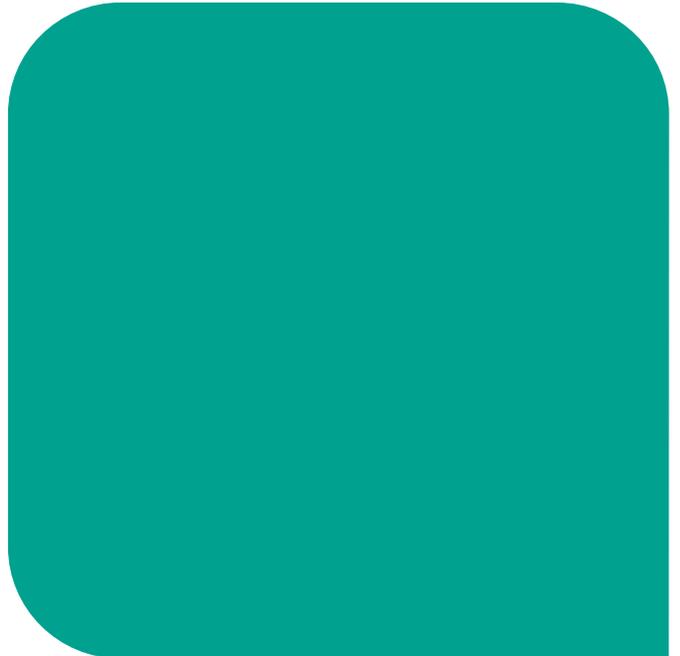




social care
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Protecting adults at risk: Good practice guide



Investigator's report

The safeguarding adults investigation report is key to the safeguarding process. It draws together all the information relevant to the allegation of abuse or exploitation. It presents an analysis of this information, keeping the alleged victim central to the process, and enables the safeguarding conference to make sound, professional, evidence-based decisions on the protection of individuals and others. An investigation report must be thorough and objective, be written in precise and clear language, make a distinction between fact and opinion and state the evidence that accounts for both.

Each London local authority will have a particular format for their investigation report, perhaps linked to their computerised system. This section represents what is good practice and, as such, is not prescriptive as to exactly how investigation reports should be completed. It lists what elements a good investigation report should contain, to which London local authorities can add any local requirements. Ensuring these elements are included in all reports will enable consistency across London and better inter-borough working.

- **Content**
 - Basic personal details including ethnicity: as required by local systems.
 - Summary of current allegations: the 'who, what, when and how' including if, on investigation, a crime appears to have been committed.
 - Summary of any previous allegations and their outcome: the chronology of previous allegations.
 - Description: a brief description of the person, the nature of their disability and their capacity to take action to protect themselves. This includes the person's mental capacity where there is evidence to question this.
 - Living/support arrangements: summary of current living and support arrangements, including family, friends and formal services.
 - List of documents read, persons interviewed and places visited relevant to the investigation:
 - documents and their source (e.g. hospital records)
 - persons seen or spoken to on the telephone, with a chronology
 - locations visited relevant to the investigation
 - photographic evidence seen and its source.
 - Process of investigation and evidence that supports or refutes the allegation(s):
 - this forms the heart of the report, looking at each allegation and considering them in turn with the relevant evidence
 - where there is conflicting information or differing accounts of events given, this is acknowledged and efforts made to resolve this are demonstrated

- the perspective of the person who has allegedly suffered harm must remain central to the process of investigation.
- Evaluation of the evidence gathered so far: this draws together the information from the previous section, evaluating what weight is given to each element in order to arrive at an initial conclusion on what may or may not have occurred.
- Seriousness of risk to alleged victim: a separate formal risk assessment may have already been completed, which can be included or quoted here. If not, then a statement needs to be made on what risks have been identified so far in the investigation process, in order to help shape protection planning at the safeguarding conference.
- The views of the person harmed or at risk of harm: the views of the person harmed must be expressed. Wherever possible, it is helpful to quote their exact words. Every effort must be made to ascertain their views even where there may be, for example, communication or mental capacity difficulties. Where the person lacks any ability to express their views it would be reasonable to explore what their previous opinions, values and beliefs may have been prior to losing capacity, or what is known of their opinions, values and beliefs by those most familiar with them, to arrive at some indication of what they would have thought.
- The views of relevant others (e.g. family, other professionals): where the opinions of others are being recorded it is important to represent these correctly. If any of the 'relevant others' are attending the safeguarding conference, then they will be able to express their views directly, so only a summary needs to be given under this section.
- Desired outcome, as expressed by the alleged person harmed: a succinct statement of what the person wants from the safeguarding process in terms of action to be taken and outcomes to be achieved. Where the person is represented by another individual (e.g. family member), include their views.
- Recommendation of investigating officer for action and/or further investigation: within the timescales set, it may not always be possible to conclude all aspects of the investigation required by local procedures. People may not be available or information may not yet have been provided. This section allows the investigating officer to cover any gaps identified and put forward further investigatory actions for the conference to consider.
- Attachments and sign-off: in discussion with the safeguarding adults conference chair, some information may need to be directly given to attendees, rather than quoted in the investigation report or noted as something read. This would be appropriate where, for example, specific written submissions are provided to the conference by family or others.

Protecting adults at risk: Good practice resource

Each London borough will have its own management arrangements for reviewing the content of and approving investigation reports prior to distribution. Managers will be aware that crucial decisions are made based on the information presented in an investigation report, so they need to be satisfied that systems are in place to ensure a consistent high standard of report writing.