



Welcome to this introduction to safeguarding course, which we have tried to make as straightforward and user friendly as possible.

This course is being delivered by Julia Plinston and Christine Nicholls on behalf of Community Action Northumberland

This course is suitable for community groups who may come across vulnerable people in the course of their work, and their volunteers. The aim is to provide a good understanding of the principles underlying safeguarding and of the responsibilities everyone has, to protect children and vulnerable adults.

NB: You may need more in-depth training if your organisations activities involve:

- regularly taking responsibility for looking after children
- providing personal care to vulnerable adults
- Managing money on behalf of a vulnerable adult
- Having access to sensitive information about vulnerable adults (for instance to provide advice and guidance).

At the end of the course you will have a better understanding of

- what is meant by safeguarding,
- What is meant by abuse: who is at risk of abuse, and what factors increase the risk
- the recognised types of abuse and the signs to look out for with each of these
- your safeguarding responsibilities, and what steps you should take if you have concerns that someone may be experiencing or be at risk of experiencing abuse
- What happens after you report a concern.

Introduction



- What is safeguarding
- Safeguarding key principles
- Who is vulnerable ?
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Why training is important?
- Safeguarding Policies



- Safeguarding means working to prevent abuse and neglect and to protect every individual's fundamental right to live with dignity, in safety and free from harm.
- The Care Act 2014 sets out six key principles that underpin safeguarding work:
 - Empowerment – everyone has the right to feel they have control of their own life. Everyone should be able to make choices for themselves, any support they require should be tailored to their needs and wishes and should be given with their consent.
 - Prevention – wherever possible actions should be taken before harm takes place
 - Proportionality – responses should be appropriate to the level of risk identified
 - Protection – support and representation should be provided to anyone at risk of harm.
 - Partnership – all services that have an impact on a person's life should work together to address safeguarding issues
 - Accountability – there should be transparency and accountability in delivering safeguarding.
- Anyone from any background can find themselves at risk of abuse and neglect in certain situations, however some people are considered to be more 'vulnerable' or 'at risk', ie those who are for any reason unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation. We will explore who is vulnerable in more detail later.
- If you have a reason for concern, you should always report this to someone who is in a position to investigate. You may be uncomfortable in doing this – you may worry that you are overreacting or that you will cause trouble. However, remember:
 - Even if your observation seems relatively small, taken along with information from others it may help build up evidence that there is need for action to be taken.
 - In some cases, you may be the only person who has recognised a situation and therefore could be the only person in a position to help.Don't assume that someone else is taking responsibility: if everyone takes that view, and opportunities to intervene are missed, a vulnerable person may be subject to further abuse which could escalate could result in long term psychological problems, serious injury or and in extreme cases even death.
- There have been many high-profile cases showing that because signs of abuse have been missed a vulnerable person has suffered severe and extended abuse. If everyone who came into contact with that person had known what signs to look out for and how to

act on concerns, they could have been protected. It is important that as many people as possible undertake training so that similar situations are avoided in the future.

- It is important for every organisation that comes into contact with vulnerable people not only to have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place but to ensure that these are working documents used to support everyone involved in the organisation to take action if any safeguarding concerns arise. It can be very difficult for an individual who believes something is wrong to take action. They may feel that they are over-reacting to a situation, that they may be causing trouble for someone, or that they will not be believed. Knowing that the organisation encourages people to take action and having clear guidelines in place as to what steps to take can make all the difference. Everyone in your group should have access to a copy of safeguarding policies and procedures, and be given basic training as to how to use them.

Policies and Procedures should be reviewed regularly to ensure they are up to date with the latest legislation and are fit for purpose. Reviews could take place at least once every 3 years, or more frequently if legislation changes, or if a safeguarding issue has arisen – to see if the experience of dealing with this highlighted the need for any changes.

The issues around safeguarding children and vulnerable adults are largely the same, however:

- Different legislation and guidance apply in each case. There are different reporting routes in each case with every local authority having both a Safeguarding Adults Board, and a Safeguarding Children Board
- All adults, including adults at risk, have a right to make unwise decisions – including the choice not to take action to protect themselves. This is different for children, where their safety is the primary concern

Understanding Abuse



- What is abuse?
- Who commits abuse?
- Who is vulnerable to abuse?
- Factors that increase risk



- There is no one definition of Abuse but two government departments provide useful ones: The Department of Health's 2000 document, 'No secrets: guidance on protecting vulnerable adults' defines abuse as:
'a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons which results in significant harm'.
The Department of Education's guidance document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (published in 2015 and updated in 2019) defines child abuse as:
'any action by another person, adult or child, that causes harm to a child'
Core categories of abuse include neglect, emotional abuse, financial abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. There are also many other types of abuse that are recognised including some sub-divisions of this core list, and some which describe particular situations in which abuse occurs such as institutional, domestic, modern slavery and exploitation and online or cyber abuse. These are explored later in this course.
- There are many pre-conceptions as to who commits abuse. In fact, people from all backgrounds, commit abuse. An abuser may be a professional caring for a vulnerable person, a parent, child, other family member or friend, or a stranger. Abuse can occur anywhere: in the home, in a care setting or in a public place. Most abuse is committed by people known to the vulnerable person.
- People who are considered to be particularly at risk and therefore in need of safeguarding are Children (defined as anyone under the age of 18) and some groups of adults identified by the Department of Health and the 2014 Care Act. These include any person aged 18 years or older who:
 - Has need of care and support: this could be due to a mental illness or other disability, their age or an illness
 - Is experiencing or at risk of abuse and neglect
 - As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.
- People may be more vulnerable than others if they lack the capacity to make decisions on their own or if they live in isolated circumstances with little chance to ask for help.

Types of Abuse 1



- Neglect
- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial



- **Neglect** – causing harm by failing to provide something that is essential to the wellbeing of a vulnerable person: for instance food and drink, adequate clothing, heating and shelter, hygiene and personal care, medical treatment, and access to health care, social care or education. It could also include an absence of love and attention. Neglect may be intentional or unintentional and may include self-neglect.

Signs of neglect may include, dehydration, malnutrition or excessive weight loss, excessive hunger or thirst, dirty skin, nails and hair, dirty or inadequate clothing, a cold, dirty and sparsely furnished home environment, untreated medical conditions including bed sores, emotional distress and complaints of pain or discomfort.

- **Psychological abuse** includes: name calling, mocking or humiliating, harassing, verbal abuse, excessive criticism, coercion, controlling or intimidating behaviour, isolating someone from their friends and family, and blaming the person for what is happening.

Signs of psychological abuse may include anxiety, seeming withdrawn, agitation, aggression, lack of self-esteem, stress related health conditions such as high blood pressure, lack of trust in anyone, fear of a particular person or people, significant loss or gain in weight, difficulty sleeping, absence from activities and being difficult to contact.

- **Physical Abuse** includes any acts that cause physical harm to the body, such as hitting, kicking, pushing, pulling, burning, cutting, beating or inappropriately restraining, Administering medication inappropriately.

Signs of physical abuse may include: unexplained injuries – especially if these appear to have happened on more than one occasion. These may include bruises especially if clearly in the shape of a hand or an object, sprains, fractures, bleeding, internal injuries, untreated medical problems, unexplained excessive weight loss, changes of behaviour, fear of a particular person, or group of people.

- **Sexual Abuse** – forcing or coercing a person into any sexual activity when they don't want to take part or cannot give their consent. This could include inappropriate touching, sexual assault or rape, being made to look at sexual images, being forced to have other people look at their bodies, or to have pictures or videos of a sexual nature taken of them. It could include sexual exploitation – where the person is forced into sexual activity for gain.

Signs of sexual abuse may include torn stained or bloody clothing, tears, bruises or soreness in intimate areas, difficulty walking, unexplained pregnancy, sexually

transmitted disease, withdrawal, depression and anxiety, fear of particular people, difficulty sleeping, and overly sexualised behaviour.

- **Financial Abuse** - This includes theft, fraud, scamming, withholding someone's money or possessions from them, borrowing money and not repaying it, pressuring someone with regard to making financial transactions, use of their money or property or the terms of their will. This may often be carried out by someone who has responsibility for a vulnerable person's money or who offers to help them with shopping, banking etc.

Signs of financial abuse may include worrying about financial matters, unpaid bills, unusual transactions on bank accounts, unexplained loss of assets, a disparity between income and living conditions, or someone taking an excessive interest in a vulnerable person's financial status.

Further Types of Abuse



- Discriminatory
- Institutional
- Domestic abuse
- Online / cyber
- Modern slavery
- Radicalisation



- **Discriminatory abuse** – which includes all mistreatment or harassment of a vulnerable person, because of their age, gender, disability, race, religion or beliefs, marital status, pregnancy or parental status, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. It can take the form of slurs, harassment or bullying based on these characteristics, denying opportunities or access to services,

Signs of discriminatory abuse may include: anger, frustration, low self-esteem, trying to be more like other people, withdrawal, fearfulness, isolation or depression.

- **Institutional abuse** – for instance being forced to get up or go to bed, eat meals, go to the toilet, bathe or take medication at set times, regardless of the vulnerable person's needs or wishes, not allowing people access to their own possessions and clothing, and being left alone for long periods.

Signs of institutional abuse may include: becoming withdrawn or frustrated, wearing clothes that don't fit, unexplained weight loss, bed sores, wet or soiled clothes, deterioration in medical conditions.

- **Domestic Abuse** – refers to controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading or violent behaviour that takes place as a one-off incident or over a prolonged period within the home. It is most commonly committed by a partner or ex-partner but could also be carried out by any other family member. Whilst it is more common for women to be abused by men, almost one hundred and fifty thousand cases of men being abused were reported in 2017. It is also possible for a child to abuse a sibling or an adult.

- **Online or cyber abuse - psychological** abuse, bullying, coercion, grooming and sexual exploitation can all take place via internet or by mobile phone.

- **Modern slavery** - is the recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of people through the use of coercion, force, abuse of vulnerability or deception for the purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude or organ harvesting. It can happen to anyone especially those in vulnerable communities. Although it often involves bringing people across county borders it can happen within this country.

Signs of modern slavery may include: not being able to attend events and activities in the community, being reluctant to interact with other people, having no personal identification or possessions, and appearing frightened, and withdrawn.

➤ **Radicalisation** is the action or process of causing someone to adopt radical positions on political or social issues. This may include grooming activity, isolating the vulnerable person from their family or friends, and involving them in extreme political, religious or terrorist activities.

➤ *Signs of radicalisation* may include expressing extreme views, becoming distant from families and friends, withdrawing from everyday activities, and becoming secretive or aggressive.

Responding to Disclosures



- How to respond to a disclosure
- How to record a disclosure
- How to report a disclosure
- Whistleblowing



- Firstly remember it is not your job to investigate the allegations. Your job is to listen and reassure.
 - Reassure the person involved that you believe what they are saying, Explain to them that they are doing the right thing by telling you. Try to stay calm and never say anything judgmental. For instance: 'did you lead them on', 'why did you let them into your home?' etc.
 - You can ask questions, but keep them to a minimum, eg: When?(did it happen), Where? (did it happen), Who? (was involved) and of course What? (happened).
 - Don't ask leading questions, eg 'Did they hit you?' Basically – don't put words into their mouths. Let them tell you what happened in their own time and in their own words.
 - At the end of the disclosure, ask them what they would like to happen now. Do they want you to call someone for support?
 - Finally, abuse is an offence and must be reported. You can't promise not to tell, but you can reassure them that they will be involved in the next steps and keep them up to date with any developments.
- Recording the Disclosure
 - Don't make notes during the disclosure (unless it is absolutely essential). Start to make notes as soon you have the opportunity afterwards, the sooner the better.
 - Keep to the point, don't embellish. Use the words the person used verbatim, not your interpretation of what they said.
 - Record the time, date and place of the disclosure and those involved: the when, where, who and what.
 - Make sure you record details of any injuries.
 - If you have to take any immediate action, please record this, for example calling the police or an ambulance.
 - Sign and date the report and take a copy for your own information prior to passing the report on.
- How to Report a Disclosure
 - You may need to ring the police straight away if someone is at immediate risk or call for an ambulance if someone is injured.
 - Within your organisation you should have a Safeguarding Officer. They would be the person you go to next, once you have written your report.

➤ Whistle Blowing.

Your organisation may have a whistle blowing policy which states that you must inform your line manager or another member of your committee about a disclosure. Sometimes it just isn't appropriate to speak to anyone else within your organisation (for instance if you suspect they are involved in committing or covering up the abuse). In this case go directly to the social care team at Northumberland County Council (details via the link on the last slide in this presentation). You are protected by law for raising concerns as a whistle blower.

When to Take Action



- Why don't some people take action
- Reporting procedures
- If the concerns are about a member of your group or a professional
- When to report a concern even without a disclosure



- Some people don't take action, even though they may be aware of abuse, for a number of reasons. These can include:
 - Being worried about the reputation of the organisation
 - Having some kind of relationship with the abuser
 - Being concerned that taking action could ruin someone's life
 - Being worried that the accusation may be false
 - Worrying that they might make the situation worse
- Always follow your organisation's safeguarding guidelines and wherever appropriate report concerns to your safeguarding officer. Both are there to guide you on taking the right steps to protect those at risk. Remember it is NOT your responsibility to investigate any claims or concerns, just report what you know directly to the safeguarding officer who should then contact the Social Care Team at NCC or the police. DO NOT discuss a disclosure or your concerns with anyone else.
- If you are concerned that your report is not likely to be taken seriously within your organisation, you should report directly to the appropriate Social Care team for Adults or Children (a link to their contact details is on the last slide).
- If the report concerns a member of your group or a professional, the procedure is exactly the same.
- Should you have concerns that abuse may be happening without the benefit of a disclosure, you must report your concerns to the safeguarding officer. Again, write a report including as much information as you can, using the guidance highlighted earlier and take a copy for your own records. Once again, you can go directly to the appropriate social care team if necessary.
- If at any time you talk directly to the Social Care Team, please record your conversation in writing and take a copy for your own information. Make sure you include who you speak to, along with the date and the time

After a Referral



- Adult social care's decision
- Strategy discussions
- Safeguarding case conference
- Protection plans
- Reviewing and closing a protection plan



- After a referral the social care team will investigate, they will assess whether there is any risk to the person concerned and then decide what action to take. This may include:
 - Speaking to the person concerned, the family and the alleged perpetrator,
 - Checking their social care records for any other evidence of an issue
 - Checking with other agencies involved in the care of the person for evidence of an issue
 - Arranging a medical examination if necessary
 - Liaising with the police.
- If the social care team choose not to act on a concern and you don't agree with their decision you can ask them to review it, along with reporting any additional information that may have come to light.
- If further action is needed, then a strategy discussion is the next step. This discussion will involve police, social care, health care, in the case of children education staff and the person who made the referral and any other services that are known to be involved. All the available information will be shared and a decision made on what action to take next. The wishes of the vulnerable person will be taken into consideration at all times, as well as their safety.
- A case conference is a multi-agency meeting which includes all those involved in the investigation, a chairperson and the care quality commission. The person of concern can choose whether to attend this meeting or not, or they can appoint someone to attend on their behalf.
- A protection plan is put in place to stop the abuse that has occurred and remove the risk of further abuse. Support will be put in place for the vulnerable person.
- The protection plan must be reviewed every 6 months. If the review decides that the person is no longer at risk the plan will be closed.
- If abuse should re-occur, a new referral will be made

Helpful links



Details of how to report abuse and of organisations that can offer you direct support are available at:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Care/Support/Safeguarding.aspx#informationforthepublic>

Follow the link above and scroll down to Useful Links and Information

If you have any further questions that haven't been covered in this course, please get in touch with us:

- christinenicholls@ca-north.org.uk
- juliaplinton@ca-north.org.uk



There is a link on this slide which will take you to a very comprehensive page on Northumberland County Council's website. Here you will find a list of organisations which can offer you direct support.

We will continue to provide updates and resources to accompany this training over the next few months.

Thank you for listening to this information on safeguarding. If you have any questions or comments, please email myself or Julia via the emails on the screen.

Finally, please remember: safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Abuse is an offence: if you are aware that abuse is happening, or believe it to be so, you have a legal responsibility to act.