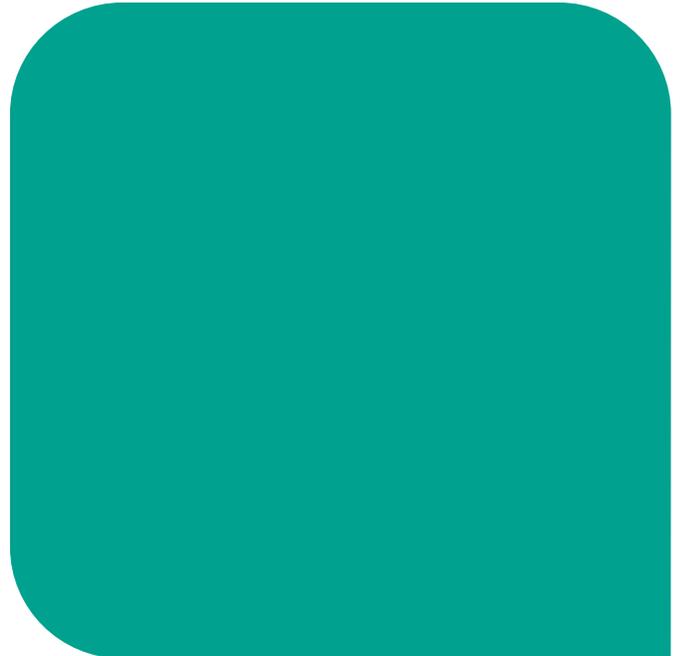




social care
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Protecting adults at risk: Good practice guide



Key messages

'The Government believes that safeguarding is everybody's business with communities playing a part in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. Measures need to be in place locally to protect those least able to protect themselves. Safeguards against poor practice, harm and abuse need to be an integral part of care and support. We should achieve this through partnerships between local organisations, communities and individuals.'

Statement of government policy on adult safeguarding, Department of Health

In May 2011, the Department of Health (DH) released the Statement of government policy on adult safeguarding (1), which set out six key safeguarding principles:

1. Empowerment: a presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent.
2. Protection: support and representation for those in greatest need.
3. Prevention: it is better to take action before harm occurs.
4. Proportionality: a proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
5. Partnership: local solutions achieved via services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
6. Accountability: accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

The document goes on to describe what these principles might look like from the perspective of the adult at risk:

- **Empowerment:** I am consulted about the outcomes I want from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.
- **Protection:** I am provided with help and support to report abuse. I am supported to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want to do so and to which I am able.
- **Prevention:** I am provided with easily understood information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.
- **Proportionality:** I am confident that the responses to risk will take into account my preferred outcomes or best interests.
- **Partnership:** I am confident that information will be appropriately shared in a way that takes into account its personal and sensitive nature. I am confident that agencies will work together to find the most effective responses for my own situation.
- **Accountability:** I am clear about the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the solution to the problem.

The Statement also sets out what these principles might mean for agencies involved in safeguarding adults:

- **Empowerment:** we give individuals relevant information about recognising abuse and the choices available to them to ensure their safety. We give them clear information about how to report abuse and crime, and any necessary support in doing so. We consult them before we take any action. Where someone lacks capacity to make a decision, we always act in his or her best interests.
- **Protection:** our local reporting arrangements for abuse and suspected criminal offences, along with our risk assessments, work effectively. Our governance arrangements are open and transparent and communicated to our citizens.
- **Prevention:** we can effectively identify and appropriately respond to signs of abuse and suspected criminal offences. We make staff aware, through provision of appropriate training and guidance, of how to recognise signs and take any appropriate action to prevent abuse from occurring. In all our work, we consider how to make communities safer.
- **Proportionality:** we discuss with the individual and where appropriate with partner agencies the proportionality of possible responses to the risk of significant harm before we take a decision. Our arrangements support the use of professional judgement and the management of risk.
- **Partnership:** we have effective local information-sharing and multi-agency partnership arrangements in place and staff understand these. We foster a 'one team' approach that places the welfare of individuals above organisational boundaries.
- **Accountability:** the roles of all agencies are clear, together with the lines of accountability. Staff understand what is expected of them and others. Agencies recognise their responsibilities to each other, act upon them and accept collective responsibility for safeguarding arrangements.

This resource will help individual staff members from across agencies to put these principles into practice in their day-to-day work.