

# National Competency Framework



**North Lincolnshire  
Safeguarding Adults Board**

## Introduction

This framework has been produced based on the Third Edition of the [Bournemouth University National Competency Framework for Safeguarding Adults](#).

Living a life that is free from harm and abuse is a fundamental right of every person. When abuse or neglect does occur, it needs to be dealt with swiftly, effectively and in ways that are proportionate to the concerns raised. In addition, the person must be at the centre of any safeguarding response and must stay as much in control of decision making as possible. The right of the individual to be heard throughout the safeguarding process is a critical element in the drive to ensure more personalised support.

## What is 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 any action.

Organisations should always promote the adult's wellbeing in their safeguarding arrangements. People have complex lives and being safe is only one of the things that they want for themselves. Professionals should work with the adult to establish what being safe means to them and how it can be best achieved. Professionals and other staff should not be advocating "safety" measures that do not take account of individual well-being, as defined in Section 1 of the Care Act [Care and Support Statutory Guidance, p.230 DoH 2014].

Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- 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 [Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Section 42 Enquiry DoH 2014]

## Care Act 2014

The Care Act 2014 creates a new legal framework for how local authorities and other parts of the system should work together to protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect. Chapter 14 of the Care Act 2014 introduces a new statutory framework for adult safeguarding which replaces the 'No Secrets' Guidance (2000, Department of Health). The Care Act 2014 requires the local authority to make enquiries, or to ask others to make enquiries, where they reasonably suspect that an adult in its area is at risk of neglect or abuse. The purpose of the enquiry is to establish with the individual and/or their representatives what (if any) action is needed in relation to the situation and to establish who should take such action. The statutory safeguarding duty (section 42 enquiry) applies when a person with care and support needs (whether or not ordinarily resident in the local authority area or whether the local authority is meeting any of those needs) is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs, is unable to protect him/herself.

## **Making Safeguarding Personal and the Care Act 2014**

Making Safeguarding Personal ensures that any safeguarding concern is led by the person and not by the process. It puts the adult at the heart by giving them choice and control. It is about seeing people as experts in their own lives and working alongside them to enable them to resolve their circumstances.

The statutory guidance to the Care Act 2014 also outlines a number of fundamental principles that must now underpin social work practice including adult safeguarding highlighting the importance of:

- Promoting wellbeing when providing support or making a decision in relation to a person.
- Supporting people to achieve the outcomes that matter to them in their life by practitioners focusing on the needs and goals of the individual.
- Beginning with the assumption that the individual is best placed to make judgments about their own wellbeing.
- Taking into account any particular views, feelings or beliefs (including religious beliefs) which impact on the choices that a person may wish to make about their support. This is especially important where a person has expressed views in the past, but no longer has capacity to make decisions themselves.
- A preventive approach because wellbeing cannot be achieved through crisis management. By providing effective intervention at the right time, risk factors may be prevented from escalating.
- Ensuring the person is able to participate as fully as possible in decisions about them and being given the information and support necessary to consider options and make decisions rather than decisions being made from which the person is excluded.
- Considering the person in the context of their family and wider support networks, taking into account the impact of an individual's need on those who support them, and take steps to help others access information or support.
- Protecting the person from abuse and neglect and in carrying out any care and support functions professionals consider how to ensure that the person is and remains protected from abuse or neglect. This is not confined only to safeguarding issues but should be a general principle applied in every case.

Ensuring that any restriction on the person's rights or freedom of action is kept to the minimum necessary. Where action has to be taken which restrict these, the course followed is the least restrictive.

## **Purpose of the National Competency Framework Safeguarding Adults**

The aim of this document is to outline the competencies within the workforce to allow staff and volunteers ensure the safety and protection of adults at risk of or experiencing abuse and/ or neglect (adult at risk). It offers a clear framework of these competencies within varied roles where you may work with an adult at risk. The framework will aid staff supervisors and team leaders to use identifiable standards to measure the competencies of staff, record appropriate evidence and have a framework as to the achievable outcomes for the development of staff and volunteers.

### **What is a competency?**

Each competency within this framework refers to a combination of skills, knowledge and experience expected of individual staff and volunteers. This framework aims to ensure that these qualities inform your safeguarding practice in keeping with your job role, duties, and responsibilities.

A competency involves being able to demonstrate the ability to be confident in responding to safeguarding concerns you may come across whilst carrying out your day-to-day duties.

## Using the National Competencies Framework Safeguarding Adults

It has been suggested that all newly appointed staff and volunteers should be assessed as capable against their relevant competencies, by their line manager, within the first six months of entering your post from induction, National Occupational Standards or through to any training or skills acquired. Timescales for achieving competencies will depend on each agency.

### Competency Framework Supervision, training, workforce development

The assessment of competencies should be undertaken by an appropriate competent staff member such as a supervisor. This can combine a mix of direct observation of practice, discussion and questioning in supervision and appraisal meetings.

All staff and volunteers should be helped to develop safeguarding competencies. This can be done by participating in formal training and development opportunities. However, there are also many opportunities for staff to learn and develop within the workplace. For example, discussions in team meetings, shadowing with more experienced staff, and mentoring opportunities.

As a partnership board committed to learning from local experience and national best practice, we will keep this framework under constant review, it will be updated regularly as both practice and policy develop.

All training commissioned through Safeguarding Adult Boards can be mapped / evaluated / audited against the specific Safeguarding Adults competencies for specific roles.

### Six Principles of Adult Safeguarding

The following six principles apply to all sectors and settings including care and support services, further education colleges, commissioning, regulation and provision of health and care services, social work, healthcare, welfare benefits, housing, wider local authority functions and the criminal justice system. The principles should inform the ways in which professionals and other staff work with adults.

| Six Principles of Adult Safeguarding |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Principle                            | Outcome for adult at risk   |
| <b>Empowerment</b>                   | "I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens."  |
| <b>Prevention</b>                    | "I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help."  |
| <b>Proportionality</b>               | "I am sure that the professionals will work for my best interests, as I see them and will only get involved as much as needed". "I understand the role of everyone involved in my life."                        |
| <b>Protection</b>                    | "I get help and support to report abuse. I get help to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want and to which I am able."   |
| <b>Partnership</b>                   | "I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together to get the best result for me." |
| <b>Accountability</b>                | "I understand the role of everyone involved in my life."  |

## Staff Groups

| Safeguarding Adults: Professional Competencies in working with people and providing safeguarding services  |   |
|--|---|
| Staff group  | Including, but not limited to:  |
| <p>Staff Group A (Alerters / NHS Level 1*)</p> <p>This group have a duty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• of care to adults at risk of abuse.</li> <li>• to identify and raise a Safeguarding Adults concern.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff and volunteers who are employed by agencies represented by the Safeguarding Adults Boards and other agencies that provide care and/or support services.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Staff Group B1 (Responders and Specialist Practitioners / NHS Level 2*)</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff who are in regular direct contact with people who may be an 'adult at risk'</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Staff Group B2 (Responders and Specialist Practitioners/NHS Level 3*)</p> <p>In addition to the above duties this group also has the responsibility for making decisions for concerns raised. They hold key roles within Safeguarding Adults, in particular S.42 Enquiries within the Care Act.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team Managers.</li> <li>• Staff who may be required to complete or contribute to safeguarding enquiries.</li> <li>• All levels of enquiry.</li> <li>• Safeguarding Adults Strategy / Outcomes Meeting Chairs.</li> </ul> |
| Safeguarding Adults: Professional Competencies in Strategic Management and Leadership of Safeguarding Services   |   |
| <p>Staff Group C (Decision Makers/NHS Level 4 and Level 5*)</p> <p>In addition to the above duties this group is also responsible for ensuring the management and delivery of Safeguarding Adult services. They will have oversight of the development systems, policies, and procedures in accordance with national, local, and organisational policies and procedures.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team Managers</li> <li>• Service Managers</li> <li>• Safeguarding Adult Lead Professionals</li> <li>• Heads of Service</li> <li>• Registered Managers</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Staff Group D (Governance and Board Roles/NHS Level 5 and Board and CEO Levels*)</p> <p>In addition to the above duties this group is also responsible for strategic leadership and planning of services for adults at risk of abuse.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All partners that are members of the Safeguarding Adults Board.</li> <li>• Executive directors.</li> <li>• Non-executive directors.</li> <li>• Chief Executive Officers.</li> <li>• Elected Members.</li> </ul>          |

## Competencies of Each Staff Group

**Staff Group A:** (Alerters / NHS Level 1) Function - To identify abuse or neglect and to report concerns appropriately. Including but not limited to: All staff that are employed (or volunteer) in health and social care settings, all frontline staff in Fire and Rescue, Police and Neighbourhood Teams and Housing, Clerical and Administration Staff (including within Police), Domestic and Ancillary Staff, Health and Safety Officers, staff working in Prisons and other Custodial Settings, other Support Staff, Elected Members and Governing Boards and Safeguarding Administrative Support Staff will be able to:

| Staff Group A:                      |  |           |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| Safeguarding Adults Competencies    | Provided evidence must be proportionate and relevant to your role.   | Completed |
| 1. Awareness of Safeguarding Adults | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates what constitutes an adult at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect (Care Act 2014 definition).</li> <li>• Describe what is meant by abuse and neglect.</li> <li>• Knowledge of your organisation's processes for Safeguarding Adults.</li> <li>• Ability to demonstrate understanding of how to ensure immediate safety (e.g., contacting police) and maintain appropriate confidentiality.</li> <li>• Apply duty of care to adults at risk and duty to report Safeguarding Adults concerns.</li> </ul> |           |
| 2. Reporting Safeguarding concerns  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate an understanding of your organisation's procedures for supporting an adult at risk of abuse.</li> <li>• Ability to outline the processes for informing appropriate person of Safeguarding Adults concern.</li> <li>• Ability to demonstrate understanding of how to ensure immediate safety (e.g., contacting police) and maintain appropriate confidentiality.</li> <li>• Awareness of and confidence in using 'whistleblowing' policies and procedures.</li> </ul>  |           |

**Staff Group B1 and B2:** (Responders and Specialist Staff/NHS Level 2 and Level 3) Function - Staff and volunteers with professional and organisational responsibility for adult safeguarding and who may be called upon to lead safeguarding enquiries through the provision of professional / clinical advice and support. Qualified Professionals in health and social care and all Frontline Managers (including staff who may act as the senior staff on duty) who manage/supervise staff providing services directly to the public. Including but not limited to: Social Work Team Managers, Voluntary / Independent Sector Managers, Heads of Nursing, Health and Social Care Provider Service Managers, Police Officers, Probation, Community Safety Managers, Prison Managers, Mental Capacity Act Lead, Best Interest Assessors and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, Advocates, Therapists, Fire and Rescue and staff working in Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs will be able to:

| Staff Group<br>B1:  |   |           |
|---|---|-----------|
| Safeguarding Adults Competencies<br>(In addition to competencies 1 - 2) | Provided evidence must be proportionate and relevant to your role.  | Completed |
| 3. Inform, Involve and Listen   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the adult at risk is appropriately informed and involved in decision making around the Safeguarding Adult concern relating to them.</li> </ul>  |           |
| 4. Respond  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate accountable decision making in response to Safeguarding Adult concerns.</li> <li>Demonstrate that all Safeguarding Adults practice takes account of the wellbeing of the adult at risk in keeping with Care Act Guidance 2014.</li> <li>Demonstrate appropriate information sharing with others and within your organisation.</li> </ul>   |           |
| 5. Report, Refer and Record   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to apply your organisational procedures and processes for reporting and documenting Safeguarding Adult concerns.</li> </ul>  |           |
| Staff Group<br>B2:  |   |           |
| 6. Managing Safeguarding Adults concerns and enquiries                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers / qualified staff:</li> <li>Demonstrate ability to manage cases through Safeguarding Adult processes.</li> <li>Show ability to co-ordinate Safeguarding Adult enquiries.</li> <li>Promote outcome-focused Safeguarding Adult practice and decision making.</li> <li>Provide support and supervision to staff, volunteers, and managers with Safeguarding Adult concerns.</li> <li>Demonstrate the appropriate involvement of the adult at risk, family, advocate, witnesses, and source of harm.</li> <li>Staff undertaking enquiries:</li> <li>Undertake Safeguarding Adult enquiry with support and guidance from Managers.</li> <li>Identify how best evidence is achieved.</li> <li>Demonstrate how to undertake effective, outcome-based Safeguarding Adult enquiries.</li> <li>Demonstrate the ability to undertake structured and appropriate interviews.</li> <li>Demonstrate ability to produce good quality comprehensive enquiry reports.</li> <li>Demonstrate the ability to present the report at Strategy / Outcomes Meetings.</li> <li>Demonstrate the appropriate involvement of the adult at risk, family, advocate, witnesses, and source of harm.</li> <li>Chair of Strategy / Outcomes Meetings:</li> <li>Show an ability to chair Safeguarding Adults Strategy / Outcomes Meetings (virtual/actual).</li> <li>Demonstrate an ability to review and analyse information within the Enquiry report.</li> </ul> |           |

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|---|---|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to review and make appropriate amendments to Safeguarding Adults Strategy / Outcome Meeting minutes.</li> <li>• Demonstrate appropriate involvement of adult at risk, family, advocate, witnesses, and source of harm in Safeguarding Adults Strategy / Outcomes Meetings.</li> <li>• Demonstrate the development of Safeguarding Plans with the adult at risk (and/or via the advocate).</li> <li>• Safeguarding plans should be outcome-focused and include risk enablement, protection, specialist assessment, mediation, and recovery as appropriate.</li> </ul>   |  |
| 7. Specialist knowledge in Safeguarding Adults    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate a working knowledge of legislation and local and organisational guidance in Safeguarding Adult practice.</li> <li>• Dependent upon your role and organisation, this may include:</li> <li>• Care Act Statutory Guidance 2014</li> <li>• Mental Capacity Act 2005</li> <li>• Mental Capacity Code of Practice 2015</li> <li>• Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards code 2009</li> <li>• Human Rights Act 1998</li> <li>• Housing Act 2004</li> <li>• Equalities Act 2010</li> <li>• Homelessness Act 2002</li> <li>• Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2012</li> <li>• Disclosure and Barring Service</li> <li>• Data Protection and Information Sharing</li> <li>• Local and Organisational Guidance</li> <li>• SAB Multi Agency Safeguarding Policy &amp; Procedures</li> </ul>   |  |
| 8. Application of specialist skills and knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify how to respond appropriately to Safeguarding Adults concerns.</li> <li>• Identify and address any Safeguarding Adults concern regarding immediate safety.</li> <li>• Show ability to initiate good partnership working within and across organisations in line with statutory guidance.</li> <li>• Participate and Contribute to Safeguarding Adults enquiries.</li> <li>• Support, promote and progress whistleblowing actions in accordance with your organisation's guidance.</li> <li>• Apply appropriate and proportionate actions throughout Safeguarding Adults enquiries.</li> <li>• Demonstrate accountable decision making.</li> <li>• Demonstrate effective recording and reporting of Safeguarding Adults concerns and enquiries.</li> <li>• Demonstrate appropriate application of skills and specialist knowledge in Safeguarding Adults practice.</li> <li>• Demonstrate ability to apply Mental Capacity Act assessments and guidance (MCA Code of Practice 2015).</li> <li>• Demonstrate how an adult at risk has provided informed consent.</li> <li>• Demonstrate knowledge of signs of coercion and duress.</li> <li>• Demonstrate appropriate and effective information sharing in accordance with legal guidance for information sharing agreements including:</li> <li>• Involving the adult at risk</li> <li>• Involving the source of harm</li> <li>• Sharing information across organisation</li> <li>• Safeguarding Adults documentation</li> <li>• Safeguarding Adults meetings/discussions</li> <li>• Safeguarding Adults enquiries</li> <li>• Demonstrate ability to include other agencies appropriately throughout the safeguarding adults process, in accordance with local procedures and best practice guidance</li> </ul> |  |



**Staff Group C:** (Decision Makers/NHS Level 4) Function - Making decisions about actions and next steps, chairing meetings and supervising staff undertaking safeguarding enquiries. Strategic Managers, including but not limited to: Service Managers, Independent Chair, Operations Managers, Head of Assessment and Care Management, etc. will be able to:

| Staff Group<br>C:   |   |           |
|---|---|-----------|
| Safeguarding Adults Competency (in addition to competencies 1 to 8) | Provided evidence must be proportionate and relevant to your role.  | Completed |
| 9. Develop and promote  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show an understanding and application of best practice in Safeguarding Adults that are:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outcome-focused results</li> <li>- Safeguarding Adults practice</li> <li>- Adult at risk wellbeing</li> <li>- Making Safeguarding Personal</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Demonstrate skills in development and promotion of best practice in Safeguarding Adults:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Safeguarding Adults policy and procedures</li> <li>-Supervision of staff and volunteering undertaking Safeguarding Adults practice</li> <li>-Safeguarding adults training</li> <li>-Auditing and monitoring Safeguarding Adults practice</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Demonstrate skills in application of learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)</li> </ul> |           |
| 10. Engage  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and challenge poor practice in Safeguarding Adults.</li> <li>• Disseminate information to and from strategic leaders (staff group E) in Safeguarding Adults practice.</li> <li>• Actively engage with partner agencies and networks to support staff, volunteers, and managers to enable best practice in Safeguarding Adults.</li> <li>• Actively engage with multi-agency networks to support staff, volunteers, and managers to enable Safeguarding Adults best practice.</li> </ul>   |           |
| 11. Support   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support staff, volunteers, and management (staff groups A to C) within your organisation to ensure best practice in accordance with statutory and local guidance, policy, and procedures (and within your organisation).</li> </ul>  |           |

**Staff Group D:** (Governance and Board Roles/NHS Level 5) Function - To scrutinise adult safeguarding work and to challenge and hold the organisation and safeguarding partnership to account. Including but not limited to: Executive and Senior Managers, Chief Executive, Owner/Manager, Head of Service, Local Safeguarding Adult Boards and above will be able to:

| Staff Group D:   |   |           |
|--|---|-----------|
| Safeguarding Adults Competency (in addition to competencies 1 to 11) | Provided evidence must be proportionate and relevant to your role.  | Completed |
| 12. Lead   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate and support the enabling and sustaining culture change in line with the CareAct</li> <li>• Show strategic leadership and understanding of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outcome-focused</li> <li>- Wellbeing</li> <li>- Making Safeguarding Personal</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Demonstrate application and embedding of learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) across the Safeguarding Adults Boards (SAB).</li> <li>• Promote practice-based and evidence-based research and implementation of research in Safeguarding Adults practice.</li> <li>• Promote embedding of NCF SA within your organisation.</li> </ul> |           |
| 13. Strategic planning in line with SABs                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure and support systems are in place for Safeguarding Adults in respect of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Safeguarding Adults Annual Report - Prevention strategies</li> <li>- Performance measures</li> <li>- Safeguarding Adults strategic plan - Training compliance</li> <li>- Auditing and monitoring</li> <li>- Challenging poor practice</li> <li>- Whistleblowing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |           |
| 14. Develop and Promote  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate active participation in strategic commissioning within the SAB and disseminate within your organisation.</li> <li>• Demonstrate public, professional, and organisational awareness of Safeguarding Adults.</li> <li>• Use local community and public engagement strategies.</li> <li>• Strategically support outcome focused Safeguarding Adult practice.</li> </ul>   |           |

