

## How to manage **Unsatisfactory/Adverse Hospital Discharge** and when to consider raising a **Safeguarding Concern**

### 1) Hospital Discharge

For the purposes of this document, 'discharge' is the term used when a person leaves hospital after a period as an in-patient or following a visit to an accident and emergency department. A key aim of effective discharge planning is to reduce hospital length of stay and unplanned readmission and to improve the coordination of services following hospital discharge.

When concerns are identified around discharge arrangements, the following guidance can be used to support decision-making and determine whether a safeguarding concern should be raised.

The guiding principle is to consider whether an individual with care and support needs has been placed at risk of, or has come to, harm because of unsatisfactory and/or adverse discharge arrangements. The harm may include care not provided resulting in deterioration of health or confidence, and avoidable readmission to hospital, or admission to a residential/nursing care setting as unable to cope at home.

### 2) Unsatisfactory/Adverse Discharge may present as the following:

- Lack of engagement of the individual in discharge planning
- Lack of involvement and engagement of relevant others (i.e., professionals, care providers, family, and friends),
- Lack of recognition of complex care and support needs
- Failure to consider and apply MCA and appropriate Best Interests
- Poor quality of discharge planning, including appropriate referrals
- Poor sharing of information (including failure to provide appropriate documentation)
- Failure to respond to identified concerns
- Failure to supply the correct prescription and medication

### 3) Responsibilities of Regulated Care Providers

Whenever there are concerns identified around a discharge, in the first instance, it is the responsibility of the Care Provider to:

- Identify the nature of the concern
- Ensure the immediate safety of the individual, involving relevant professionals
- Refer to their organisation's safeguarding policy
- Contact the ward/department of the organisation responsible for the discharge as per details provided on discharge paperwork (or contact the main switchboard for the relevant hospital) to inform of the concern\*
- Seek a prompt and safe resolution with the hospital ward/department, where this is possible
- Keep the individual and family, if appropriate, informed of the concern and the actions being taken
- To document the concern and action taken in individual's record/care plan

\*Local hospital and local authority contact details are included on page 3 of this document.

The CQC, as part of the inspection process, will require documented evidence to confirm that all concerns have been addressed appropriately, with necessary actions having been undertaken.

## **Raising a Safeguarding Concern following an Unsafe and/or Unsatisfactory Hospital Discharge**

“Safeguarding means protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult’s well-being is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings, and beliefs in deciding on any action.” (Care Act 2014 statutory guidance Chapter 14 para 7)

This means that agencies have a legal responsibility to raise safeguarding concerns where there is **a suspicion that abuse** of an adult with care and support needs has occurred which may be as **a result of neglect or omission of care**.

### **1) Raising a safeguarding concern regarding unsafe and/or unsatisfactory hospital discharge**

The regulated care provider must consider whether or not the concern has resulted in the individual with care and support needs having been placed at risk of harm or come to harm as a result of the discharge arrangements.

A safeguarding concern should be raised where there are concerns that:

- There has been a failure to respond to signs of neglect and/or abuse
- There has been a failure to act on evidence of omission of care
- Themes from the same discharging organisation are recurring

The list is not exhaustive - all incidents should be considered fully and in partnership with the discharging organisation in the first instance.

### **2) When a safeguarding concern does not need to be raised**

A safeguarding concern does not need to be raised if the issue is:

- an isolated incident with a reasonable explanation given regarding the circumstances
- **and** resolved in an appropriate and timely manner, to the satisfaction of the individual involved
- **and** results in the removal of the risk of harm and/or no actual harm has occurred

In these situations, the following action should be taken:

- Formally document the concern and record in the individual's record/care plan and on the organisation’s incident reporting system as an adverse discharge
- Share the details of the concern with the discharging organisation/hospital safeguarding team to reduce the risk of recurrence.

### **3) Systemic failings**

Where there are systemic failings in a hospital, ward, or department’s discharge planning process, which lead to repeated concerns from discharges, a safeguarding concern should be raised under organisational abuse.

**This document is intended as a guidance tool and should be used in conjunction with professional judgement.**

**When there is any doubt** as to whether to raise a safeguarding concern, staff should always speak to the safeguarding lead in their organisation, and if further advice is required, to the local authority safeguarding team via Norfolk County Council adult social care: 0344 8008020, or the respective hospital safeguarding duty team.

| Organisation Name                                      | Main Switchboard | Adult Safeguarding generic email address   |
|--|------------------|--|
| Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital ( <b>NNUH</b> )  | 01603 286286     | <a href="mailto:safeguardingadults.guarding@nuh.nhs.uk">safeguardingadults.guarding@nuh.nhs.uk</a> |
| Norfolk & Suffolk Foundation Trust ( <b>NSFT</b> )     | 01603 421421     | <a href="mailto:nmh-tr.nsftsafeguardingteam@nhs.uk">nmh-tr.nsftsafeguardingteam@nhs.uk</a>         |
| James Paget University Hospital ( <b>JPUH</b> )        | 01493 452452     | <a href="mailto:safeguarding@jpaget.nhs.uk">safeguarding@jpaget.nhs.uk</a>                         |
| East Coast Community Health ( <b>ECCH</b> )            | 01502 445445     | <a href="mailto:safeguarding@ecch.nhs.uk">safeguarding@ecch.nhs.uk</a>                             |
| Norfolk Community Health and Care ( <b>NCH&amp;C</b> ) | 01603 776776     | <a href="mailto:safeguardingteam@nchc.nhs.uk">safeguardingteam@nchc.nhs.uk</a>                     |
| Queen Elizabeth Hospital Kings Lynn ( <b>QEHKL</b> )   | 01553 613613     | <a href="mailto:Qehkl-tr.safeguardingteamqehkl@nhs.uk">Qehkl-tr.safeguardingteamqehkl@nhs.uk</a>   |
| Integrated Urgent Care ( <b>IC24</b> )                 | 01233 505450     | <a href="mailto:ic24.safeguarding@nhs.net">ic24.safeguarding@nhs.net</a>                           |
| East of England Ambulance Service ( <b>EEAST</b> )     | 0345 601 3733    | <a href="mailto:safeguarding@eastamb.nhs.uk">safeguarding@eastamb.nhs.uk</a>                       |

| LOCAL AUTHORITY               | Contact Number       |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Norfolk County Council</b> | <b>0344 800 8020</b> |
| <b>Suffolk County Council</b> | <b>0800 917 1109</b> |

| Integrated Care Boards (ICB)                  | Safeguarding Team Contact Details  |
|---|--|
| Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board ICB | <a href="mailto:nwicb.safeguardingadultsnorfolk@nhs.net">nwicb.safeguardingadultsnorfolk@nhs.net</a> |
| Suffolk and North East Essex ICB              | <a href="mailto:sneeicb-ies.adultsafeguarding@nhs.net">sneeicb-ies.adultsafeguarding@nhs.net</a>     |

## LINKS TO BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

### [NICE Guidance](#)

### [Age UK Factsheet 37](#)

### [Care Act 2014 – Reference to Discharge Planning](#)

### [Government guidance on hospital discharge](#)

### [Patient Advice and Liaison Service](#)

Find your nearest Patient Advice and Liaison Service, known as PALS. The service is there to ensure that the NHS listens to patients, their relatives, carers and friends, and answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible.

### [Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board \(NSAB\)](#)

Adapted with permission (by Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board and Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care Board Adult Safeguarding Team) from Lancashire Safeguarding Adults Board Guidance for Unsatisfactory/Adverse Hospital Discharges Appendix 6: When to consider raising a safeguarding concern in respect of Discharge Planning August 2019