

## Safeguarding tips to consider when face-to-face visits are not used

### 1. BEFORE ALL CONSULTATIONS

Check the records. Are there safeguarding flags or alerts recorded? There is often a significant amount of information about individuals available in the records which could help to identify those with safeguarding issues. This may pick up:

- Substance misuse.
- Domestic abuse.
- Issues of *Was Not Brought/Did Not Attend*.
- Families where there are carers or young carers.
- Emotional or mental health problems.
- Families where there are family members with Learning Disabilities.
- Family members with dementia or other issues which could impact on mental capacity.
- Situations where there are other safeguarding concerns such as exploitation, modern day slavery, cuckooing, honour based violence.
- Homelessness.
- Those isolated or who are recently bereaved.
- Individuals and families who may be facing food and internet poverty.
- Those in temporary accommodation.
- Those presenting with specific risks.

### 2. OVER THE PHONE

Check at the start of the consultation whether it is safe to talk. Picking up possible indicators of safeguarding concerns can be challenging over a phone call. However, there are a few things that could be useful:

- Try as much as possible to speak to the person themselves. Ask if it is ok to talk now.
- Take the opportunity to check how they are coping at present; do they need help?
- Does the person sound guarded? Can you hear that their conversation is being directed by another person? Can you hear sounds of possible altercations or vehement disagreements?
- Background sounds of persistent crying and a carer expression of anxiety about how to cope with this; what emotions are you hearing and what message is this giving?
- Use your professional curiosity to explore and understand what is happening.
- Consultations where a family member is providing the ‘translation’ use an interpreter.
- Ask and record the names of who are in the room with the person, be aware that there may be other people present, bear this in mind in your questioning.
- Where relevant, ask what support a person has and whether this has changed due to COVID-19.
- Have you a code word agreed to escalate concerns?

### 3. USING VIDEO

- Video consultations can be really effective and are a real opportunity to pick up possible indicators that things are not well.
- Check at the start of the consultation whether it is safe for them to talk.
- Do you know who else is present in the room? Are they someone you recognise from the family? Check if the patient is happy to proceed with the consultation if other people are around.
- How does the room look? Is there any obvious evidence of alcohol or drug use? Are there any obvious environmental risks, particularly if there are young children in the home?
- How does the individual present? Is this very different to usual? Do they appear guarded or watchful? Are they upset or on edge?
- If the consultation is about a person who lacks mental capacity, is the carer unwilling for them to be seen and is their objection reasonable? If seen, how do they look? Are they clothed appropriately for the season? How are the interactions with their carer?
- Are there signs of neglect in the home?
- Ask and record who is in the room with the person, but even if the person states that they are alone, be aware that there may be people outside of the video who you cannot see and bear this in mind in your questioning.
- Where relevant, ask what support a person has and whether this has changed due to COVID-19.
- Have you a code word agreed to escalate concerns?

### 4. OBSERVATIONS

- Consider what you see as well as hear. Is the environment dangerous/hoarding/fire risk?
- Can you see any obvious injuries? Is the person looking to someone else before answering?
- Any concerning background noise, e.g. someone else talking as if giving answers?

### 5. YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT ABUSE, OR ABUSE DISCLOSED

- Consider a **face-to-face** appointment to discuss further that day wherever possible. If you have concerns that the virtual meeting hasn't eased your worries, the person may feel able to discuss abuse if alone in a consultation in a safe setting.
- Apply the principles of person-centred approaches and making Safeguarding Personal. This should include:
  - getting their views on what has happened and what they want to happen now (consider mental capacity and consent);
  - what they want to achieve as an outcome;
  - speaking to them in a private and safe place and informing them of any concerns;
  - providing them with information about the Safeguarding Adults and how that could help to make them safer;
  - identifying communication needs, personal care arrangements;
  - explaining how they will be kept informed and supported; and
  - discussing what could be done to ensure their safety.
- Refer to the appropriate service (Adult Safeguarding, CASS, MARAC, Police, Fire Service, Ambulance etc.)
- To report safeguarding concerns for adults with care and support need:

## 6. AFTER THE CONSULTATION

- Record everything carefully in the notes.
  - “Referral to safeguarding adult’s team,”
  - “Referral to safeguarding children’s team,” or
  - “Referral to MARAC etc.”
- Remember to look after yourself; these consultations can be stressful so take a quick 5-minute break.
- If you feel you need further advice, speak to your Safeguarding Lead. For referrals to other services, e.g. secondary care/community services, ensure it is documented how the person was consulted, i.e. face-to-face, telephone, video. Any relevant safeguarding information such as known to Local Authority Safeguarding Services should be added to the referral.

## 7. AFTER THE CONSULTATION

- In an emergency, or if someone is in immediate danger, call 999. Otherwise, report crimes to West Midlands Police by calling 101.
- Professionals should report a concern of adult abuse to Birmingham City Council by completing the online form below:
  - Report adult abuse online: (Professionals) [Begin this form now](#)
- Members of the public can report a concern of an adult with care and support needs to Birmingham City Council in the following ways:
  - Report adult abuse online: (Members of public) [Begin this form now](#); or by:
  - Email: [CSAdultSocialCare@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:CSAdultSocialCare@birmingham.gov.uk)
  - Telephone: 0121 303 1234
  - Text Relay: dial 18001 followed by the full national phone number
- [Read more](#) about what we mean by care and support needs.
- If you are worried about a Child call: 0121 303 1888 or visit [www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk](http://www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk)

**For more information on Safeguarding Adults visit  
the Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board website:  
[www.bsab.org](http://www.bsab.org)**