

ADULT SAFEGUARDING

New Policy Requirements

The DHSSPS and DoJ have published a new policy called Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership. The Policy introduces new definitions of an adult at risk and an adult in need of protection.

The new policy requires any providers of services who are in a position of trust, including optometrists, should **at a minimum**

- Recognise that adult harm is wrong and should not be tolerated;
- Be aware of the signs of harm from abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- Reduce opportunities for harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect; and
- Know how and when to report concerns



Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership

The full policy can be accessed at:

<https://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/articles/adult-safeguarding->

Who is an adult at risk or in need of protection?

An '**Adult at risk of harm**' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

personal characteristics

AND/OR

life circumstances

Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain. **Life circumstances** may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

An '**Adult in need of protection**' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

personal characteristics

AND/OR

life circumstances

AND

who is **unable to protect** their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests;

AND

where the **action or inaction of another person or persons** is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed.

What does the policy mean by abuse?

The Policy sets out definitions of the different types of abuse that adults at risk may experience. These are set out below along with some of the possible signs or symptoms you may notice. The indicators listed are only examples and abuse may manifest itself in many other ways

Type of abuse or harm	Possible signs
Physical	Unexplained fractures; bruising; burns; marks or not wanting to be touched
Sexual	Changes in appearance; behaving in a sexually inappropriate way; not wanting to be touched
Financial	Unusual difficulty with finances; not having enough money; not paying bills; unusually defensive about money; not having adequate food or heat
Institutional	No care plan; no personal possessions; frequent admissions to hospital; unprofessional conduct by staff
Psychological/emotional	Withdrawn; not being able to concentrate; overly compliant; restricted activities
Human Trafficking/Modern Slavery	Delay in seeking treatment; never left by themselves; lives with group of people who are of the same gender but not related; no official papers.

Who do I contact if I have a concern?

If you are concerned that one of your patients may be an adult at risk and is being subjected to some form of abuse, neglect or exploitation, you should contact the Adult Safeguarding Gateway Service in your HSC Trust area. They will provide advice and where necessary take a referral from you.

The Adult Safeguarding Gateway teams can be contacted at the following numbers:

Northern Trust	028 256 35512
Western Trust	028 716 11366
South Eastern Trust	028 925 01227
Belfast Trust	028 950 41744
Southern Trust	028 374 12015 or 028 374 12354.
Emergency (Out of Hours) Social Work	028 9504 9999