



GIRL ON FIRE

2. Safeguarding Adults At Risk

Owner: DSL | Applies to adult participants and anyone supporting them

GOF promotes dignity, choice and safety. Disadvantage, disability, mental ill health or a diagnosis alone does not establish that someone lacks capacity or meets the adult safeguarding threshold. In England, the Care Act section 42 threshold concerns an adult with care and support needs who is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect and, because of those needs, cannot protect themselves from that risk. The local authority decides its statutory response.

Recognise physical, sexual, psychological, financial, discriminatory and organisational abuse, domestic abuse, exploitation, neglect and self-neglect. Listen privately without demanding unnecessary details. Ask what outcome the adult wants, establish immediate safety, and record observations and their words.

Call 999 for immediate danger or urgent medical need. Report other concerns promptly to the DSL. Where appropriate, seek informed consent for referral and explain the options. Do not automatically contact relatives or carers: they may be implicated or the adult may not want involvement.

If the adult declines referral, the DSL considers their wishes, apparent decision-making capacity, coercion, seriousness, risk to others and any legal obligation. Sharing without consent may be justified or required in particular circumstances; document the lawful basis and reasoning, and tell the adult where safe. Do not assume that consent is always required to safeguard, or that safeguarding always permits unlimited sharing.

Capacity is presumed unless there is reason to doubt it, is decision-specific and time-specific, and is not disproved by an unwise decision. Provide accessible explanations and support. Seek qualified advice where a capacity or best-interests decision is required; facilitators must not make unsupported clinical assessments.

The DSL consults/refers to local adult safeguarding or police as appropriate, agrees a proportionate support plan and follows up. Adults outside the section 42 threshold can still need assistance, domestic abuse support or police protection. Store records securely and review ongoing risks with the adult wherever possible.