



Safeguarding Adults at Risk

1. Introduction

The Department of Health's guidance [No Secrets](#) (2000) announced a new framework of guidelines was to be developed to prevent and respond to the abuse of vulnerable adults. This has been reviewed in recent years and the outcome of the consultation has been fed into the [Law Commission Proposals for Adult Social Care](#), which was published in May 2011. This will inform the Social Care Reform Bill, due to have its first reading in parliament in early 2012.

An adult at risk is defined as 'someone over 16 who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation'.¹

Adult Abuse is considered as 'the violation of an individual's Human and Civil Rights by any other person or persons. Further, it is any action or deliberate inaction that results in physical, sexual, emotional or financial harm and can be perpetrated by either someone known to the victim or a stranger. The abuse can be an isolated incident, or have occurred over a period of time'.²

In January 2011, the [London Multi-Agency Policy & Procedures to Safeguard Adults from Abuse](#) to safeguard adults from abuse were launched across London, to ensure a consistent approach to safeguarding adults at risk. This will:

- Improve inter-agency working;
- Avoid people falling between the gaps in services;
- Reduce duplication of work;
- Contribute to a better understanding of safeguarding across all agencies; and
- Help with the alignment of language used across agencies.

2. The Local Picture

In the past eight years, an increased awareness amongst members of the public, staff and vulnerable adults that the abuse of vulnerable adults can (and does) happen in Hounslow has resulted in a steady rise in the number of allegations made. It is believed that it is not the abuse that has increased, but rather a higher level of reporting of these incidents.

Analysis of data collected during 2010/11 ([Safeguarding Adults Annual Report](#)) highlights that:

- There were 358 cases of adult abuse reported and investigated, compared with 361 cases during 2009/10 and 350 cases during 2008/09. Figures have increased significantly from 38 cases in 2002/03 and 90 cases in 2003/04.
- There was a dramatic increase in the number of alerts (from 65 to 153) in 2009/10, which reduced slightly (to 114) in 2010/11. Alerts are defined as expressions of

¹ Law Commission (1999) 'Making Decisions'. Lord Chancellor's Department.

² London Borough of Hounslow (2007) Hounslow Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy.
<http://democraticservices.hounslow.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=42867>



concern about possible abuse where, at a very early stage of gathering information, it is evident that there is no adult abuse. Alerts were not recorded before 2008/9.

- The number of reports involving a resident with a learning disability continues to be high in proportion with the number of people with learning disabilities living in Hounslow. Possible reasons for this include a high proportion of adults with a learning disability being known to services and as a result there being more opportunity for staff to pick up indications of possible adult abuse. This is supported by the disproportionately high number of allegations of abuse reported from Day Support and other service providers.
- The number of reports being made by the vulnerable adult directly to a professional working with them has continued to increase significantly. During 2010/11, there were 69 reports of this nature.
- There has been a steady increase year-on-year in the percentage of allegations of abuse where the abuse is occurring in the vulnerable adult's own home. This is matched by a steady decrease in the number of allegations where the abuse has taken place in a Care Home or Nursing Home. We would expect this with the shift of focus on supporting people to remain living in the community and a decline in residential and nursing home placements.
- With regard to outcomes, it is worth noting that during 2010/11, most adult abuse was stopped by various interventions. In some cases, residents chose not to pursue investigation, in these cases a protection plan and monitoring are put in place.

3. Strategic Leadership and Collaboration

The Hounslow Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy was agreed in January 2011, following consultation with each of the statutory agencies and with many individuals and organisations who work with vulnerable adults in Hounslow. The Policy ensured that adult abuse continues to be reported, investigations are carried out and, most importantly, that abused adults receive appropriate care and support. Within the year, this Policy was superseded by the Pan-London Policy and Procedures, implemented in Hounslow in September 2011.

The Safeguarding of Adults at risk in Hounslow is a core function of Adult Social Care Services and its health and social care partners and aims to:

- Make sure people in Hounslow are aware of issues about the abuse of adults;
- Give priority to safeguarding people from abuse;
- Prevent people experiencing abuse in the first place;
- Recognise and act appropriately when there are allegations of abuse and support the person who has experienced abuse; and
- Learn lessons and develop excellent practice.

3.1 *The Hounslow Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Board*

The Hounslow Safeguarding Adults Board is a multi-agency partnership board with the responsibility for promoting, directing, informing and supporting work to safeguard adults at risk in Hounslow. The Board aims to ensure that safeguarding adults in Hounslow is everyone's business.

The Board has representatives from a wide range of local partners, including NHS Hounslow; Hounslow Community Safety Partnership; West Middlesex University Hospital; West London



NHS Mental Health Trust; Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare; Children's Services and Lifelong Learning; Housing Strategy and Services; Community and Voluntary Services; the Care Quality Commission; Adult Social Care Commissioning; the Local Involvement Network; the Metropolitan Police and the Hounslow Safeguarding Adults Team.

4. Priorities

The key areas of emphasis in Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults in 2011/12 in the Borough of Hounslow are:

- Train a further 1300 people across the Borough in safeguarding adults, in order to continue to protect vulnerable adults at risk of violence, abuse and neglect;
- Produce quarterly Safeguarding Adults in Hounslow newsletters (available on the internet) for wide circulation to staff and volunteers working with adults at risk within the Borough;
- Work with Safeguarding Adults Board partners, Local Government Improvement and Development and other boroughs to develop effective ways of making sure that user experience is taken into account in the development of safeguarding adults policies and procedures;
- Increase by eight the number of Best Interest Assessors available to deliver Local Authority and Primary Care Trust responsibilities with regard to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS);
- Monitor progress, ensure prompts for timely reviews and monitor performance of DoLS; and
- Add Mental Capacity Act (MCA)/DoLS Information to Hounslow Council's website.

5. Summary of Need

The table summarising the needs in this area has not been completed as it is not considered applicable to Safeguarding Adults at Risk.