



October 2020
1st Edition

Guidance

for UKPHR registrants about handling safeguarding issues

Approved for publication by UKPHR's Board on 01 October 2020

Introduction

All vulnerable people, including children and young people, are entitled to protection from abuse and neglect.

At UKPHR we take our responsibility for safeguarding seriously and we expect all registrants to give safeguarding the constant and serious attention that it requires.

Good Public Health Practice Framework 2016 places a duty on all registrants to safeguard and protect the health and wellbeing of the population, with particular attention to vulnerable groups within this population. This duty is reinforced on the *Code of Conduct* for registrants.

Vulnerable groups may include (but are not limited to) children and young people, people with physical and/or mental health issues, older people and people in disadvantaged communities.

This means all registrants must act on any concerns they have about the safety or welfare of a vulnerable person.

As the regulator, UKPHR accepts that it has the same obligations as its registrants in this regard.

UKPHR will ensure that its employees, Board members and others who work for UKPHR whether for payment or on a voluntary basis also take seriously their own duty to safeguard all vulnerable people.

This guidance sets out UKPHR's expectations and signposts relevant guidance produced by other organisations to assist registrants to understand what to be vigilant for and what to do if you have any concerns about the safety or welfare of a vulnerable person.

Duties of registrants

Working as you – registrants – do in roles that may impact on the health and wellbeing of the public in the UK, you have a duty in law to contribute to the safeguarding of vulnerable groups and vulnerable individuals.

As well as legislation and case law on this subject, you must, as registrants, keep up to date with, and follow, the relevant laws, codes of practice and guidance,. These include our advice in *Good Public Health Practice Framework 2016* and in the *Code of Practice* for registrants as a condition of maintaining your registration.

If you are unsure how to act in a particular situation, you should always seek advice and assistance from an experienced and appropriately qualified colleagues or a professional organisation

It is vital that you have the confidence to act if you believe that someone may be being abused or neglected.

You must constantly be aware of risk factors that have been linked to abuse and neglect and look out for signs that an individual may be at risk.

If you are not sure about whether someone is at risk or how best to act on your concerns, ask a named or designated professional or, if they are not available, an experienced colleague for advice.

Taking action will be justified, even if it turns out that the person is not at risk of, or suffering, abuse or neglect, as long as your concerns are honestly held and reasonable, and you take action through appropriate channels.

Registrants who make decisions based on the principles in this guidance will be able to justify your decisions and actions if we receive a complaint about your practice in relation to the decisions you made.

Good Public Health Practice Framework 2016 and UKPHR's Code of Conduct

Good Public Health Practice Framework 2016

This updated publication by UK Faculty of Public Health and UKPHR sets out the standards which apply to the public health practice of all UKPHR's registrants.

It was developed in order to provide guidance for multidisciplinary public health practice, for example, where there is a need for population-based interventions.

Good Public Health Practice Framework 2016 provides registrants with guidance on good professional practice.

The following provisions are relevant in relation to safeguarding:

A. KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE

3. *You must practise within ethical, legal and regulatory limits that apply to your area of public health practice. Where aspects of public health practice are governed by law or regulated by other statutory codes of practice, you are expected to observe these and keep up to date with changes that may affect your practice.*

B. SAFETY AND QUALITY

10. *You have a duty to safeguard and protect the health and wellbeing of your population, with particular attention to vulnerable groups within your population. Vulnerable groups may include (but are not limited to) children and young people, people with physical and/or mental health issues, older people and people in disadvantaged communities. You should be aware of the needs and welfare of vulnerable groups when you work with them, including people who care for vulnerable individuals (such as parents, partners/ spouses, and children). Be aware also of any individuals or groups who may represent a danger to vulnerable groups.*

Take especial care when seeking vulnerable people's consent and consult with them or their advocates in appropriate ways so as to be clear whether consent is being given or withheld. You should offer assistance to vulnerable individuals or groups, including where necessary advocating on their behalf if you have reason to think that their rights have been abused or denied.

When communicating with vulnerable individuals or groups you must:

- *Treat them with respect and listen to their views*
- *Answer their questions to the best of your ability*
- *Provide information in a way they can understand.*

11. *Your duty to vulnerable groups extends to their relatives, carers and partners. When dealing with matters concerning vulnerable individuals, you must be considerate to relatives, carers, partners and others close to the person, and be sensitive and responsive in providing information and support. In doing this, you must follow the guidance in relation to confidentiality, information governance and data protection (the Caldicott principles).*

UKPHR's Code of Conduct 2nd Edition March 2014

UKPHR expects all its registrants to practice public health in accordance with UKPHR's Code of Conduct.

Our separate Code of Practice requires Board and Committee members, Moderators and assessors to work for us in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles):

selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

The Code of Conduct occupies a central role in the core public health workforce's practice and encourages registrants to consider how it applies in your everyday practice.

If we receive information or a complaint which raises questions relating to a registrant's conduct and fitness to practise, we will refer to the Code of Conduct in determining whether or not there is any issue we need to consider.

Key content of the Code in relation to safeguarding is as follows:

4. *Protect confidentiality*

4.1 *Information you learn about individuals in the course of your work must remain confidential unless there are lawful and justifiable reasons for disclosing it*

4.2 *Disclose information only to those entitled to receive it or to whom you are required or authorised to disclose it, and take effective steps to prevent accidental disclosure*

5. *Respect the dignity of individuals and treat everyone fairly*

...

5.3 *Recognise the differences between individuals and groups; avoid stereotyping and treat everyone fairly and with compassion, paying particular attention to the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable people*

6 *Know the limits of your competence and act within them*

...

6.5 *Find out about, understand and comply with, laws and regulations which affect your work*

Guidance provided by others

There are many good sources of guidance already in existence. In this section, we reference some that we believe might be relevant at some point for registrants who may have a need for assistance with a specific issue or challenge.

UK-WIDE

General Medical Council:

[Adult safeguarding](#)

[Protecting children and young people](#)

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence:

[Safeguarding products \(includes domestic violence and abuse\)](#)

Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE):

[Safeguarding adults](#)

[Safeguarding children in education](#)

ENGLAND

Government:

[Safeguarding adults](#)

[Safeguarding children](#)

Local Government Association

[Making Safeguarding Personal](#)

Northern Ireland

Department of Health:

[Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership key documents](#)

[Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland](#)

Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland:

[Child Protection issues and Child Protection investigations](#)

Scotland

Scottish Government:

[Adult support and protection](#)

[Adult Support and Protection revised Code of Practice](#)

[Child protection](#)

Wales

Welsh Government:

[Safeguarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect](#)

[Safeguarding adults: adult protection and support orders](#)

[Safeguarding children at risk of abuse or neglect](#)

[Sharing information to safeguard children](#)

[Safeguarding people: an introduction](#)

[Safeguarding guidance \(collection\)](#)

At UKPHR we do not have specialist knowledge and expertise about safeguarding but registrants are welcome to get in touch to discuss issues and challenges relating to safeguarding.

At UKPHR we will always do our best to support you in getting help with your enquiry.

For further information, please CONTACT:

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