



October 2020
1st Edition

Guidance

for UKPHR registrants about handling safeguarding issues

*Approved for publication by UKPHR's Board on 01 October 2020
Updated in October 2024 following Good Public Health Practice 2024*

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 2024

Good Public Health Practice Framework 2024

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 whilst having a stronger focus on behaviours and values which reflect the unique ethical domain of the public health profession

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

Good Public Health Practice Framework 2024 provides registrants with guidance on good professional 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 there is any issue we need to consider.

The following provisions are relevant in relation to safeguarding:

A. KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT

10. **You must take care to delegate responsibility to others safely.** *Where a task or act of work is delegated by you or someone else, you must be satisfied that the person to whom you delegate has the qualifications, experience, knowledge and skills to complete the task required. You retain overall management responsibility through delegation of the task; people to whom you delegate will be accountable for their own decisions and actions*
12. You must provide **safe and effective public health** advice whether face-to-face, or virtually.

B. PATIENTS, PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

1. **You have a duty protect the health and wellbeing of your population.** *You must treat everyone with kindness, fairness, courtesy and respect. This means communicating sensitively and considerately, listening, not making assumptions and explaining rationale for your advice or decisions, with particular attention to vulnerable groups and individuals within your population. Vulnerable groups and individuals 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. Take special care when seeking vulnerable people's consent and consult with them or their advocates in appropriate ways 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 or communities you must:

- *Treat them with respect and listen to their views, be open and honest and be compassionate with individuals and those supporting them.*
- *Answer their questions to the best of your ability.*
- *Provide information in a clear way that can be understood.*
- *Check information provided has been understood, taking into account language and communication needs, including: any hidden or visible disabilities or impairments,*

including physical, and relevant psychological, spiritual, social, economic, and cultural factors.

2. **Your duty to vulnerable groups extends to their relatives, carers and partners.** When dealing with matters concerning vulnerable individuals and vulnerable communities, 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 appropriate data sharing (the Caldicott principles²).

C. COLLEAGUES, CULTURE AND SAFETY

7. **You must treat colleagues and individuals fairly and with kindness, courtesy and respect, to contribute to a positive working environment.** You must work collaboratively with colleagues, respecting their skills and contributions. You must not subject them to bullying or harassment, or unfairly discriminate against them by allowing your personal views to affect adversely your professional relationship with them. You should challenge colleagues if their behaviour does not comply with this guidance. Where colleagues are experiencing health or performance problems, you should be supportive of them. However, this support should not compromise or be at the expense of public safety. If you are an employer or manager, you should take any bullying or discrimination complaint seriously and investigate it as soon as possible, ensuring that you are aware of the relevant policies and procedures in your organisation.
12. **You should ensure you keep patients safe.** You should be familiar with clinical governance and risk management structures and processes in your organisation. You must contribute to confidential inquiries, incident reviews and investigations, and respond to requests from organisations monitoring public health. You should respond promptly to any safety risks, such as concerns that a colleague is not fit to practise, putting a patient at risk.

D. TRUST AND PROFESSIONALISM

7. **You must be vigilant about issues concerning data confidentiality and data protection.** When handling information about individuals or communities, you must ensure that information is dealt with in a sensitive way and confidentiality is maintained where required. This may include seeking the consent of individuals prior to sharing information. Exceptions to this may occur where there is a balance of greater risk to the population through non-disclosure. Such cases may require further specific clinical or legal advice.

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:

register@ukphr.org

Tel. 0121 296 4370

UKPHR

16a McLaren Building, 46 Priory Queensway, Birmingham B4 7LR

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