

Safeguarding is "*everyone's business*" – all staff, volunteers, and organizations working with vulnerable people have a duty of care.

Safeguarding the unborn, children, young people, adults and families in the NHS is a fundamental, collective, and statutory obligation for all staff to protect the health, wellbeing, and human rights of children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect. It involves identifying, preventing, and responding to harm by implementing robust, evidence-based policies, staff training, and working in partnership with other agencies to ensure safe care.

Safeguarding responsibilities include

- **A Fundamental Obligation:** All NHS employees, have a responsibility to keep people safe.
- **Statutory Duty:** The Children Act 1989 and 2004 place duties on the NHS to safeguard children, while safeguarding adults is underpinned by legal frameworks aimed at preventing abuse.
- **"Making Every Contact Count":** NHS England aims to apply safeguarding principles consistently whenever a patient accesses services.
- **Recognition and Identification:** Actively identifying signs of physical, emotional, sexual, financial abuse, or neglect in both children and adults.
- **Documentation:** Keeping accurate, detailed, and objective records of any concerns, incidents, or disclosures.
- **Target Groups:** Specific focus on protecting children, young people, and adults at risk, such as those with additional care needs, disabilities, or mental impairments.
- **Inter-agency Working:** The NHS works with key organisations, such as Safeguarding Children Partnership's, Safeguarding Adult Boards, Integrated Care Boards and other bodies to ensure coordinated protection.
- **Policies and Training:** Ensuring robust policies are in place, alongside staff training and supervision. Staff should ensure they know how to access relevant policies, and that they are up to date with mandatory training requirements.
- **Expert Guidance:** Staff should know how to access the MCHFT safeguarding teams that provide support, advice, manage safeguarding concerns, and have oversight of safeguarding events.
- **Empowerment:** Supporting individuals / patients to make their own choices while protecting them from harm, focusing on early intervention to prevent abuse. For children and young people this includes obtaining their thought wishes and feelings to inform care / discharge planning.