

**Adult Safeguarding: Roles and Competencies for Health Care Staff: Second Edition:  
Published August 2024**

**Summary of Changes**

**Purpose**

This paper provides an overview of some of the key changes to the document *Adult Safeguarding: Roles and Competencies for Health Care Staff: Second Edition*.

**Overview**

One of the most important principles of safeguarding is that it is everyone's responsibility. This updated document is designed to guide professionals and the teams they work with to identify the competencies required to support individuals to receive personalised and culturally sensitive safeguarding.

This document will be the basis for further developments over the coming years to encompass a lifespan approach to safeguarding.

The RCGP will soon be launching their own Safeguarding Standards, there has been joint working with the RCN and RCPCH to agree overarching standards. The RCGP standards are for GPs and everyone working in a general practice setting in the UK. They are a single life course document incorporating child and adult safeguarding.

The Intercollegiate Documents regarding safeguarding children and young people, and looked after children and young people, are being reviewed and rewritten; hosted by the RCPCH, with input from other Royal Colleges and four nations. The project will also consider transition to adulthood, with the aspiration of a joint 'whole life' resource with adult safeguarding in the future.

This [Adult Safeguarding: Roles and Competencies](#) has been reviewed by a group of senior Safeguarding leaders in Healthcare. The group was established following discussion within the Safeguarding Adults National Network ensuring representation from across the sector. In addition, there were regular meetings with the safeguarding leads from RCPCH and RCGP for their expert advice and support. The revision builds on the 2018 version and adopts several changes based on feedback from colleagues across the sector, providing clarity about the non-statutory nature of the guidance and how it is there to support healthcare staff to identify what specific skills, knowledge and competence are needed for adult safeguarding. The updated document makes it clear the guidance is for organisational interpretation.

The updated document includes changes that support differing approaches to training, including learning from incidents and reflective practice. It also reflects the importance of meaningful training and not hours of training that translates into meaningful practice. In addition it also identifies there is other training which compliments safeguarding and could be incorporated in to safeguarding competency achievement.

## General Changes

- The scope of the document is designed to incorporate all services who are commissioned to work directly with children but need also to be competent working with adults.
- The document now refers to 'healthcare staff' to reflect all staff working in health and social care to ensure consistency
- Key definitions are incorporated, including Head of Safeguarding, Mental Capacity Act Lead, and Person in Position of Trust (PiPoT)
- An updated definition of domestic abuse is provided
- The foreword now includes a statement around risk from healthcare staff:
- It now includes a section on Mental Capacity and Deprivation of Liberty with links to external trusted resources. However, it makes it clear in the 'Scope' that it is not intended that safeguarding training replaces MCA and DoLS training, but rather compliments it.

## Updates by Staff Level

The revised document clarifies the expectations around repeating or refreshing training and discusses the interpretation and allocation in relation to staff levels.

### Level 1

- Clarifies that this applies to staff in both NHS and non-NHS settings

### Level 2

- Increased clarity about training hours reduced to 3 hours instead of '3-4', setting a suggested minimum that can be built upon instead of a previous inference that it would be 'up to' a set duration
- Advises that refreshing at the levels should not simply be repetition of previous training:

### Level 3

- Staff group definition expanded from registered professionals to include non-registered roles such as Support Workers and Health Care Assistants, aligning the intercollegiate guidance for children and young people for level 3 staff that is not limited to registered professionals.
- Whilst opening level 3 to all staff working with service users as described above, it is stated later that for all registered health care staff, this should be "considered the minimum level required"
- Supporting the move towards a life course approach, it is now recommended that all staff trained at level 3 or above "*understand transitional safeguarding, including the developmental phase of adolescence, and the specific safeguarding risks for young people as they emerge into adulthood.*"
- Where training compliance is reported to regulators and commissioners, organisations should decide at what point they class someone as 'compliant' with training in the suggested 3-year refresher period. When reviewing training compliance, it is important regulators and commissioners, or other stakeholders seek clarification as to at what point in the cumulative learning journey that compliance is formally recorded for

Sally Wilson (UK Professional Lead for Older People and Dementia, Royal College of Nursing) and Philip Winterbottom, Head of Safeguarding, Cygnet Group, Chair of the Independent Health Providers Safeguarding Forum, August 2024

Reference: Wilson, S and Winterbottom, P. (2024) Adult Safeguarding: Roles and Competencies for Health Care Staff: Second Edition: October 2023 (Published July 2024) Summary of Changes Briefing. RCN, London

reporting purposes.

- Recognising this is often the most scrutinised level of training, the revised document highlights the expectations of providers to ensure staff are trained and have competencies relevant to their role.

#### **Level 4**

- The specialist roles definition has been expanded to include ‘Safeguarding Leads’: *“Named professionals, Safeguarding leads (and equivalent roles directly advising staff on safeguarding)”*
- For training at this level, the guidance now states the professionals/designations who can deliver this.

#### **Level 5**

- A change from a previous expectation of a minimum 24hrs of learning over 3 years to ‘*yearly updates*’ with no suggestions of specific learning hours, this change recognises the specialist dedicated roles are constantly learning at a higher level, building on the existing learning completed at level 4 which already sets out the suggested learning hours.
- Colleagues working at this level should be supported by their employers to engage in continuous professional development which includes but is not limited to academic courses of study, specialist learning, supervision and coaching, reflective practice. It is recognised that learning at this level should not be limited to safeguarding but could incorporate associated areas.



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