

Safeguarding Adults Policy – SO-0194

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1. Purpose

To ensure systems are in place that promote the welfare of the people we support, protecting them from abuse, and that an appropriate and timely response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse. To enable all members of staff and volunteers to be effective in upholding the rights and entitlements of all individuals and to prevent, detect and report all instances of abuse, including neglect, maltreatment, mate and hate crimes or inappropriate treatment wherever possible.

This policy provides an overarching view of safeguarding adults and is part of a suite of safeguarding policies, and as such, must be read in conjunction with the following NAS Policies:

- Overarching Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- NAS E-Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Conduct Management Policy

In addition, all services must produce a protocol of Adult Safeguarding Procedures in line with the procedures outlined by the Local Safeguarding Adults Board or the relevant Local Authority or Statutory Body.

The Service will ensure that, wherever practicable, all people supported by the service and where appropriate parents and carers, have access to the NAS Adult Safeguarding procedures in a format that they can understand.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all NAS Adult Services across all Nations.

Safeguarding Adults (Concise Statement)

THIS POLICY SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH (as applicable):

- **England – THE CARE ACT 2014**
- **Wales -the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014.**
- **Scotland - “ADULT SUPPORT & PROTECTION ACT 2007”**
- **Northern Ireland - Adult Safeguarding: Prevention to Protection in Partnership Policy (DHSSPS 2015)**

AND WITH

- **RELEVANT LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL SERVICES SAFEGUARDING POLICIES / RELEVANT PROCEDURES OUTLINED BY THE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARDS / LOCAL AUTHORITIES / HEALTH TRUSTS**

3. Concise Statement

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It is the duty of all staff and volunteers to promote the interests of the people we support.

Our staff and volunteers are reminded of the over-riding duty of care to safeguard the physical, emotional and social well-being of individuals in our care.

If staff or a volunteer observes or are made aware of any instance where abuse may have occurred they have a professional responsibility to bring this to the immediate attention of their manager or appropriate senior staff as set out in local procedure. Following this, the facts will be investigated in line with the appropriate procedures, and any matter which continues to raise concerns or is likely to be detrimental to the interests of the people we support or appears to breach an individual's rights will result in a suitable plan of action to stop this from continuing to happen.

In all cases of abuse, NAS will ensure that the appropriate authorities are notified (for Northern Ireland – within 24 hours to RQIA), this may include contact with the police to determine if a criminal offence has been committed. This is why all safeguarding matters will be reported to a number of external agencies up to a maximum of 72 hours (to allow for weekends), including:

- The Police (Public Protection Team/Appropriate Adult) where applicable.
- The Lead Manager of the Adult Protection team within the Local Authority that the service is located (Local Safeguarding team)
- Care Quality Commission (England)
- Care Inspectorate (Wales)
- Care Inspectorate (Scotland)
- Mental Welfare Commission (Scotland)
- SSSC (who in turn will notify the appropriate Scottish Minister)
- Social Worker/Care Manager - Northern Ireland
- Designated Adult Protection Officer (DAPO) of the specific HSC Trust - NI

All Services must have an up to date copy of their local multi-agency guidelines on the safeguarding of adults, and these must be followed.

4. Six Key Principles:

There are six recognised key safeguarding principles:

1. Empowerment: a presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent.
2. Protection: support and representation for those in greatest need.
3. Prevention: it is better to take action before harm occurs.
4. Proportionality: a proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
5. Partnership: local solutions achieved via services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
6. Accountability: accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

The key principles from the perspective of the adult at risk:

- **Empowerment:** I am consulted about the outcomes I want from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.
- **Protection:** I am provided with help and support to report abuse. I am supported to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want to do so and to which I am able.
- **Prevention:** I am provided with easily understood information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.
- **Proportionality:** I am confident that the responses to risk will take into account my preferred outcomes or best interests.

Partnership: I am confident that information will be appropriately shared in a way that takes into account its personal and sensitive nature. I am confident that agencies will work together to find the most effective responses for my own situation.

- **Accountability:** I am clear about the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the solution to the problem.

What these principles mean for the NAS:

Empowerment: we give individuals relevant information about recognising abuse and the choices available to them to ensure their safety. We give them clear information about how to report abuse and crime, and any necessary support in doing so. We consult them before we take any action. Where someone lacks capacity to make a decision, we always act in his or her best interests.

Protection: our local reporting arrangements for abuse and suspected criminal offences, along with our risk assessments, work effectively. Our governance arrangements are open and transparent and communicated to the people we support.

Prevention: we can effectively identify and appropriately respond to signs of abuse and suspected criminal offences. We make staff aware, through provision of appropriate training and guidance, of how to recognise signs and take any appropriate action to prevent abuse from occurring.

Proportionality: we discuss with the individual and where appropriate with partner agencies the proportionality of possible responses to the risk of significant harm before we take a decision. Our arrangements support the use of professional judgement and the management of risk.

Partnership: we have effective local information-sharing and multi-agency partnership arrangements in place and staff understand these. We foster a 'one team' approach that places the welfare of individuals above organisational boundaries.

Accountability: the roles of all agencies are clear, together with the lines of accountability. Staff understand what is expected of them and others. The NAS recognises its responsibilities, acts upon them and accepts collective responsibility for safeguarding arrangements.

5. The Procedures to be undertaken by the National Autistic Society with regards to Safeguarding Adults

The NAS will adhere to the following procedures in relation to adult protection, these are outlined in detail in the policy.

- We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Adult's Board (LSAB) / Local Adult's Social Services / Designated Adult Protection Officer (DAPO) of the specific HSC Trust in the area in which the service is located and take account of guidance issued by the appropriate government department or regulatory body.
- Ensure we have an organisational nominated lead responsible for safeguarding adults; Nominated Individual and Safeguarding Lead
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and agency staff and volunteers) and the Board of Trustees knows the name of the appropriate manager in their service or the contact details of the Nominated Individual and Safeguarding Lead and understands their role in safeguarding.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and maintain an attitude of "it could happen here";
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibility for referring any concerns to the appropriate manager or Nominated Individual and Safeguarding Lead and are aware that they may raise concerns directly with Adult's Social Care Services if they believe their concerns have not been listened to or acted upon.
- Ensure that those who use our services and or their carers / advocates, (where appropriate) have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the service and staff for safeguarding by setting out its obligations in the service welcome pack or user guide and publish the policy on the NAS website;
- Operate a vetting policy which ensures the suitability of staff working with vulnerable adults at all times.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including attendance at strategy meetings, initial case conference, core groups and review meetings;
- Ensure that the duty of care towards the people supported by the NAS and staff is promoted by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour and assist staff to monitor their own standards and practice;
- Keep written records of concerns about adults we support, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately;
- Ensure any Safeguarding data is sent in line with The General Data Protection Regulations and any documents sent externally are password protected.
- Ensure all safeguarding records are kept securely, separate from the main file, and in locked locations;
- Ensure that all safeguarding files are transferred in a safe and timely manner when an adult moves or changes service.

- Be aware of and follow procedures set out by Adult Social Services and the LSAB where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, including making a referral to the DBS / PVG / Access NI if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have been had they not resigned. Such referrals will always be given priority and will be done promptly and made within at least one month of the person leaving our employment.
- Ensure that the appropriate training in Safeguarding is provided to the Board of Trustees and appropriate members of staff across all our services
Ensure a review of the adult safeguarding policies and procedures is undertaken and monitor the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged in accordance with current legislation. An annual safeguarding report will be produced for the Board of Trustees by the Nominated Individual and Safeguarding Lead.
- Our procedures will be reviewed and updated regularly and at least annually.

6. Safeguarding and Mental Capacity:

The NAS adheres to the statutory requirements outlined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 in England and Wales, Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 and the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000.

If someone makes a decision that you, or others, think is unwise or not in their interests, this does not necessarily mean that they lack the capacity to decide. It is inevitable that there will be times when an adult who has capacity decides to accept a situation that may be perceived as potentially abusive or neglectful. This is a decision that they are free to make, unless:

- other people are being put at risk (for example, letting friends who are abusive or exploitative into a shared living environment, where they may put other residents at risk)
- a child is involved
- the alleged perpetrator has care and support needs and may also be at risk
- a serious crime has been committed
- staff are implicated • coercion is involved.

In regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and The General Data Protection Regulations 2018, please note these do not supersede safeguarding concerns, therefore you are able to share concerns about a safeguarding matter within the service or externally. You won't need the individual's consent to share the information in most circumstances.

However, if the only person with capacity who would suffer if the information is not shared is the subject of that information, and they have mental capacity to make a decision about it, then sharing it may not be justified. In such a situation, discussion

- must be held with the manager of the service or the Safeguarding Lead and there is a need to make sure that the person is aware of any risks and the potential impact on their safety and wellbeing, and encourage them to develop strategies to protect themselves. This might involve them becoming involved with a user-led organisation or a support group, for example.

If you believe that a person with capacity is acting in a way that is a risk only to their own safety or wellbeing, and they are not being unduly influenced by anyone else, then you may decide not to intervene and not to share safeguarding information with other partners. A decision not to intervene must be discussed with the appropriate manager or NAS Safeguarding Lead. If a decision not to intervene is made, then the following steps must be taken:

- support the person to weigh up the risks and benefits of different options
- make sure that they are aware of the level of risk and possible outcomes,
- agree on the level of risk they are taking
- offer to arrange an advocate or peer supporter for them, if they would like this
- offer support for them to build their confidence and self-esteem, if it appears relevant
- record your reasons for not intervening or sharing information, including every detail of your assessment of the person's capacity and of your conversations with them about the potential risks posed by their chosen action
- review the situation regularly
- make sure that they understand where they can go if they want to seek help in the future
- try to build trust and use your professional skills and the relationship you have with the person to make it possible for them to better protect themselves, encouraging them to continue the conversation with other people who they trust, such as family members, friends and other professionals.

It may be necessary to share information about the person with capacity outside your organisation without their consent, if other people's safety is potentially at risk. If this is the case, discussion with the appropriate manager or NAS safeguarding lead must be held as to sharing the information.

If information needs to be shared without consent, if as long as it does not increase the risk to the person, they should be informed that you will share their information, and why. You should also:

- explore the reasons for their objections and find out what their concerns are
- explain why you are concerned about them and why you think it is important to share the information
- tell them who you would like to share it with and why
- explain what the benefits may be to the person of sharing information about them

- discuss the potential consequences of not sharing the information
- reassure them that their information will not be shared with anyone who does not need to know

Please note that in line with the Adults with Incapacity Act (Scotland) 2000, all staff supporting an individual in NAS Scotland services must have records detailing an individual's welfare guardian, where this is relevant, and are required to liaise with the welfare guardian appropriately in relation to an individual's care delivery.

7. Staff and Volunteers' Roles and responsibilities

All NAS Staff and Volunteers

To follow this policy and ask questions if not sure about any aspect of this policy.

- To be aware that abuse does happen; to always remain alert to the possibility of abuse and ready to act upon information that you receive or signs of abuse you see or hear about.
- To be aware of the early warning signs of potential abuse situations and the possible signs of abuse.
- To notify a Manager or Area Manager or Nominated Individual and Safeguarding Lead if there is any reason to suspect that someone has been or may be the subject of abuse.
- To maintain a professional confidential approach in line with NAS Equal Opportunities Policy when dealing with the person supported and any other person who may be involved.
- To ensure good communication of observations are made in writing.
- To actively teach those we support about how to keep themselves safe (including online) through practical teaching and learning opportunities.
- To challenge any practice that does not fit with NAS Values.

Directors responsibilities

- Ratify this policy annually to ensure it conforms to relevant law and guidance
- The Director of Adult Services has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient and appropriate measures in place to safeguard the people supported in Adult Services
- Ensure that resources are available to ensure that staff have skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep those we support safe.
- To act on any trends / themes or significant occurrences that are identified.

NAS Nominated Individual and Safeguarding Lead

- To take leadership responsibility for the Charity's safeguarding arrangements and report to the relevant subcommittee of the Board of Trustees and the Independent Safeguarding Committee

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- To promote a culture of listening to those we support and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services
- To ensure there are clear whistleblowing procedures and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of those we support to be addressed
- To ensure there are clear escalation policies for staff to follow when safeguarding concerns are not being addressed within their service or by other agencies
- To ensure safer recruitment practices and ongoing safe working practices are followed by adult services
- To create a culture of safety, equality and protection within services

Area Manager's responsibilities

- Ensure all relevant staff are aware of this policy, receive appropriate training are aware of the services' local procedures to support safeguarding and follow this policy and procedures
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed
- Ensure effective reporting to both the Director of Adult Services and Nominated Individual and Safeguarding Lead as and when required.
- To ensure appropriate duty of care to employees and minimise the stress inherent in the investigation process.
- To ensure that Service Managers are equipped with the appropriate skills to support and manage safeguarding procedures in their service.

Safeguarding and Concerns Manager Responsibilities:

- Will liaise with services and assist staff with their safeguarding duties
- Ensuring that where concerns are raised that they have been (where relevant):
 - referred cases of suspected abuse to the local authority / Trust safeguarding teams
 - raised with the funding authority
 - concerns have been reported to the regulatory authority where appropriate
 - reported where a crime may have been committed to the police.
 - That capacity has been considered
 - That a protection plan has been developed
 - report incidences where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to the DBS
- Liaising with the Area Manager to inform them of issues, especially ongoing safeguarding enquiries.
- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies. • Bulk report to the Charity Commission
- Produce data and reports for SMG, SQDC and the Independent Safeguarding Committee
- Liaise with other teams to ensure that there is a comprehensive oversight of safeguarding concerns, complaints and issues with quality of service

The Registered / Service Manager Responsibilities

- To ensure all safeguarding concerns are reported in line with legislation policy and procedure.
- To build a strong safeguarding culture in the home / service where those supported are listened to, respected and involved in both the development of the home / service and decisions about the home / service.
- Ensure that day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each person safe and to protect each person effectively from harm
- Ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each person and the arrangements in place to protect them, based on the individual person's needs, and recognise that adults we support are able to take a particular risk or follow a particular course of action where this is in their best interest
- To ensure that all decisions are made with a person in line with their capacity.
- Help each person we support to understand how to keep safe
- Ensure that staff have the training and skills to identify and act upon signs that an individual is at risk of harm. Ensure that staff skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed and recorded in the workforce plan.
- Manage relationships between those we support to prevent them from harming each other.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns for a person we support, a protection plan is agreed and is followed

Adult Services Staff Responsibilities

- All staff are responsible for providing a safe environment in which those we support can learn / live
- To read and understand safeguarding policies and procedures and how to identify and report abuse
- To ensure that training is up to date in adult safeguarding
- Members of staff are not responsible for investigating concerns or suspicions.
- To read and follow this policy and ask questions if not sure about any aspect of this policy.
- To be aware that abuse does happen; to always remain alert to the possibility of abuse and ready to act upon information that you receive or signs of abuse you see or hear about.
- To be aware of the early warning signs of potential abuse situations and the possible signs of abuse.
- To notify the Manager or Area Manager or Nominated Individual and Safeguarding Lead if there is any reason to suspect that someone has been or may be the subject of abuse.
- To maintain a professional confidential approach in line with NAS Equal Opportunities Policy when dealing with the victim and any other person who may be involved.
- To ensure good communication of observations are made in writing
- To actively teach those we support about how to keep themselves safe (including online) through practical learning opportunities
- To follow support plans and any protection plans that may be in place

8. Equal Opportunities

Employees of the NAS or NAS volunteers shall not discriminate against any individual we support on the grounds of race, nationality, age, beliefs, sexual orientation, or social standing and shall work in such a way as to give equal opportunity for each individual to achieve the maximum benefit and potential consist with respecting the dignity and value of fellow human beings.

These same principles of fairness, equity and transparency will apply in how all employees of NAS are treated, and without exception this will include those employees who report abuse, and those who are either investigating or subject to an investigation.

9. Disclosure / Someone shares a concern or worry

If an adult experiencing abuse or neglect speaks to you about this, assure them that you are taking them seriously. Listen carefully to what they are saying, stay calm and get a clear and factual picture of the concern.

- Be honest and avoid making assurances that you may not be able to keep confidentiality. Be clear and say that you need to report the abuse. Do not be judgmental and try to keep an open mind.

- If an adult experiencing abuse or neglect speaks to you about this, assure them that you are taking them seriously.
- All staff (professionals and volunteers) of any service involved with adults at risk should inform the relevant manager if they are concerned that an adult has been abused or may be at risk of harm as soon as possible.
- If you hear about an incident of abuse from a third party (this is when someone else tells you about what they have heard or seen happen to a vulnerable adult at risk), encourage them to report it themselves or help them to report the facts of what they know

What to do if you suspect abuse

Everyone with a duty of care to an adult at risk should:

- act to protect the adult at risk
- deal with immediate needs and ensure the person is, as far as possible, central to the decision-making process
- report the abuse to an appropriate person or service (e.g. your line manager) who will report this to the relevant local authority.
- if a crime has or may have been committed, contact the police to discuss or report it
- record the events.

A concern may be a direct disclosure by the adult at risk, or a concern raised by staff or volunteers, others using the service, a carer or member of the public, or an observation of the behaviour of the adult at risk, or the behaviour of another.

All staff (professionals and volunteers) of any service involved with adults at risk should inform the relevant manager if they are concerned that an adult has been abused or may be at risk of harm.

10. Allegations made against Staff or Volunteers

Staff members and volunteers against whom an allegation is made are owed a duty of care and should be treated fairly, honestly and without discrimination. They should be provided with support throughout the process. The police and other relevant agencies should always agree jointly when to inform the subject of allegations which may be subject to criminal procedures.

If an allegation is made against an agency member of staff, the local procedures must be followed and the employment agency informed

11. Supporting Staff and Supervision of Staff

All staff working directly with vulnerable adults will have supervision with a suitably experienced person during which safeguarding concerns and processes will be discussed. Each staff member should have 6 supervisions per year including their annual appraisal.

We recognise that staff working in an NAS service who have become involved with a vulnerable adult who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the relevant line manager and to seek further support such as counselling or regular supervision, reflective practice, as appropriate. Employees also have access to a confidential helpline - The First Assist Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

In order to reduce the risk of allegations being made against staff, and ensure that staff are competent, confident and safe to work with vulnerable adults, they will be made aware of safer working practice guidance and will be given opportunities in training to develop their understanding of what constitutes safe and unsafe behaviour.

12. Recruitment and Selection of Staff

The NAS has a written recruitment and selection policy statement and procedures linking explicitly to this policy.

The statement is included in all job advertisements, publicity material, recruitment websites, and candidate information packs.

The recruitment process is robust in seeking to establish the commitment of candidates to support the NAS's measures to safeguard adults and to deter, identify, reject or identify people who might pose a risk of harm to adults or are otherwise unsuited to work with them.

All staff and volunteers in regulated activity within our services have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications, previous employment history and DBS / PVG / Access NI check and a right to work in the UK.

Staff will only work in regulated activities prior to verification by the NAS of their satisfactory DBS / PVG / Access NI Certificate on the rare occurrence that it is deemed that the person supported would be put at risk because the staff member had a delayed start date. (Please note: In England, in such circumstance, an application will be made to the Adult First Scheme, which checks against the adult barring list only). The staff will not be left unsupervised and will be subject to a full risk assessment.

Volunteers who are not working in regulated activity, will be supervised at all times.

The protocol for receiving information prior to Agency staff working in services must be followed and this includes assurance of an appropriate and in date Criminal Record Check and whether this is clear from convictions, safeguarding training and references.

13. Training

All staff and volunteers will receive safeguarding adults training that is relevant to their role, including from the Board of Trustees to support staff in services, to volunteers. For those working directly with adults, safeguarding training will be completed within the induction framework and be refreshed on an annual basis (not later than 13 months since the last training) via the face to face Safeguarding People training developed by the NAS or via the on-line safeguarding training or from the relevant Local Authority / LSAB or specialist organisation.

The training will cover adult safeguarding procedures including:

- prevention and recognition of abuse
- dealing with disclosures and suspicions of abuse
- information sharing
- Whistleblowing
- maintaining confidentiality
- mental capacity (Mental Capacity Act (England & Wales) 2005, Mental Capacity Northern Ireland Act 2016 and Adults with Incapacity Act (Scotland) 2000)

All staff and volunteers must read, understand and become knowledgeable about adult safeguarding procedures during induction and must undertake refresher training on an annual basis. Failure by a member of staff to report actual or reasonably suspected abuse of an adult will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

14. Safeguarding Adults Procedures, please to refer to the one that covers your Country:

[SO-0194-001-0621 Safeguarding Adults Procedure ENGLAND](#)

[SO-0194-002-0621 Safeguarding Adults Procedure WALES](#)

[SO-0194-003-0621 Safeguarding Adults Procedure SCOTLAND](#)

[SO-0194-004-0621 Safeguarding Adults Procedure NORTHERN IRELAND](#)

15. Appendices to be used by all adult services.

- [SO-0194-005-0621 – Safeguarding Report Form](#)
- [SO-0194-006-0621 – Safeguarding Closure Form](#)
- [SO-0194-007-0621 – Flow Chart Reporting Procedure](#)
- [SO-0194-008-0621 – Types & Indicators of Abuse](#)
- [SO-0194-009-0621 – Safeguarding Summary Sheet](#)
- [SO-0194-010-0621 – Serious Incident Flowchart](#)
- [SO-0194-011-0621 – Escalation Protocol](#)

- [SO-0194-012-0621 – Protection Plan template](#)

16. Safeguarding Adults – References

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Care Inspectorate for Wales

Care Inspectorate - Scotland

RQIA – Northern Ireland

HSC Trust

Access NI

The Care Act 2014

Adult Safeguarding Policy for Northern Ireland 'Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership' 2015

Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014.

Adult Support & Protection Act (Scotland) 2007

Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

Adults with Incapacity (Scotland Act) 2000

Mental Capacity Act 2005 (England and Wales)

Purchasers' Contracts

Local Adult Safeguarding Boards

Other relevant policies / guidance

Near Miss Framework

Higher Risk Support Needs Framework

Notifications Booklet – SO-0183-001-0319

Whistleblowing Policy HR-0002

Online E-Safety Policy

Data Protection Policy – IGP-02

Conduct Management Policy – HR-0022

Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy SO-0231

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Policy SO-0190

Equal Opportunities

Local Authority Guidelines

No Secrets: The Protection of Vulnerable Adults - Department of Health.

Making Safeguarding Personal – Guide 2014