** Safeguarding Adults**

**Guidance on Raising Concerns about Abuse and Neglect**

**Appendix 3: Supplementary guidance on when to consider raising a safeguarding concern regarding incidents between adults in a service**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to service providers on the management of incidents between adults in their service, and in determining when the circumstances require a safeguarding concern to be raised.

This supplementary guidance should be read in conjunction with:

* [Guidance on Raising Concerns about Abuse and Neglect](https://www.eastsussexsab.org.uk/documents/guidance-on-raising-concerns-about-abuse-and-neglect/)
* [Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures](http://sussexsafeguardingadults.procedures.org.uk/).

**Which situations cover incidents between adults in a service?**

Incidents between adults in a service can include any interaction involving two or more adults in any setting, involving physical, psychological / emotional, sexual, financial or discriminatory abuse or behaviour, which results in the risk of harm, or actual harm.

**Incidents between adults in a service and safeguarding**

***Not all incidents between adults in a service will require a safeguarding concern to be raised. Agencies must use their own internal incident policy and processes and ensure that all incidents are reported using the appropriate procedures. What is important is for each incident to be considered according to the individual circumstances of the situation and a professional judgement reached.***

A degree of conflict on occasions is to be expected in all relationships, and this equally applied to environments where people with care and support needs live together or spend long periods of time together. There may be times when the actions of one adult in a service towards another goes beyond usual conflict and their behaviour is abusive, causing harm.

**Responsibilities of care providers**

Preventing incidents between adults in a service from occurring wherever possible is always the preferred approach. Those in receipt of services should expect to be supported or cared for in a safe environment. Abuse by other adults in the service who also have care and support needs themselves service is just as harmful as any other form of abuse. Provider services should ensure that interventions and support arrangements are in place to minimise the risk of abuse between adults using their service.

**Good practice in the management of incidents involving adults in a service**

* Having robust and comprehensive pre-admission assessment arrangements to establish an individual’s previous and current needs. This should include consideration to building and maintaining relationships with others, vulnerability, any behaviour which may challenge, including bullying.
* Considering the potential impact, where appropriate, on existing adults in the service prior to the placement or person starting to use the service, and keeping the compatibility of all adults in that service under review.
* The inclusion of anti-bullying, issues of inappropriate interactions between adults in the service and also between staff and adults, are included in relevant policies and procedures.
* Promoting a positive culture of mutual respect where individual rights and responsibilities are discussed with adults in the service, and the Mental Capacity Act principles of least restrictive practice are followed and confirmed in the service’s documentation.
* Understanding how to support adults who are involved in incidents through the assessment of needs and risk, and mitigating the risks to both, and linking them in with appropriate support services.
* Care and support plans directing staff on how to promote the safety of adults in their service.
* Having measures in place to positively support those with known behavioural difficulties.
* Ensuring that staff have appropriate training and know who to identify, record and review incidents involving adults in the service.
* Ensuring that staff numbers are sufficient to meet the needs of the adults in the service.
* Following the agency’s notification procedures, including, where appropriate, informing the adults’ families or nominated representatives.
* Ensuring that measures are in place to secure the safety of people within or visiting the service.

**Post incident reviews**

* When an incident occurs between adults in a service, the details should be recorded to identify any potential patterns. The information as a minimum should record the incident date and time, the adults involved, members of staff on duty, and the circumstances immediately prior to the incident and any other relevant information.
* Reviews of risk assessments and care plans should always be undertaken following each incident.
* Senior managers should review post incident information on a regular basis to determine whether or not certain adults are regularly involved, either as the victim or the person who is the cause of risk, and the staff on duty at the time. Reviews should consider lessons learnt, whether the incident could have been prevented, and the need for changes to avoid similar incidents recurring. The post incident findings may also trigger the need for further review and updating of risk assessments and / or a safeguarding concern being raised.

**Situations in which incidents between adults in a service do not require reporting as a safeguarding concern**

If the incident between the adults in a service is an isolated event, has not caused harm and has been dealt with promptly and appropriately, it should not require a safeguarding concern to be raised. However service providers should:

* Complete incident reports, review support plans and risk assessments for both the victim and the person who is the cause of risk, and take actions to minimise the risk of recurrence. Consideration should always be given to the frequency and impact of each incident.
* A referral to Adult Social Care and Health for a social care assessment / review, or to an appropriate health care professional, should be made in response to a decline or change in an adult’s presentation.
* The service provider’s incident reporting requirements should always be followed even when a safeguarding concern is not necessary.

**Raising a safeguarding concern for incidents between adults in a service**

Under the Care Act 2014 agencies have a legal responsibility to raise a safeguarding concern with the local authority where there is a suspicion that abuse of an adult with care and support needs has taken place as a result of neglect or omission of care.

**Situations in which a safeguarding concern should be raised:**

Some examples of incidents between adults in a service which should be raised as a safeguarding concern include:

* Physical assault leading to actual harm or death.
* Predictable and preventable (by staff) incident(s) between adults resulting in harm.
* Bullying or persistent teasing resulting in distress, loss of confidence or dignity.
* Intimate touching without valid consent or verbal sexualised harassment / teasing.

**Systemic failings**

Where there are systemic failings in a providers’ management process which leads to repeated incidents between adults in that service, consideration should be given as to whether a safeguarding enquiry into organisational abuse is warranted. There is an obligation on all services involved to identify such failings and ensure that safeguarding concerns are raised where necessary, and that issues are addressed.

***If there is any doubt as to whether to raise a safeguarding concern you should contact Health and Social Care Connect for further consultation on 0345 60 80 191.***