progress in relation to implementation of the multi-agency action plan/service provider improvement plan



- Action required to ensure the ongoing safety of adults at risk
- Timescales for further meetings
- Communication plan and responsibility for keeping people informed about the process
- Review the decision to impose a suspension on new placements.

#### 6.4 Outcome and Lessons Learned meeting framework (Appendix Three):

- Purpose of meeting
- Finalisation of action/improvement plan
- Decide that it is appropriate to conclude the process e.g. clear and sustained improvement in the quality of care delivered
- Confirmation of storage of records and agreement in relation to the information recorded on individual case files/electronic records
- **Identification of lessons learned:** (Appendix Three – Page 11)
- Follow up recommendations
- Follow up action plans (including timescales if applicable)
- Multi-agency issues and considerations
- Timescales

The completed Lessons Learned document will be forwarded to the TSAB Business Unit. The information contained therein will be considered by the SAR Sub-group for further dissemination.



<b>SECTION 1: PURPOSE OF MEETING</b>

<b>SECTION 2: DETAILS OF SAFEGUARDING ADULTS ALERTS/REFERRALS AND OUTCOME OF SAGEGUARDING INVESTIGATIONS</b>

<b>SECTION 3: DETAILS OF MULTI-AGENCY CONCERNS</b>

<b>SECTION 4: INFORMATION KNOWN ABOUT THE SERVICE PROVIDER</b>

<b>SECTION 5: MULTI-AGENCY ASSESSMENT OF RISK</b>
Has a suspension of further placements been agreed? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>SECTION 6: MULTI-AGENCY ACTION PLAN</b>
The Multi-agency Action Plan will address the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues requiring investigation</li> <li>• Information or advice required in relation to any legal / contractual / registration / employment issues</li> <li>• Action required ensuring ongoing safety of vulnerable adults</li> <li>• Identification of specific individuals at risk subject to the Safeguarding Adults procedures</li> </ul>

Item/Issue	Task/Action	Desired Outcome	Agency/ Person Responsible	Timescale

Agency responsible for communicating outcome of the meeting to the service provider / organisation / individual at risk	
Relevant agency's TSAB Member notified	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board Informed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>SECTION 7: NEXT MEETING</b>		
Date	Time	Venue
Signed by Chair Person	Date	



## Appendix Two

### Record of Multi-Agency Review Meeting

- This meeting is held under the guidance provided by the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board's protocol for Responding to Serious Concerns about a Service provided for Adults.
- The matters raised are **confidential** to the members of the meeting and the agencies that they represent.
- Minutes of the meeting are distributed on the strict understanding that they will be kept confidential and in a secure place. These minutes must not be shared outside the meeting without the agreement of the Chair.

**Please complete all sections of the form in as much detail as possible. You can easily navigate through each section by pressing F11 on your keyboard. To select a tick box, double click on the box and select 'checked'**

<b>Name of Service Provider</b>	
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Review Meeting Date:

Time:

Venue:

Name	Organisation	Contact Details	Invited	Attended	Apologies	Named Contact	Date Notes Circulated
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**SECTION 1: PURPOSE OF MEETING**

**SECTION 2: REVIEW OF MINUTES OF THE INITIAL MEETING / REVIEW MEETING**

**SECTION 3: REVIEW OF PROGRESS**  
 Implementation of the Multi-Agency Action Plan / Service Provider Improvement Plan including record of plans, reports received, consideration of any further safeguarding referrals or multi-agency concerns.

**SECTION 4: REPORTS FROM ANY INDIVIDUAL SAFEGUARDING INVESTIGATIONS/ ASSESSMENTS**

**SECTION 5: INFORMATION FROM SERVICE PROVIDER**

**SECTION 6: REVIEW MULTI-AGENCY ASSESSMENT OF RISK**

Has a suspension of further placements been agreed or removed? Yes  No

Please provide further details below:

**SECTION 7: MULTI-AGENCY ACTION PLAN**

The Multi-agency Action Plan will address the following:

- Issues requiring investigation
- Action required in relation to implementation of the Multi-Agency Action Plan / Service Provider Improvement Plan
- Action required ensuring ongoing safety of vulnerable adults
- Identification of specific individuals at risk subject to the Safeguarding Adults procedures

Item/Issue	Task/Action	Desired Outcome	Agency/ Person Responsible	Timescale

**SECTION 8: CONCLUSION**

It is the conclusion of this multi-agency meeting that on the balance of probabilities Organisational Abuse occurred:

- Substantiated
- Partly Substantiated
- Not Substantiated
- Not Determined / Inconclusive

Identify type of abuse / neglect:

Discriminatory	Domestic	Financial or Material	Modern Slavery	Neglect and Acts of Omission
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisational	Physical	Psychological	Self-Neglect	Sexual
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SECTION 9: NEXT MEETING**

Date	Time	Venue
Signed by Chair Person	Date	

## Appendix Three

### Record of Multi-Agency Outcome and Lessons Learned Meeting

- This meeting is held under the guidance provided by the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board’s protocol for Responding to Serious Concerns about a Service provided for Adults.
- The matters raised are **confidential** to the members of the meeting and the agencies that they represent.
- Minutes of the meeting are distributed on the strict understanding that they will be kept confidential and in a secure place. These minutes must not be shared outside the meeting without the agreement of the Chair.

Please complete all sections of the form in as much detail as possible. You can easily navigate through each section by pressing F11 on your keyboard. To select a tick box, double click on the box and select ‘checked’

<b>Name of Service Provider</b>	
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Meeting Date:  
Time:  
Venue:

Name	Organisation	Contact Details	Invited	Attended	Apologies	Named Contact	Date Notes Circulated
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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<b>SECTION 1: PURPOSE OF MEETING</b>

<b>SECTION 2: REVIEW OF MINUTES OF THE REVIEW MEETING</b>

<b>SECTION 3: FINALISATION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MULTI-AGENCY ACTION PLAN / SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b>

Are multi-agency members agreed that the Action Plan / Service Provider Improvement Plan addresses the risks identified and that the <i>Protocol for Responding to Serious Concerns about a Service for Adults</i> may be concluded?		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Note any disagreements:

<b>SECTION 4: IDENTIFICATION OF LESSONS LEARNED</b>
Clarification of information to be shared with Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Follow up recommendations</li><li>• Follow up Action Plans (including timescales if applicable)</li><li>• Multi-Agency issues and considerations</li></ul>

<b>SECTION 5: CONFIRMATION OF WHERE RECORDS OF THE SERIOUS CONCERNS PROTOCOL ARE TO BE HELD</b>

Agree the information to be recorded on individual case files / electronic records	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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<b>SECTION 6: SIGNATURE</b>			
Signed by Chair Person		Date	

Copy forwarded to the TSAB Business Unit on:	
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