

RAISING A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN | FAQs

Q: What happens when I ring 0344 800 8020? if I have a safeguarding concern about an adult?

A: This telephone number puts you through to Norfolk County Council's (NCC) Customer Services. **Tell the call handler you wish to raise a 'safeguarding adult concern' – use these words.**

If the person you are concerned about has an **active** social care worker, the call handler will put you straight through to them, or their duty team. In all other cases you will be put through to the Social Care Community of Engagement (SCCE) team.

The relevant team member will record the details of your concern, but at this stage it is not necessarily a 'referral'. Please use this referral checklist to make sure you give as much information as possible [Click here for the Raising a Safeguarding Adult Concern Checklist \(JUNE 2019\)](#).

The team member will discuss your concern with their manager, or a *Safeguarding Adult Practice Consultant (SAPC)* to determine if it meets the criteria for a safeguarding enquiry (Section 42). SAPCs will always be consulted within working hours if it appears that abuse / harm has occurred.

Some safeguarding concerns are actually about risks in a situation, which may not be abusive, but rather a result of choices made by individuals, or complicated relationships. Other concerns may be about the quality of a service being provided.

If your concern meets the criteria for a s42 enquiry NCC will inform you as soon as possible. **NB: depending on your relationship to the situation / individual, you may not get direct feedback on the outcome of the safeguarding enquiry.**

Q: When I ring 0344 800 8020 to report a safeguarding adult concern am I speaking to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)?

A: No. When you call 0344 800 8020 this is the main number for Norfolk County Council (NCC) the call will be answered by a Customer Service agent first. They will find out what your call is about. **TIP: tell the call handler you wish to raise a 'safeguarding adult concern' – use these words.**

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Q: I am worried raising a safeguarding concern about my service, will it reflect badly on the care we provide?

A: On the contrary, by ringing in a safeguarding concern within your service you are demonstrating good and transparent practice and protecting those who use your service. It is more harmful to your service's reputation not to report.

Q: What do I do next?

A: Once you have confirmation that a safeguarding enquiry has been raised, there may be a slight delay while Adult Social Care discuss your enquiry with police colleagues. If the police decide to investigate this should happen before anyone else does any other enquiry. In the meantime, make sure the person you are concerned about, or anyone else at risk, is as safe as possible. The Adult Social Care worker will inform you of the next steps asap, where appropriate.

Q: What can I do if my concern isn't accepted as I am still worried about the person?

A: If the situation continues to cause you concern, the risk remains or increases, please call again and ask for the concern to be reviewed. It is helpful if you can provide as much detail and additional information as possible.

Q: Will I find out what has happened once I have made a referral? Will I get feedback?

A: If the concern that you bring to NCC's attention is raised as a safeguarding referral, then the team member should inform you that this is happening – *but please be aware that, depending on your relationship to the situation / individual, you may not get direct feedback on the outcome of the safeguarding enquiry.*

For example, if the person you have called about has mental capacity (ie the ability to make decisions for themselves), they may not want the outcome shared with you.

If the concern you raised is *not* going to be a safeguarding enquiry, the team worker should inform you. This does not necessarily mean that no action at all will be taken (although sometimes this might be the case) and they should advise you about what will happen next.

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If you haven't received feedback on a concern you have raised, please call back to check, but please be aware that NCC's information sharing policy may limit what you can be told.

If you are a health professional (for example a nurse or therapist working in an area where there are numerous professionals responding to calls and queries), please check with colleagues or make local arrangements for sharing feedback on safeguarding referrals. Feedback may be recorded, for example, in ward notes. NCC relies on the person who receives the feedback to share it with those colleagues who need to know the outcome.

Q: What if the person who is being abused will not consent to a concern being raised?

A: Individuals may not give their consent to the sharing of safeguarding information for a number of reasons. For example, they may be frightened of reprisals, they may fear losing control, they may not trust social services or other partners or they may fear that their relationship with the abuser will be damaged.

Reassurance and appropriate support along with gentle persuasion may help to change their view on whether it is best to share information.

If a person refuses help or requests that information about them is not shared with other safeguarding partners, you should respect their wishes. However, there are a number of circumstances where you can reasonably override their wishes for example:

- the person lacks the mental capacity to make that decision – this must be properly explored and recorded in line with the Mental Capacity Act
- other people are, or may be, at risk, including children
- sharing the information could prevent a crime
- the alleged abuser has care and support needs and may also be at risk
- a serious crime has been committed
- staff are implicated
- the person has the mental capacity to make that decision but they may be under duress or being coerced
- the risk is unreasonably high and meets the criteria for a [Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference \(MARAC\) referral](#)

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- a court order or other legal authority has requested the information.

If none of the above apply and the decision is not to share safeguarding information with other safeguarding partners, or not to intervene to safeguard the person you must still work to:

- support the person to weigh up the risks and benefits of different options
- ensure they are aware of the level of risk and possible outcomes
- offer to arrange for them to have an advocate or peer supporter
- offer support for them to build confidence and self-esteem if necessary
- agree on and record the level of risk the person is taking
- record the reasons for not intervening or sharing information
- regularly review the situation
- try to build trust and use gentle persuasion to enable the person to better protect themselves.

As long as it does not increase the risk to the individual, always tell the person of your concerns. Explain why you are worried and that there are services to support them in stopping the abuse and harm from happening. If they still do not want their information to be shared, explain that it is your responsibility to share safeguarding concerns in line with your organisation's policy, usually with your line manager or safeguarding lead in the first instance, except in emergency situations.

If you have a safeguarding concern about someone who is using your service you should *always* tell your manager.

Your manager will decide whether to share this information with external agencies, including the police and local authority.

If it is necessary to share information outside the organisation:

- explore the reasons for the person's objections – what are they worried about?
- explain the concern and why you think it is important to share the information

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- tell the person who you would like to share the information with and why
- explain the benefits, to them or others, of sharing information – could they access better help and support?
- discuss the consequences of not sharing the information – could someone come to harm?
- reassure them that the information will not be shared with anyone who does not need to know
- reassure them that they are not alone and that support is available to them.

If you cannot persuade the person to give their consent, then, unless you consider it dangerous to do so, explain to them that the information will be shared without their consent and your reasons and record them. The safeguarding principle of proportionality should underpin decisions about sharing information without consent, and decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis.

If it is not clear that information should be shared outside the organisation, discuss it with safeguarding partners in the police or local authority without disclosing the identity of the person in the first instance. They can then advise on whether full disclosure is necessary without the consent of the person concerned.

It is very important that you consider the risk of sharing information. In some cases, such as *domestic violence* or *hate crime*, it is possible that sharing information could increase the risk to the individual. Safeguarding partners need to work jointly to provide advice, support and protection to the individual in order to minimise the risk of worsening the relationship or triggering retribution from the abuser.

Q: Can I remain anonymous?

A: Anyone bringing a concern to Adult Social Care (ASC) at Norfolk County Council (NCC) can ask for their details to be kept confidential or choose not to share those details with NCC in the first place. However, anonymity can sometimes make it difficult for the safeguarding team to progress the enquiry, particularly if your information is quite generalised.

If the concern that you share is serious, NCC will need to explore it with the individual or service involved. It is possible that you may be identified as the source as a result. Also if you haven't given your name a worker from Adult Social Care will not be able to give you feedback because they have no means of contacting you.

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Q: Who can raise a concern?

A: Anyone can raise a concern about an adult at risk of abuse or harm, whether you are a professional or member of the public.

Q: I think someone is not looking after themselves properly – is this safeguarding?

A: Self-neglect is now a category of abuse in the Care Act guidance, but it will rarely require an enquiry under s42. However, a number of agencies may need to consider any risks to the individual and possible support to be given. The approach to do this is by using the safeguarding boards [Self-neglect and Hoarding strategy](#).

Self-neglect is quite a subjective term and can occur in a range of situations. People may be acutely unwell or have experienced specific difficulties or losses; things that are usual to them may not be usual to someone else, but that may not make it wrong. Where there are environmental or concerns about the person's health / wellbeing, we would not necessarily consider this a safeguarding issue – we would expect that all possible steps are taken to work with that person to properly identify what risks there may be, how the person feels about those risks, and what support may be available. This should involve all appropriate agencies (social care, health, housing, fire service, local community etc).

In situations where, despite a multi-agency / long-term approach, the risks to the person remain and indicate a high risk of harm, a referral may be made and a s42 enquiry raised. NB: this does not give any additional powers to the agencies involved but provides a further forum in which to review the risks and take actions if necessary.

Q: As a professional do I need to inform the Care Quality Commission (CQC) that I have raised a safeguarding concern (providers)?

A: CQC will expect you as a service provider to tell them when you raised a concern with NCC, once we have confirmed that it will be raised as a s42 enquiry.

Make sure you check with the person you speak to at NCC so you are clear if the issue will be taken forward under safeguarding.

END.