

Brief guide: inspecting safeguarding

Context

We must inspect the safeguarding arrangements of the service in each comprehensive inspection. It may be appropriate to look at the arrangements in most responsive inspections as well especially where patients may be at risk.

In general, three questions need to be answered:

- Do staff know what abuse is, how to identify it, and when patients may be at risk of abuse or neglect
- Do staff know how to act when they identify abuse or the potential for abuse?
- Does the organisation and its staff learn from safeguarding incidents or identified safeguarding risks?

All staff who have contact with patients should receive training in safeguarding children and/or adults. This includes reception staff. Staff should be supported by the service to act on and learn from safeguarding concerns.

Evidence required

The evidence required on safeguarding is outlined below. Speak to a range of senior and junior staff, patients and their families across the service to gather this information and, where appropriate, ask for anonymised examples to support the responses:

Ask all staff (including healthcare assistants, allied healthcare professionals, receptionists and porters) if they:

- know about the different types of abuse, how to identify abuse and can tell you about risks within their service or potential risks to patients from people external to the service e.g. family or friends
- know how to report concerns and are satisfied that senior staff/colleagues and other agencies act on them appropriately.
- hear back on lessons learnt from safeguarding incidents, where appropriate, and that they can see changes have been made to stop them from happening again.
- have regular safeguarding learning and development input (either child and adult safeguarding as appropriate) which tells them what they need to know, providing updates and further information about developments in safeguarding.

Ask senior staff, including managers, consultants, Board members and lead nurses if:

- there is an effective system in place for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns. Seek evidence of this.
- staff know about the system and how to use it.
- staff have good links with local partners, including the local authority and the police, and the families of people who use the service.
- there is an established approach to learning from safeguarding incidents, that the learning is shared with all staff, and processes and procedures are changed where necessary and communicated.
- staff have safeguarding training (either child and adult safeguarding as appropriate) in line with the Inter Collegiate document on the Roles and Competencies for Healthcare staff in safeguarding children and safeguarding adults and this training is effective. This will be

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evidenced by how many safeguarding concerns or referrals have been made and what about – need to see safeguarding in action.

Ask patients, their families, friends and carers if they:

- feel safe with staff, other patients or people visiting the service at all times.
- know what to do if they were worried or had any concerns.

You may wish to look into incidents where patients have been harmed or witnessed abuse of others. In these cases, conversations with patients should be handled sensitively and should only take place if initiated by them, if they are comfortable discussing the incident and if they will not be too adversely affected by discussing it. You must also make sure that there is support in place for the person following the conversation. It is crucial that these conversations lead to a formal referral to the local authority safeguarding team if the abuse has not already been reported to them.

You should also check that:

- there is a written safeguarding policy in place with clear procedures, governance and accountability at each level within the organisation
- safeguarding training (child and adult as appropriate) is undertaken by all staff and takes place in line with the Intercollegiate documents on the roles and competencies of health care staff in safeguarding children and safeguarding adults and there are records for this taking place.
- there are safeguarding records of all referrals to the local authority safeguarding team and associated statutory notification to the CQC. These should detail all actions taken to safeguard the individual concerned and other where appropriate.
- The system in place is effective and is able to be used and supports the organisation's approach to safeguarding, including the IT system used for recording information and that all staff who need to use it are competent to do so.

Intelligence

Before the inspection, look at whether the service has reported any safeguarding concerns for at least the last six months. If there are concerns, check that the correct actions have been taken quickly and are being followed up. If this is not happening, look at the reasons for this during the inspection. Patterns of particular types of abuse may suggest that there are issues with specific aspects of the care, treatment and support which need to be explored on inspection. The data pack may include details of previous safeguarding concerns and patterns. Issues to look out for include: incidents being repeated (for example, patient on patient assault); incidents being repeated even after action has been taken to prevent them happening again; or the same incidents happening across the provider (in different locations or wards).

Reporting

Report on safeguarding concerns in **safe** under the “**Assessing and managing risk to patients and staff**” section of the inspection report. Cover the three main points listed at the top of the ‘evidence required’ section in this guide.

Policy position

CQC's position on safeguarding can be found [here](#). It sets out the legal context and our role in relation to safeguarding. Internal staff can also look at CQC's Inspectors Safeguarding Handbook (under review).

<http://intranetplus.cqc.local/Registration%20and%20Compliance/Compliance/safeguarding/Files/Inspector%20Handbook%20on%20Safeguarding.pdf> which is also available externally <https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20180223%20CQC%20Inspector%20Handbook%20Safe%20guarding.pdf>

Link to regulations

Safeguarding is covered by [Regulation 13](#).

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