

The 7 Essential Adult Safeguarding Questions

Where you are concerned that an adult is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect your first priority is with them, to make them safe. You should be thinking about options for supporting them and if needed, raising an adult safeguarding concern with the local authority. Raising a safeguarding concern is a possibility when you can answer 'yes' to questions one to three:

1. Does the person have care and support needs, regardless of who is meeting those needs?
2. Is the person experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect?
3. Are they unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect because of their care and support needs?

Next, explain your concerns to the person affected (unless this increases the risk to them or to others). If they cannot take part in the conversation, then you need speak to their family, friend/s or representative to ask:

4. Do they want to raise the safeguarding concern themselves? If not,
5. Do they want you to support them to raise the concern? If not,
6. Do they want you to raise the concern on their behalf?

This one is the 7th essential question:

7. Is there a public or vital interest (please consider whether the person is subject to coercion and control) that means you need to override their choice and report the concern anyway?

Public interest includes:

- risk to other adults or children
- situations where a person in a position of trust is implicated (such as staff or volunteers)
- preventing a crime from being committed or a serious crime has been committed
- the potential source of risk has care and support needs and may also be at risk
- an adult with mental capacity to make the decision is being controlled or coerced

Vital interests includes where the risk is unreasonably high and there could be serious harm to someone's life.

Further information about raising a concern without consent is available from the Social Care Institute for Excellence [here](#) and The Adult Safeguarding Process in Shropshire document [here](#).

You may need to raise the concern in the adults' best interests if they are assessed as lacking the mental capacity to make a specific decision about raising a safeguarding concern, liaise with other appropriate people in their life to make this decision.

Not Raising an Adult Safeguarding Concern?

There are some circumstances that may not require an adult safeguarding concern to be reported to Shropshire Council but may require alternative action.

Where you are *not raising* a safeguarding adults concern with the local authority, consider (not exhaustive):

- Alternative risk management actions (see sections 7 and 8 of the Working with Risk Guidance on the Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership [website](#)).
- Whether criminal or other enquiries are required (e.g., complaints, inquests, regulatory, commissioning, health and safety investigations); and take any required action.
- Advice or information, support and signposting to other agencies or professionals, in some cases this may include a referral for a Care Act Assessment or other assessments.
- Staff and volunteer training, internal audit, serious incident process, quality monitoring or policy review.
- The safeguarding principle of 'prevention' and whether there is any awareness raising or education that will support the adult's ability to protect themselves in the future. For example, increasing awareness of financial scams and how to identify them.
- Complete the [Alternative Actions Proforma](#) to record your rationale and alternative actions to raising an Adult Safeguarding Concern. The Alternative Actions Proforma is available as a word document on the Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership [website](#).

The Alternative Actions Proforma may be used to document when:

You have assessed that you do not need to raise a safeguarding concern because:

- There is **no current and ongoing level of danger** to the adult (or others) as a result of abuse or neglect and you have taken action to respond or minimise the risk in the future.
- There is a current and ongoing level of danger to the adult (or others) but the **adult has not consented** to you raising a concern and there is no public or vital interest to override their choice.

Reporting

- Shropshire First Point of Contact 0345 6789044
- Telford & Wrekin Family Connect 01952 385385 option 3

Social Work Emergency Out of Hours Teams:

- Shropshire - 0345 678 9040
- Telford & Wrekin - 01952 676500

If immediate action is needed dial 999 for the relevant Emergency Service

- Contact the Police regarding advice about preserving evidence
- Non-emergency police contacts are: 101 or general switchboard 0300 333 3000 (West Mercia)