



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Safeguarding Adults

SERVICE INFORMATION SYSTEM	
Title	Safeguarding Adults
Category	Prevention
Number	C5
Status	V6.0
Action	By all Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) personnel
Original author	Prevention Team Leader
Protective marking	Official
Executive summary	This policy is designed to ensure that safeguarding adults and protecting them from harm is at the heart of every interaction NFRS personnel have with adults, equipping them with the knowledge of common signs of abuse and the procedure to follow should personnel have concerns.

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Job title	Prevention Team Leader
Date	May 2021
Review due	May 2023

1 POLICY SCOPE AND CONTEXT

Safeguarding is the process that organisations put in place to make sure that they protect the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults that they come into contact with in the course of their work.

Whilst the safeguarding of children and adults has many similarities there are also fundamental differences which must be taken into account including different procedures for working together with other organisations.

For this reason, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) have separate policies and procedures for safeguarding children and young people and for safeguarding adults. This policy is about safeguarding adults.

The Care Act 2014 (the Act) determines the Local Authority to be the lead agency for safeguarding adults at risk but has an emphasis on **all** agencies to continue to share responsibility for promoting their safety and welfare.

1.1 What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is broader than adult protection and means protecting an individual's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding refers to activities which are carried out to support and protect individuals who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing harm as a result of abuse or neglect.

1.2 Adult(s) at risk and adult abuse – definition

The safeguarding duties apply to any person who is over 18 and:

1. Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) **and**;
2. Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; **and**
3. As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

This criteria is also referred to as the Three Step Test.

Someone may have needs for care and support because of their age, mental or physical incapacity, sensory loss, or physical or learning disabilities. This can also include those who are unpaid carers.

Some individuals may need protection on a long term basis. For others it may be temporary following a specific injury or illness.

The adult experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect may hereafter be referred to as “the adult at risk” throughout the policy and associated procedures.

1.3 What is abuse?

For the purpose of this Safeguarding Adults policy, the term 'abuse' is defined as "a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons which may result in harm".

Abuse may be:

- a single act or repeated acts
- an act of neglect or a failure to act
- multiple acts (e.g. an adult at risk may be neglected *and* financially abused)

Abuse is about the misuse of the power and control that one person has over another. Where there is dependency, there is a possibility of abuse or neglect unless adequate safeguards are put in place.

Intent is not necessarily an issue at the point of deciding whether an act or a failure to act is abuse; it is the impact of the act on the person and the harm or risk of harm to that individual.

1.4 Types of abuse - adults at risk

Abuse of adults at risk can include physical abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, financial or material abuse and also neglect (acts of omission) and self-neglect.

In addition to these, the term 'modern slavery' captures a whole range of types of exploitation and abuse, it is a form of organised crime in which individuals including children, young people and vulnerable adults are treated as commodities and exploited for criminal gain. It requires a safeguarding response.

Further information about types of abuse can be found in the accompanying Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) C5.

Self-Neglect:

Under the Care Act Statutory Guidance self-neglect is listed specifically as a type of abuse and neglect.

The majority of adult safeguarding concerns raised by NFRS are focused on self-neglect and/or hoarding and so it is highlighted in this policy to improve understanding of what it is and how we can help to improve the circumstances of someone self-neglecting.

The guidance gives this definition of self-neglect: "This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding".

Self-neglect, like neglect, is an act of omission but is unique in safeguarding as there is no third party perpetrator. Additionally, the harm, or risk of it, may not be due to one event but may gradually increase over time, although the behaviour causing it is the same.

This can make it harder to intervene, as a behaviour that can appear harmless or eccentric in the short-term, may pose serious risks both to the individual and others in the longer term.

The desire to allow people their freedom to make unwise decisions and control over day to day decisions has to be balanced with the risk posed by the outcome of those repeated unwise decisions for the adult and also for others.

Safeguarding concerns raised for self-neglect will not always end in statutory safeguarding assessments and so practitioners still need to find ways of working together to mitigate risks wherever possible and ensure robust recording of this. The NFRS Prevention Team will undertake this work in response to concerns and internal referrals made by crews.

1.5 Mental Capacity

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a statutory framework to empower and protect people who may lack capacity to make their own decisions and establishes a framework for making decisions on their behalf.

Issues of mental capacity and the ability to give informed consent are central to safeguarding decisions and actions and are often pertinent in cases of self-neglect. All interventions need to take into account the ability of adults to make informed choices about the way they want to live and the risks they want to take.

Key principles of the MCA are:

- A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that they lack capacity.
- A person must not be treated as unable to make a decision just because they have made an unwise or poor decision.
- A decision or action under the MCA on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be in their best interests.

Adults with care and support needs are often less able to protect themselves from the risk of abuse and neglect and adults lacking mental capacity even more so because they rely on others to provide care and to make decisions.

Safeguarding duties apply to all adults with care and support needs, regardless of mental capacity.

Ill treatment and wilful neglect of adults who lack the capacity to make decisions is a criminal offence.

1.6 Safeguarding Adults Board

Section 44 of the Act made Safeguarding Adults Boards a statutory requirement. The Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB) exists to make sure different organisations, including NFRS, are working together and understand their respective roles and responsibilities. This improves multi agency working and ultimately outcomes for adults who are safeguarded.

The NSAB publish a strategic plan which is developed with community involvement and in consultation with the local Healthwatch. It also publishes an annual report of its progress and achievements against this plan and is responsible for conducting safeguarding adult reviews in accordance with Section 44 of the Act to identify learning and improvements that can be made.

NFRS will work under the multi-agency guidance and operating procedures produced by the NSAB. The NSAB Executive Board is for Statutory Partners only, so NFRS will be an active member of the Delivery Board, where the Prevention, Safeguarding & Partnerships Manager will represent NFRS on behalf of the Chief Fire Officer (CFO).

Information sharing:

NSAB have produced an Information Sharing Protocol. This document is specifically about sharing information for the purposes of safeguarding and for promoting the welfare of adults at risk.

The protocol specifically states: **“Sharing of information between agencies and staff /practitioners working with adults at risk and their families /carers is essential. In many cases it is only when information from a range of sources is put together that individuals can be seen to be at risk of harm.”**

Failing to pass on information that might prevent an adult at risk from being abused could lead to them suffering significant harm.

Failure to share information may also have a significant impact on others in the community.

This lack of information sharing could expose agencies/staff/practitioners to criticism in the same way as an unjustified disclosure could.

There may be anxieties about the legal or ethical restrictions on sharing information, particularly with other agencies. There should however be an awareness of the law and agencies and their staff/practitioners should comply with their relevant professional codes of conduct, organisational requirements and other relevant agency guidance. These rarely provide an absolute barrier to disclosure.

A decision by a practitioner or member of staff whether to disclose information may be particularly difficult if a staff member/practitioner thinks it may damage the trust between themselves and the adult at risk.

If concerns arise, advice should be sought from a senior colleague, designated professional or Information Governance/Data Protection Officer.

Where there is concern that a crime has been committed information must be shared with Northamptonshire Police to enable this to be recorded and investigated.

Protocol for responding to concerns about a Person in a Position of Trust (PiPoT):

NSAB have established a framework for any partner organisations to respond to allegations against any personnel who work with adults with care and support needs. This framework is called the PiPoT protocol.

The protocol applies whether an allegation is current or is a historical concern and is designed to support decision making once a concern around a PiPoT has been raised.

The NSAB agency that first becomes aware of a PiPoT concern will have the responsibility for taking appropriate action in line with the protocol even if the PiPoT is not employed by them.

2 POLICY STATEMENT

“NFRS are committed to ensuring that adults at risk are protected and kept safe from harm whenever they come into contact with the Service. We will do this by applying the Safeguarding guidance provided by the NSAB and ensuring that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. **All staff** within NFRS are responsible for the application of this policy.”

NFRS is committed to:

- Ensuring staff are aware of signs and symptoms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and know what appropriate action to take if they have concerns about an adult.
- Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) respecting the human rights, needs and interests of all adults at risk.
- Taking all reasonable and practicable steps to protect adults at risk of abuse and neglect including responding to allegations against NFRS personnel in line with PiPoT guidance.
- To take part in or initiate Adult Risk Management (ARM) Meetings when appropriate and to carry out quarterly ARM monitoring returns to the NSAB Quality & Performance Sub Group.
- To record all safeguarding concerns and referrals so that they can be reported on CFRMIS.
- Reporting any suspected criminal activity to the Police for investigation
- Ensuring that safer recruitment practises are in place and that Level 1 Safeguarding Awareness training is provided to ensure that all staff and volunteers who may come into contact with adults at risk are aware of their responsibilities, this policy and its associated procedures.
- Working with partners from the statutory and voluntary sector to enable access to additional support for adults where there is no immediate or significant risk but where situations are likely to deteriorate if left.
- Offering suitable support for all adults where there are concerns about fire safety, arson risk or fire setting behaviours.
- Continually reviewing safeguarding policies and procedures and keeping up to date with emerging risks, developments and training needs through

our Safeguarding Action Plan delivered via our internal Safeguarding Management Group.

Additional commitment:

There will be instances when NFRS raise safeguarding concerns but the criteria of the Three Step Test are not met. There may also be instances where the adult at risk has capacity and chooses not to engage with the safeguarding process.

In these cases, the situation may deteriorate and the risks may increase if there is no action taken. NFRS is therefore still committed to doing what we can to prevent escalation of issues even if safeguarding processes are not applicable.

There are different services and pathways for managing circumstances when this happens. This work will be co-ordinated on behalf of NFRS by the Prevention Team and referred to collectively by NFRS as “Early Help and Risk Management”.

3 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

NFRS recognises its responsibilities to work with other organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults at risk.

This policy establishes the roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to the protection of adults at risk who they may come into contact with through their work.

It lays out the partnership context in which NFRS works to ensure the needs of adults at risk are supported appropriately.

3.1 Associated guidance and procedures

The associated guidance and procedures in SOP C5 highlights different types of abuse and how to recognise indicators of abuse and risk of significant harm.

The procedures specifically include:

- How to report concerns so adults at risk can be quickly identified and incidences of abuse can be prevented or readily acted upon.
- How to manage allegations made against NFRS personnel who are paid, unpaid, volunteer, agency, casual and self-employed through referral to the designated officer.
- How to manage circumstances where concerns are raised, but where the threshold for a statutory safeguarding enquiry is not met.

3.2 Scope

References to ‘personnel’, ‘staff’, or ‘employees’ within this document refer to all employees of NFRS, all volunteers, temporary staff and casual workers, agency workers and contractors that work with or on behalf of NFRS, either in a paid or unpaid capacity.

The nature and activities of the Service, will put personnel (whether in a paid or voluntary capacity) into contact with adults at risk. It is important to note that abuse can take place anywhere, including in the following settings:

- A person's own home
- A friend or relative's home
- A hospital or care establishment
- A day centre or support group meeting place
- An educational establishment
- A public place

The list below is not exhaustive but highlights situations where personnel may note concerns about abuse and harm:

- Operational incidents including co-responding on behalf of East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS)
- Fire station visits by a wide range of community groups
- Home Safety Visits (HSVs)
- Fire-setter Intervention Visits
- Activities with young adults such as The Princes Trust Team programme, and Northamptonshire Emergency Service Cadets (NESC)
- During Fire Protection inspection activity
- Station open days or at local community events such as fetes and galas
- Working with partner agencies providing services and support to adults at risk
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

Given this wide variety of activity, the guidance and procedures outlined in this policy refer to **all** engagements with adults at risk, whether planned or otherwise and regardless of duration.

All personnel should ensure that their behaviour complies with the guidance provided in SOP C5.

All personnel must follow the laid out procedures following concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse or neglect. No personnel should assume that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to keeping an adult at risk safe. If personnel have concerns, this procedure should be followed.

4 WORKING WITH PARTNER AGENCIES

Under the NSAB Inter-agency Policy and Procedures, there is a shared vision of how adults at risk are supported by the collective workforce whenever concerns are identified.

NFRS are likely to encounter many adults where the threshold for statutory safeguarding is not met. In these cases, the NFRS Prevention Team will take on the Service's responsibility for supporting the adult to reduce risk, usually by referring to suitable services or support.

The NFRS Prevention Team will also work with partners to ensure that suitable services are offered to help address specific fire safety concerns and risks identified by other partner agencies through the incoming Home Safety Visit referral form, MAPPA, MARAC and Threat Danger processes.

4.1 Early Help and Risk Management

Providing effective help and working with partners to manage risks for other adults is a key priority for NFRS in order to keep people in our communities safe and well. The NFRS Prevention Team work proactively to help manage the risks for adults by:

- Maintaining a relationship with housing and health and social care providers to ensure there is an understanding of referral pathways designed to help adults access the support and services they need.
- Signposting/making outgoing referrals on behalf of adults, to different services and support including Adult Care, Falls Prevention, and Crime Prevention teams, and also providers of Housing, Assistive Technology and Home Improvement services.
- Accepting inward referrals for Home Safety and Arson Safety Visits
- Conducting joint home visits with other partners to highlight/address risk.
- Representing NFRS in Adult Risk Management (ARM) processes and Vulnerable Adult Risk Management Conferences (VARAC).

4.2 Joint working and commissioning services

This policy will be drawn to the attention of and made available to all agencies and organisations in joint working situations.

Where partnership working involves a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for another organisation to provide services on its behalf, the NFRS personnel responsible for the agreement will ensure that the partner organisation has appropriate safeguarding policies in place.

If an NFRS employee becomes aware of abuse or allegations of abuse relating to personnel from a partner organisation, then the NFRS employee should follow the procedures within the [SOP C5](#).

5 **MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE, SPECIFIC ROLES, SELECTION AND TRAINING**

Management structure:

The Safeguarding Management Group is chaired by the CFO and has specific reference for the oversight and management of safeguarding for the whole Service. This group will ensure this policy is adhered to.

Specific roles:

The CFO is the strategic lead for safeguarding in NFRS and will represent the organisation at the Safeguarding Adults Board and lead the work of the Safeguarding Management Group.

The Area Manager (AM) Service Delivery will deputise for the strategic lead for safeguarding in NFRS and will support and review the application of this policy and its associated procedures.

The Prevention Team will act as the specialist support hub for safeguarding, early help and risk management in relation to adults and adults at risk. They will provide advice, guidance and support with decision making during office hours. They will take on casework for adults where ongoing involvement from NFRS is required to reduce fire risks or to stimulate a co-ordinated approach to managing other risks.

The Prevention Team Leader (PTLs) will act as operational safeguarding leads and will represent the organisation at NSAB sub groups and other partnership meetings.

The Officer of the Day (OOD) will be available for assistance and advice on all matters relating to safeguarding of adults at risk. Outside of office hours they will need to be informed if NFRS personnel have any concerns regarding an adult who is being/has been abused or is at risk. They will refer threshold decisions to the Duty Gold Officer.

The Duty Gold Officer is the AM or Principal Officer on duty at any given time. Where needed, they will make threshold decisions to assist the OOD to ensure consistency of approach.

Training:

Personnel will receive instruction/training at a level appropriate to their needs and in proportion to the expected levels of activity with adults at risk.

As a minimum all personnel will complete the online training package for safeguarding.

Operational staff in additional paid or unpaid roles who are working on schemes where NFRS are likely to encounter more adults at risk will receive further training and guidance to assist in identifying risks and taking appropriate action.

This will be based on best practise and may be delivered by Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) or NSAB partners or by external training providers. External providers will be those recommended via the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) or by the NSAB. Training is likely to include safe working practises, safeguarding training and highlighted issues such as Modern Slavery.

The Duty Gold Officers and the OODs will receive enhanced training in adult safeguarding.

Selected roles within the Prevention Team such as Prevention Team Leaders and Complex Case Officer, Arson Task Force Co-ordinator, Community Safety Officers and the Youth Diversion Officer, will receive enhanced training as their role involves unsupervised access to adults at risk, handling case work and/or the development of work practises and processes. This will be accessed via the NSAB to ensure consistency of approach in Making Safeguarding Personal.

5.1 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check

NFRS will take all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people from working with adults at risk.

An important element of good practice of safeguarding begins at the stage of recruitment, selection, posting and transfer of personnel. If any personnel are expected to have regular unsupervised access to adults at risk as part of their role within NFRS, then they will need to pass an enhanced DBS check prior to starting that role.

Line managers are responsible for ensuring the appropriate DBS check has been carried out and taking references as to the suitability of candidates prior to the candidate taking up the position in NFRS, and records of all DBS Checks undertaken will be held by HR.

6 GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Term	Definition
Abuse	Abuse is defined as a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons, and may consist of a single act or repeated acts of physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect. Further information about the main types of abuse are documented in the associated procedures and guidance SOP C5.
Adult	While it is appreciated that the age of being an adult can vary dependent on the individual’s needs, people of 18 years and over are generically referred to as ‘adults’ within this policy regardless of their ability/level of need.
Adult at Risk	An adult who has needs for care and support and is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and who as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.
Early Help and Risk Management	This term is used by NFRS to describe the way it supports adults even if the statutory threshold for safeguarding is not met, in order to prevent deterioration.
Personnel	References to ‘personnel’, ‘staff’, or ‘employees’ within this document refer to all employees of NFRS, all volunteers, temporary staff and casual workers, agency workers and contractors that work with or on behalf of NFRS, either in a paid or unpaid capacity.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the protecting of an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

7 PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING

It is the responsibility of the CFO and the AM Service Delivery within NFRS to make sure that all personnel for whom they are responsible are aware of and understand the importance of this policy and are given suitable training to a level appropriate to their role and contact with adults at risk.

They must also make sure that any volunteers, contractors, agents or other representatives whom they engage to undertake duties on their behalf, which may involve contact with adults, understand and comply with this policy and any other related documents as appropriate (Care Act 2014).

8 AUDIT AND REVIEW DATE

This policy will be reviewed in line with Service Policy A1 – Service Information System Document Framework.

The application of this policy and its associated procedures will be monitored by the AM Service Delivery through audit and review. The Safeguarding Management Group will provide oversight and challenge to the AM Service Delivery in regards to safeguarding throughout the service, and all outcomes from serious adult reviews will come to the Safeguarding Management Group for dissemination.

9 CLICK TO CONFIRM UNDERSTANDING OF THIS POLICY

All personnel are required to click the button below to go through to RedKite to confirm that they have read and understood this policy:

**Click to Confirm
Understanding**

10 DOCUMENT HISTORY

Impact assessments

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was completed on:

Equality Impact Assessment	08 April 2021
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Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing published versions of this policy:

Document Control			
Version	Date	Author	Status
V1.0	April 2012	Prevention Team Leader (PTL)	Published
V2.0	November 2012	PTL	Published
V3.0	October 2016	PTL	Published
V4.0	January 2019	PTL	Published
V5.0	July 2020	PTL	Published
V6.0	May 2021	PTL	Published