

Contacts

Adult Services

LCC Social Care 0300 123 6721 (8am – 8pm)

Out of Hours / Emergency Team 0300 123 6722

Children's Services

LCC Social Care 0300 123 6721 (8am – 8pm)

Out of Hours / Emergency Duty Team 0300 123 6722

NSPCC 24-hour help line Tel No: 0808 800 5000

Police

In an emergency 999

In a Non-emergency 101

Am I okay to Ask Questions?

Not everyone is comfortable in asking others if they are ok, or they would like any help. What we do know is that often those who do need help, do want to be asked and claim that they never disclosed the harm because no one ever asked them.

If you suspect that a child or vulnerable adult may be suffering from harm, then in order to clarify whether there is a safeguarding concern, you should try to give them an opportunity to talk.

It is fine to ask whether the person is all right and whether you can help in any way and would you like me to refer you to a support service which may be able to help? It's OK to say you are unsure what help is available, and that you will have to ask a colleague.

There are a series of simple ground-rules to follow in circumstances where a child or vulnerable adult tells an adult about possible or suspected abuse. Remember that this is about *listening* as opposed to interviewing, investigating or interrogating.

Make sure that any immediate risks are understood and taken account of insofar as that is possible i.e. that the child is safe there and then (**Where there is immediate risk the Police should be contacted** – this may occur following consultation with one of the Council's Nominated Lead Safeguarding Officers (NLSO's), depending on particular circumstances).

Reassure the person and make clear to them what you need to do now.

It is not the responsibility of Council staff, elected members or volunteers to decide whether or not abuse has taken place or if a child or vulnerable adult is at significant risk. Council staffs, elected members and volunteers, however, have a responsibility to act if they have a concern.

It's Everybody's Business

We all have the right to live free from abuse and degrading treatment.

No matter what your job is in the Council, it is your responsibility to be vigilant and report any suspected abuse.

Everyone has a duty to report any allegations or suspicions of abuse or potential abuse of a child or vulnerable adult.

It is important to note that safeguarding is a complex issue so, as well as following this Council's Safeguarding Policy and this procedure, you will need to use your skills, knowledge and judgement. If in doubt, get advice as soon as possible from the Nominated Lead Safeguarding Officer (NLSO).

The One Chance Rule

We may only have one chance to reach out to someone at risk.

You may be the only person they have contact with and the manner in which we respond is crucial and could save a life. If the victim is left without support being offered, that one chance might be wasted.

What to Look For?

Signs of Abuse / Neglect

Many children and vulnerable adults at risk may draw attention to physical signs or exhibit behaviour to indicate abuse or ill treatment and we should be ever vigilant to pick up these signs and act appropriately.

There are many signs of physical abuse and psychological abuse and below are a list of indicators that you as a Council employee may see that should alert you to the possibility of abuse and neglect.

Physical signs can include any signs of physical injury or neglect: bruising, scald marks, burn marks, open wounds, bleeding, poor personal hygiene, self – harm, pressure sores.

General signs can include: A home in a filthy condition, lack of heating, too few clothes or blankets, lack of food or unexplained financial problems. Does the person always have the things they need such as glasses, hearing aids, walking stick, and mobility aid within easy reach? Please also consider isolation, loneliness, not managing household administration / upkeep etc.

A change in his or her general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unexpectedly aggressive. Such changes can be sudden or gradual.

He or she appears distrustful of a particular adult, or a parent/carer/guardian or a coach with whom you would expect there to be a close relationship.

He or she may describe receiving attention from an adult that suggests they are being 'groomed' for future abuse.

A full list of signs of abuse or neglect can be found in the Councils Safeguarding Policy.

These indicators do not prove that there is actual abuse occurring. However, they do indicate that a closer look is needed and possible discussion with the Nominated Lead Safeguarding Officer (NLSO) or your line manager.

What if No-one is Listening to Me?

If you report a concern about a persons' welfare and no one listens or is doing anything you should tell someone else! You may choose to:

- Report the matter to another senior officer / manager immediately.
- Implement the Council's whistle-blowing procedure.
- Remember, doing nothing is not an option and the welfare of a person must always be your paramount consideration!

Should I Call the Police?

Your first duty is to protect the child or vulnerable adult at risk.

If you feel that a crime has been committed or a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of immediate harm you can report your concerns directly to the police first.

In an emergency:

- Wherever possible, establish with the person what the action they want you to take is.
- If there is need for emergency medical treatment, call for an ambulance (if you suspect that the injury is non-accidental, alert the ambulance staff so that appropriate measures are taken to preserve possible forensic evidence).

Remember, if you believe a child or vulnerable adult to be in immediate danger you should contact the Police, then inform the Nominated Lead Safeguarding Officer (NLSO).

Can You Ever Promise Not to Tell?

No. If anybody discloses to you that someone has harmed them, you must tell them that you take seriously what they have just told you and the person must be made aware that the information will need to be shared with a Safeguarding Officer. They must be made aware that information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. For adults, obtain consent.

If you are considering referring a vulnerable adult on to other services who may be able to help it is important to ask for their consent to share information about them with other services, where it is safe to do so, or in an emergency situation with regard to informing the police.

If you are considering referring a child, parents should be informed prior to a referral being made unless this would increase risk of harm or might impede an investigation.

All matters relating to safeguarding are confidential – however, confidentiality must not be confused with secrecy. Where doubt remains about child abuse / protection a referral should always be made. Check the enclosed taking action flow chart for internal procedures.

If in doubt, contact the Nominated Lead Safeguarding Officer (NLSO) for advice.

What Can You Expect to Happen Next?

When you tell the Safeguarding Officer they will:

- Take your concerns seriously.
- Work to ensure that the child or vulnerable adult is safe.
- Make an appropriate referral, using the enclosed taking action flow chart for guidance, for an appropriate risk assessment and response.
- Involve the police immediately if a crime is suspected.

Whilst you may not learn the eventual outcome of the report your concerns will be referred through to the most appropriate agency to take action.

Is Consent Required?

Consent is a significant factor in deciding what action to take in response to a concern. Safeguarding adults is different from safeguarding children as adults have the right to make choices. Referrals can be made without consent in special circumstances, but you need to speak to the NLSO to discuss the circumstances.

Parents of children should be informed prior to a referral being made unless this would increase risk of harm or might impede an investigation.

However, if you believe a child or vulnerable adult to be in immediate danger you should contact the Police, then inform a Nominated Lead Safeguarding Officer (NLSO).

How Should You Respond if Somebody Reports Abuse?

If a child or vulnerable adult discloses to you that someone has harmed them, you must tell them that you take it seriously.

For vulnerable adults, you can offer to make contact with someone they trust or speak to the appropriate authorities themselves such as Police or Adult Safeguarding Services.

If they choose not to report it to appropriate authorities and you believe that they may be at immediate risk of harm you can contact the police yourself, as your duty is to protect the vulnerable adult.

Reassure the child or vulnerable adult but do not make promises of secrecy or confidentiality, as these may not be feasible as a result of subsequent developments

Make a full written record of what had been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible, ensuring that you use the exact words of the speaker.

ACT NOW - DO NOT DELAY. Pass the referral to a Nominated Lead Safeguarding Officer (NLSO) immediately in person.

Although you should show empathy, you must not display shock or disbelief – instead, you must remain calm and listen carefully. If someone chooses to disclose abuse to

Who are the Council's Safeguarding Officers?

The Council's Nominated Lead Safeguarding Officers are:

Lol Aitchison	01695 585188
Emma Davies	01695 585145
Kay Lovelady	01695 585075
Paul Waring	01695 585127
Michelle Williams	01695 585449

The Council's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officers are:

Paul Charlson	01695 585246
Sharon Lewis	01695 585027
Cliff Owens	01695 585394

The Council's Designated Safeguarding Officer is:

Simon Burnett	01695 585157
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WLBC Taking Action Flow Chart

I'm worried about a child / vulnerable adult

Is the child / vulnerable adult in immediate danger?

'No' – Lower Level Concern

'Yes' - Serious Concern

Emergency or Immediate risk to life or limb - Contact Police 999

For Adults – Get Consent or inform them of your intention to share if you override consent

For Adult – Get Consent, refer to Adult Social Care and log observations on 'Incident Report Form' (Safeguarding Policy, Appendix A). If help refused, log and discuss with Line manager or Nominated Lead Safeguarding Officer (NLSO)

For Child, Discuss with Line Manager or Nominated Lead Safeguarding Officer (NLSO)

NEXT STEP

Inform Nominated Lead Safeguarding Officer (NLSO)

Lol Aitchison 01695 585181 Paul Waring 01695 585127
 Emma Davies 01695 585145 Michelle Williams 0169585449
 Kay Lovelady 01695 585075

For Child - Forward completed 'Incident Reporting Form' (Appendix A) to NLSO within 24 hrs max

For Adult – Get Consent or inform them of your intention to share, if you override consent and log all observations

For Children - Inform parents prior to referral being made unless this would increase risk of harm or might impede an investigation.
 For Adults - Ask them if they want help and get consent.

Contact Adult & Children's Social Care
 Tel: 0300 123 6721

WLBC Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or Deputy DSO Follows up and Feeds-back to Employee as Appropriate

'Incident Report Form' record (for Child) retained centrally & securely including any advice sought, action taken / decisions & rationale.

Remember – Keep Clear and Accurate Notes

WLBC Safeguarding Procedure

What is this Procedure About?

West Lancashire Borough Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and to delivering services that promote good practice and expects all Council representatives, colleagues and partners to share this commitment.

All children and vulnerable adults have the right to be safe in the services provided for them and the activities they choose to participate in and the Council is committed to fostering a safeguarding culture across the organisation.

This procedure has been developed to support the Council's Safeguarding Policy which provides guidance on best practice in dealing with children and vulnerable adult's safeguarding procedures and specifies the roles and responsibilities of the Council's representatives for whom this policy is mandatory.

What are Your Responsibilities?

Your role is not to investigate the abuse or to decide if abuse has taken place; that is the role of Lancashire County Council Social Services, the Police or other relevant agency. If the child or vulnerable adult is immediately at risk, contact the police.

If you have information which raises concerns about harm or potential harm you should refer to the taking action flow chart enclosed in this procedure and a referral should be made immediately to the Council's Nominated Lead Safeguarding Officer (NLSO).

Please speak to your manager or the NLSO around worries or what appear to be 'less serious' welfare concerns i.e. where you have a concern or gut feeling about something.

No individual should alert or confront the alleged abuser. We need to be mindful of our own safety, the safety of other staff, the safety of others and the safety of the child or vulnerable adult at risk.

What is Abuse?

Abuse comes in many forms with examples listed below but it is important to understand that it does not matter if the person intended harm or not but rather on whether harm or risk of harm occurs. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts; it can affect one person or more; and it can be carried out by anyone, including family members, friends, professionals, volunteers and strangers. Abuse can vary, from treating someone with disrespect in a way that significantly affects the person's quality of life, to causing actual physical or mental suffering.

Abuse can be defined as 'a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other persons.' The types of abuse outlined below are not exhaustive and should not be seen as a limit to what constitutes abuse and neglect:

Physical Abuse. Such as: hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions. Physical abuse signs can include injuries that cannot be explained in the context of the person's lifestyle, multiple injuries including bruises, welts, cuts and burns, and the presence of old and new injuries.

Modern Slavery. This term includes: slavery, human trafficking, forced labour or domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Sexual Abuse. Such as: rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Neglect and Acts of Omission. Includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, withholding medication, adequate nutrition and heating. **Self-neglect** occurs where the extent of the behaviour endangers their own health, safety or wellbeing.

Psychological Abuse. Such as: emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Although emotional abuse does not leave physical marks it can be extremely damaging to the victim.

Radicalisation. The action or process of causing someone to adopt radical positions on political or social issues.

Financial or Material Abuse. Such as: theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE). This occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual.

Domestic Violence. Is a safeguarding issue if it applies to adults with care or support needs who therefore may be unable to protect themselves. It can include an incident or incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality. It can include: psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence: female genital mutilation; forced marriage.

Discrimination. Includes racism, sexism or acts based on a person's disability, age or sexual orientation or religion. It also includes other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment such as disability Hate Crime.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). This is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.