

Keeping Adults Safe in Lewisham

Lewisham Council has a duty to protect people at risk of abuse.

This leaflet explains what will happen if you or somebody else tells us abuse is happening, and how you or the person you care for will be involved.

'Safeguarding adults' describes the process we use to keep adults at risk safe from harm. An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who is in need of care and support, and because of those needs are unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect.

What do we mean by abuse?

Abuse can take many forms and can be from professionals, family, friends or acquaintances. It may be physical, mental, emotional, sexual or financial.

Examples of abuse are:

- lack of food, warmth or personal care
- failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, and the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- slapping, hitting or roughly moving a person
- threats, shouting or swearing
- inappropriate touching or sexual activity where a person has not given consent or is unable to give consent
- theft of money, belongings or property

What will happen when we are told someone may be at risk of abuse?

The Concern Stage (Day 1)

When a report of abuse is received it is immediately recorded by the Council. A **Safeguarding Worker** will talk to you and other people involved to understand the immediate risks to your safety. 'They will help you decide whether you would like the ongoing support of the Local Authority and what that support might be. We want to put you in control of your own safeguarding and work with you and agree how you would like to be protected and supported.

If you do not want us to take any action, the process will usually stop at this point. However, there are some situations where we must take action. This could be because a crime may have taken place, where other people may be at risk of harm, or where a person lacks mental capacity to make informed decisions and action needs to be taken in their best interests.

The Enquiry Stage (Up to Four weeks)

1. Planning an enquiry (one to five days): The next stage is to find out the facts and understand more about what has been happening to you (or the person you care for). A social worker will work with you to determine how you would like to progress, what outcomes you would like to achieve, and help determine your own strengths and support networks that could assist you. Where necessary we may, with your agreement, involve other appropriate individuals to help gather information and provide support. We may have a discussion or arrange a meeting, which you could attend with support if you would like. We will look at all the information gathered to help decide what should happen next. Taking your views into account we will either:

- Carry out a more detailed enquiry. If we suspect a crime has been committed we will contact the Police.
- Decide that no further enquiry action is needed. However we will provide support to help you manage any risks that we have identified or needs that you would like to be met; we may offer to look at the support you need.

2. Enquiry report (up to 20 days):

A detailed enquiry will review the information gathered and collect more information. We will talk to you about what you want to happen and how to prevent the abuse happening again. We will write an Enquiry Report which will be discussed with you (or the person you care for) and will look at your views and if we have achieved your desired outcomes, details of the concern, how this was addressed and what support was provided and if this will continue.

Outcome of the enquiry (within 5 days of the enquiry report):

At the end of the enquiry the report will be discussed between you, your social worker and other people involved. This discussion will look at the enquiry information and any other evidence to determine whether abuse occurred, how we can continue to support you, and what we can do to prevent the abuse or neglect from happening again.

We will check that everything has been fully investigated, consider all the information and together make a decision about happens next. We will also ask for your feedback on the safeguarding process as we will want to know if your desired outcomes were met, and if you feel safer as a result. You can tell us how working with us has impacted you and where we can do better.

Safeguarding Plan and Review

From the first conversation we will create a **safeguarding plan** with you (or the person you care for). This will:

- Describe what needs to happen to keep you, or the person you care for, safe from harm.
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of the professionals and carers who provide support.

Set out the timescales for achieving the goals and reviewing progress. This will continue to develop and change throughout the safeguarding process recording what has been achieved, and reviewing and adding items while we work together. This will reflect any changes in the situation, people involved, or your needs.

The safeguarding plan can continue after the closure of the enquiry and will be reviewed to discuss its effectiveness, whether it is meeting your outcomes and how the agreed risks are being managed. Your views are very important to this process and will lead to changes for the better so please help us get it right by honestly telling us what you think.

Closing the Enquiry

Enquiries can be closed at any time when the concern has been addressed and any risks have been managed. At this time we will agree with you any further actions that may be needed and ensure you have the contact details for those people who will continue to work with and support you. It is important to us that you are in agreement with the closure and have been able to express your views and had your outcomes met.

Lewisham Adult Social Care want to put you in control of your own safeguarding and generate a set of outcomes that you would like to achieve, making the experience meaningful for you. We want to develop a real understanding of what you wish to achieve and work with you to see how well these can be met. We will provide regular updates about what is happening and if any decisions need to be made that directly affect you.

If you prefer, or need, a friend, family member or paid professional can accompany you and say things on your behalf. We can give you advice about local organisations which offer advocacy services to help you stay involved and in control.

At the end of the process we want to hear from you whether we have met your expectations and how we could improve, to keep you involved and part of the process.