



**County Durham**  
**SAFEGUARDING ADULTS**  
**INTER-AGENCY PARTNERSHIP**

# What happens when abuse is reported?

An easy read guide to how we protect  
adults from abuse in County Durham.



**Abuse**  
don't tolerate it  
don't ignore it  
**do report it!**

# Contents

- ▶ **Introduction** **Page 2**
- ▶ **What happens when we hear about abuse?** **Page 3**
- ▶ **Safeguarding Adults Strategy Meeting** **Page 4**
- ▶ **Who will investigate what happened?** **Page 5**
- ▶ **The Safeguarding investigation** **Page 6-7**
- ▶ **The police investigation** **Page 8-11**
- ▶ **Going to court** **Page 12**
- ▶ **The Safeguarding Review / Debrief** **Page 13-18**

# Introduction

If you have received this leaflet it means that either you or someone else has reported that you have been the victim of abuse. In this booklet we will explain what will happen after abuse is reported, we call this the 'safeguarding adults' process.

This booklet will tell you who might be involved and what will happen next.

It is important to tell someone you trust if you, or someone you know, is being abused. They will tell the Police or Durham County Council.

You can phone us yourself to let us know about abuse happening to you or someone you know:

**In an Emergency ☎ 999**

**Durham Police ☎ 0345 6060365**

**Social Care Direct ☎ 0845 8 50 50 10**

This booklet was designed by Durham County Council on behalf of the Durham Safeguarding Adults Board.

It is available on the internet at [www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info](http://www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info)  
Please see other easy read booklets "Stop abuse now" and "Staying safe" for further information.

# What happens when we hear about abuse?



**After getting the information about the abuse Social Care Direct will act quickly to help you.**

## What happens when we hear about abuse?

**In Durham we have rules we follow, to tell us what to do, if we hear about abuse.**

- ▶ Social Care Direct will pass this on to a manager usually within 1 hour. The manager will decide how to help you within 1 working day. Any risks to you will be considered and someone will contact you in a safe way to help you out of any dangerous situations.
- ▶ If we hear about abuse in the evening or weekend we will help you with any risk that cannot wait, this includes making sure you are safe. A manager will then work out any additional help on the next working day.
- ▶ To help us decide what to do we may need to talk to you and other people like your family, staff and sometimes the Police.
- ▶ The police may tell us that a crime has been committed. In this case the Police will investigate what has happened.

**If we think that you, or anyone you told us about, is at immediate risk of being badly hurt, we will act very quickly to protect you.**

# Safeguarding Adults Strategy Meeting

**We will have a meeting to plan the best way of finding out what happened to you and the best way of making you safe. We will try to hold this meeting within 5 working days.**

We call this meeting the Safeguarding Adults Strategy Meeting. We invite people to the meeting who understand how to help keep you safe.



image: www.careimages.com

**We will write a plan** to say how we help you stay safe from abuse and what other help we will give you.



# Who will investigate what happened?

## Who will investigate what happened?

You, and if appropriate, your family or care worker will be told which of the following 3 things will happen next.

### The Safeguarding investigation

This will be agreed at the Safeguarding Adults Strategy Meeting. We will choose who will investigate, who should be talked to and how to support you.

Sometimes the police need to be involved. We will tell you about their role later in this booklet.



### The Police investigation

If people agree at the meeting that what has happened to you is against the law then the Police will do the investigation.

There is **not** always a Police investigation.



### No investigation

People at the Safeguarding Strategy Meeting may agree that no investigation is needed.



# The Safeguarding investigation

**If the police are not investigating what happened then you may be spoken to by a manager or social worker/ care manager.**

This is your chance to tell us what happened.

You may find it difficult to tell someone what happened so they may need to ask you questions that help you to explain.



**It is important that you say everything that you can remember.** It's okay if you can't remember everything.

You can have someone with you who you know and trust to support you when we talk to you.

You can have a break during the interview if you need one.

Investigation starts within 48hours of the safeguarding strategy.

In most cases investigation will be finished in 28 days.

# The Safeguarding investigation

**We will make sure you have the support you need to tell us what happened at the interview.**

- ▶ You can have someone to help you communicate or a language interpreter.
- ▶ If you find it difficult to say what happened, we might use photos or pictures to help you tell us.



**Other people will also be interviewed to help us find out what has happened.**

Once all of the interviews have been done the manager / social worker / care manager doing the investigation will look at all of the information to see if they can work out what happened.

They will write a report about what they find out.



# The police investigation

**The police will want to find out what happened to you by interviewing you.** They will ask you questions and get you to say what happened.

You may be asked to go to a special interview suite, called a SARC, where your story will be recorded. You can bring a friend, family member or care worker to support you.

**Durham has people who can help the police with their interviews such as social workers / care managers / advocates.**

Sometimes there maybe a special person there, called an intermediary to help people understand what you say. This person may also help at a court hearing if you have to give evidence.

**Durham Police have special police officers to support vulnerable adults.**

These police officers do not wear uniforms.



# The police investigation

**When you get to the interview suite for your interview you will be taken to special interview rooms nearby.**

There are three rooms in Durham. These photos are of an interview room.



**Your supporter can sit next to you on the sofa.**

You can choose a drink.

You can look round the interview rooms before your interview.



# The police investigation

**The interview is your chance to say what happened, how it made you feel and how you feel now.**

You can take a break when you need to and ask questions at the end. You must tell the police everything you can remember.

**You will not get into trouble for telling the police what happened.**

At the end of the interview they will tell you what will happen next.



**The police will then talk to the person who has hurt you. This person is known as the suspect.**

This interview will happen at a police station.

The police will talk to the suspect about what happened and see if what they say is different to what you said.

**The police may need to talk to other people as well.** This might take some time.



# The police investigation

**After the police have finished investigating, there are 3 things that could happen.**

## **The suspect may be charged with a criminal offence**

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) will choose whether the suspect should be charged with a criminal offence. If they are charged they will have to go to court. It may take many months for their trial to happen in court.



## **The suspect may be cautioned by the police**

This means the suspect will get a written warning which is kept on record and may count against them if they do commit another crime. The police will talk to you if they are going to caution the suspect.



## **No further action may be taken**

This is often because there is not enough evidence to take the case to court. You should be told why this is. We will offer you whatever help we can to support you.



# Going to court

## Going to court for a trial

If the Crown Prosecution Service decides that the suspect should be prosecuted you will be told when the trial will go to court, and how long the trial will take.

**If you are asked to go to court to answer questions we can apply to the judge and ask for ‘special measures’.** These can help you feel more comfortable in the court.

- ▶ the Judge may take off his or her wig
- ▶ a person, called an intermediary, can support you in court
- ▶ there are screens in court so you can't see the suspect.
- ▶ you may be able to give your evidence in another room by using a video camera



# The Safeguarding Review / Debrief

When the investigation is finished you or your advocate may be invited to a meeting or visited, to talk about what has happened, and how best to stop it happening again. If it is difficult for you to do this the care manager / social worker can visit you and explain what has happened.



**This meeting is called a Safeguarding Review / Debrief.**

The Safeguarding Strategy, if you want to attend will usually be at an office. Someone will take you to the meeting if it is hard for you to get there.



**You do not have to come to this meeting if you do not want to.**



# The Safeguarding Review / Debrief

**If you are worried about going to the meeting you can ask someone to go with you to the meeting, or to go in your place.** This could be a family member, friend or advocate.

You could write a letter to the people who will be at the meeting telling them your feelings about what happened and anything else you want to say.



## **The people who might be at the meeting are:**

- ▶ the manager of your day service or care home
- ▶ your community nurse
- ▶ your support worker
- ▶ your care manager
- ▶ a housing office
- ▶ your doctor
- ▶ your psychiatrist or psychologist
- ▶ the police (if they did the investigation)
- ▶ the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- ▶ any other person who can give information about what has happened to you



# The Safeguarding Review / Debrief

The review / debrief will have a lead officer. Their job is to run the meeting to make sure that everything has been done to keep you safe.



**You can talk to them before the meeting starts** and they will explain who will be at the meeting and what will be talked about.



**A report will be written for the meeting.** A care manager / social worker can write the report and this could include your thoughts, wishes and worries.

You will be able to go through the report with your care manager / social worker and have help to read the report if you need it.



**If you do not want to go to the Safeguarding Review / Debrief, someone you know will tell you what happens.**

# The Safeguarding Review / Debrief

## What happens at the safeguarding review / debrief?

Everyone at the meeting will listen to different people involved in your care and what they know about what has happened to you. This will include you or your advocate.

- ▶ they will ask you about what happened to you, either in a report or in person
- ▶ they will ask you to say how you feel about things now, either in a report or in person
- ▶ you can say what you want to happen next

Everyone else at the meeting will have time to say what they think has happened to you.

There will be a person who writes notes of what is talked about in the meeting.

**The meeting is confidential** which means that only the people who have been at the meeting will know what was said at the meeting. They must not tell other people about it.



# The Safeguarding Review / Debrief

**Everyone at the meeting will agree a plan of how to help you and stop you being abused again, this should happen within 5 days of the investigation being completed.** The independent chairperson will make sure that everything agreed at the meeting gets done.



**There may be a second meeting** if there are more things to discuss or if we need to see if everything is working well for you. The lead officer will decide this and tell you at the end of the first meeting.

**As soon as possible after the meeting, you will be given a copy of the actions from the meeting.**

The actions will tell you what has been agreed at the meeting and the plan to make you safe. Someone such as your social worker / care manager or person who knows you well will read through the actions of the meeting with you if you want them to.



**People at the meeting will understand that as an adult you have the right to make your own choices,** even if other people worry about your choices.

# The Safeguarding Review / Debrief

## After the Safeguarding Review / Debrief



### How to complain

If you are unhappy about what has been said in the meeting, you can complain to The lead officer, your care manager / social worker.

### Getting the support you need

People who attend the meeting will talk to you about how you will be supported in the future.

You may need extra support to talk about what has happened and how you feel about it. These are the sorts of people who might help you:

- ▶ a doctor
- ▶ a counsellor
- ▶ a psychologist
- ▶ an advocate
- ▶ a nurse
- ▶ they can work with you on your own or in a group

**You can ask for help and support at any time if you feel you want it.**

If you suspect a neighbour, friend or family member is being neglected or abused or you are you the victim of neglect or abuse call:

**Social Care Direct ☎ 0845 8 50 50 10 (24 hours a day)**

Your concerns will always be taken seriously and your details will remain confidential. Concerns about children should also be reported to this number.

**If the person is in immediate danger call ☎ 999 straight away, before contacting Social Care Direct.**

**[www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info](http://www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info)**

**Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.**

العربية (Arabic) (中文 (繁體字)) (Chinese) اردو (Urdu)  
polski (Polish) ਪੰਜਾਬੀ (Punjabi) Español (Spanish)  
বাংলা (Bengali) हिन्दी (Hindi) Deutsch (German)  
Français (French) Türkçe (Turkish) Melayu (Malay)

[altformat.awh@durham.gov.uk](mailto:altformat.awh@durham.gov.uk)

(0191) 383 5204



Braille



Audio



Large Print