Safeguarding Policy for protecting children and adults at risk

Version 1: Last reviewed January 2024

Purpose and scope

At UCLPartners, our mission is to help five million people from North London to the Essex coast live longer, healthier lives. We solve the biggest health challenges through research and innovation, speeding up the delivery of solutions that improve health and care.

We believe that our work must involve the people whose lives are affected by our work — patients, carers, and public groups — so that they have opportunities to share their knowledge, experiences and views to actively shape what we do. Our approach to involving patients, carers and the public is outlined in our **Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement strategy**.

Throughout the work of UCLPartners, the safety and wellbeing of patients, carers, and the public is a priority. We have developed our Safeguarding Commitments to ensure that in all our activities:

- The safety and wellbeing of individuals and groups we are working with is considered and appropriate actions are taken to protect safety and wellbeing
- Individuals working on behalf of UCLPartners understand their safeguarding responsibilities and how to act upon concerns to protect individuals and groups
- Patients, carers, and public groups working with UCLPartners have an understanding of our organisational responsibilities to protecting their safety and wellbeing, and how to raise safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding patients, carers, and public groups that we work with is everyone's responsibility, and everyone has a role to play to ensure people's health, safety and wellbeing is protected.

What is safeguarding and who does it apply to?

Safeguarding are the actions that we can take to protect an individual's health, wellbeing and human rights — enabling individuals to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. It is fundamental to high-quality health and care and therefore is at the heart of the work that we do.

Safeguarding applies to children and adults at risk of harm. In this policy we use the following definitions:

a. A child is defined as any person under 18 years old

b. An adult at risk is an adult who has care and support needs and a result of these, is less able to protect themselves. Adults may be included in this at-risk group if they have any of the following:

- Learning disabilities
- Physical disabilities

- Mental ill health
- Dementia
- Brain injuries
- Substance misuse
- Frailty due to age

If you have contact with an adult who is experiencing abuse, harm or neglect, but is <u>not</u> classified as at risk, this is not reportable as a safeguarding concern. As part of your wider duty of care, you should support this individual by signposting to other resources (i.e. charities, support groups) that are available to help them.

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse is the misuse of power by one person over another and has an impact on a person's independence. Neglect can stop a person who is dependent on others for their basic needs being able to choose or control parts of their life.

Abuse or neglect can be carried out by anyone: from family members and friends, to care provisioners, to staff within an organisation.

There are many different types of abuse and neglect that individuals can experience, including:

- Physical abuse (i.e. hitting, slapping, spitting)
- Sexual abuse (i.e. inappropriate touching, sharing of sexualised images)
- Psychological abuse (i.e. emotional abuse, manipulation)
- Exploitation
- Financial and material abuse (i.e. stealing money or items)
- Discriminatory abuse (i.e. abuse of an individual due to their protected characteristics, as defined by the Equalities Act 2010)
- Organisational abuse (i.e. where statutory authorities have ignored the individual's needs)
- Modern slavery (i.e. human trafficking)
- Self-neglect, including self-harm (i.e. where the person is unable, or unwilling, to look after themselves)
- Domestic violence or abuse (this may include elements of all the above, but is a category in itself to ensure the correct agencies are involved in response).

It doesn't matter whether there was an intention to cause harm via abuse or neglect. **You can find out more about the types of abuse and neglect, and their indicators on the Social Care Institute for Excellence website.**

Our safeguarding commitments

At UCLPartners we seek to keep our patients, carers and public groups safe through:

- Having an organisational culture that does not tolerate abuse or harm to the patient, carer and public groups that we work with
- Requiring job candidates to disclose any 'unspent' criminal convictions as part of their pre-employment checks, and requiring staff to report any unspent convictions and/or cautions received during the course of employment at UCLPartners.

- Clear guidance that ensures all safeguarding concerns are recognised and reported immediately
- Ensuring UCLPartners staff understand their responsibility for safeguarding and for reporting incidents
- Ensuring patients, carers and public groups who work with us know where to go for help if they have a safeguarding concern to raise
- Ensuring all staff complete the 'Safeguarding' E-Learning module as part of their induction
- Having a nominated and visible Safeguarding Lead for UCLPartners who will:
  - Make themselves known to UCLPartners staff
  - Be a visible contact point for all patient, carer and public groups who may have a concern
  - Review our safeguarding procedures after every safeguarding incident, or annually, whichever is soonest
- Have nominated Safeguarding Deputies who will:
  - Manage the Safeguarding Lead's responsibilities when unavailable
  - Provide advice and support for UCLPartners staff on the design and delivery of work that involves patients, carers and the public, to minimise safeguarding issues
- Ensuring that events and activities within projects that may involve children or adults at risk have appropriate Risk Assessments carried out
- Making sure all safeguarding issues and concerns are recorded and kept in a secure environment (using MS Forms and permissions restriction in Sharepoint)

Procedure

UCLPartners staff are not responsible for investigating any harm, abuse or neglect. It is our responsibility to gather information about the situation accurately and share this information with the appropriate authorities on the same day that the concern is observed.

Safeguarding concerns should be reported to the Local Authority for investigation and resolution. Incidents should be reported to the Local Authority where the incident occurs, rather than Authority where our offices are based (see Safeguarding Standard Operating Procedures: Appendix A for contact details).

There are five principles that underpin the process of appropriately safeguarding individuals:
1) **RECOGNISE** concerns that a child or adult at risk is being harmed, or might be at risk of harm
2) **RESPOND** appropriately to the situation. **If an individual is disclosing information to you:**
   a. Do not promise to keep information secret, private, or confidential (*see below for further notes on confidentiality)*
   b. Listen actively without any judgement
   c. Make brief notes during the disclosure: who is making the disclosure and their contact information, what is being said (including slang and swearing), any observations you have about physical signs that could indicate harm/abuse, how the individual is behaving, and any information disclosed about the perpetrator. There is a copy of the UCLPartners Safeguarding Reporting form in the Safeguarding Standard Operating Procedures: Appendix B which may help support you in notetaking.

d. Do not ask individuals leading questions when trying to gather information for the report; instead use open questions
e. Reiterate questions if you are unclear as to the circumstances
f. Seek consent from the individual to report this concern if required (*see below for further notes on consent*)
g. Explain what happens next about reporting and investigation:
    i. **If a report to the Local Authority is to be made**: Make sure you have informed the individual that to make a report, information from within the disclosure will be shared with the Local Authority.
    ii. **If a report is not going to be made:** You should make it clear that even if a report is not made, UCLPartners are legally obligated to keep an internal report on the disclosure. You may wish to reassure the individual that only nominated Safeguarding Leads/Deputies have access to these reports once they are made.

3) **REPORT** the concerns as soon as possible (within 24 hours). Y**ou should always contact via telephone in the first instance.**
    a. If you think abuse/harm is taking place:
        i. **With children/young people:** report to the Local Authority or the police without delay**.**
        ii. **With at risk adults who have given consent:** report to the Local Authority or the police without delay**.**
        iii. **With at risk adults who have not given consent:** report the incident to the UCLPartners Safeguarding Lead/Deputies without delay.
        iv. **With at risk adults where lack of consent is being overruled** (see notes on consent below): report to the Local Authority or the police without delay**.**
    b. If you are unsure as to whether it is abuse or just a feeling: report the incident to the UCLPartners Safeguarding Lead/Deputies immediately.

4) **RECORD** the concerns appropriately.
    a. **If you are making a report external to UCLPartners:** Please fill in and return/submit the reporting forms provided by the Local Authorities and/or Police as soon as possible. You should use the notes made during disclosures to support you in doing so. Make sure you keep copies of any confirmation emails, or reference numbers, you are provided to confirm receipt of this information.

        You should then fill in the UCLPartners Safeguarding Reporting Form on MS Forms here and notify the Safeguarding Lead/Deputies of the submission.
    b. **If you are not reporting external to UCLPartners: fill in the UCLPartners Safeguarding Reporting Form on MS Forms here** and notify the Safeguarding Lead/Deputies of the submission.

5) **RESOLUTION and escalation**: if you have made a report you should follow up with the Local Authority and/or Police to confirm they received and are investigating referrals. You can take further action/escalation if you are dissatisfied with the response of the those investigating the incident.

Once the concern has been raised with the Local Authority Safeguarding team, it is their responsibility to investigate and take appropriate action. In the first instance they will hold an initial Safeguarding strategy meeting as a team before beginning an investigation. The investigation is

followed by Case Conference meetings, which continue to be held until the safeguarding issue has been resolved. Those who make reports may be asked to attend Case Conference meetings as a witness.

It is most likely that you will not be informed about the results of your safeguarding referral for the sake of privacy.

Notes on Confidentiality:

Confidentiality is an important principle that enables people to feel safe in sharing their experiences, reflections and concerns. However, the right to confidentiality is not absolute: and sharing relevant information with the right authorities at the right time is fundamental to good safeguarding practice.

You should not promise complete confidentiality in your work. Instead, you should make it clear that confidentiality may be broken if:

- There is immediate danger to themselves or another person
- A safeguarding concern is raised about a child under the age of 18 years
- A safeguarding concern is raised about an at risk adult, and this at risk adult gives consent for reporting to a Local Authority
- A safeguarding concern is raised about an at risk adult and this at risk adult and consent is unable to be given due to capacity

Confidentiality is not broken by talking to people within your organisation: so if you are a UCLPartners member of staff and have concerns that you want to discuss with a UCLPartners colleague or the UCLPartners Safeguarding Lead/Deputies, you would be able to do so without breaking confidentiality. When talking to another person in the organisation about your concerns, you may want to keep identifying information to a minimum and focus on the scenario.

Notes on Consent:

To report a safeguarding concern about an at risk adult, you need to have their consent to do so (unless you believe the person lacks the capacity to consent). This is because where adults have competency, we have no legal authority to make decisions on their behalf.

During the process of responding to disclosures from at risk adults, you should seek to gain their consent to make a report. To encourage consent you can explain the advantages of consent and what support may be available from this; reassure them that as far as possible they will remain in control of the decision-making in investigations, and be clear about who information will be shared with (the Local Authority).

You may overrule the lack of consent in the following circumstances:

- If there is immediate risk to themselves or others
- If you think the individual lacks the mental capacity to decide (as outlined in the Mental Health Capacity Act 2014).

- o If you are unsure of how to make this judgement or would like support in the decision-making process, contact the Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy to discuss
- If a serious crime has been, or is going to be, committed
- If there is a legal requirement to do so
- If the safeguarding concern has a public interest that outweighs the individual's interest (i.e. a disclosure is made about abuse by staff within an NHS Trust)
- If you suspect the individual is being coerced or under duress
- If the individual gives information which indicates a possible terrorist threat

You do not need to get consent from children and young people (under 18) to report a safeguarding concern.

If you do overrule an individual's lack of consent, you should explain to the individual that the information will be shared without consent and why. You should then also record the rationale, and note that this discussion has been had, in any reports you make.

UCLPartners safeguarding contacts:

If you have any questions relating to safeguarding and this policy, please contact the Safeguarding contacts below. This team can also help you in deciding if actions should be taken and support you through the reporting process.

Name	Email address
Safeguarding telephone contact	020 3821 6506
Safeguarding inbox	**safeguarding@uclpartners.com**
Dominique Allwood (Safeguarding Lead)	**Dominique.Allwood@uclpartners.com**
Natt Day (Safeguarding Deputy)	**Natt.Day@uclpartners.com**

Policy review:

This Policy will be reviewed as necessary (when legislation changes), always following a serious incident, and at least once a year.

Storage, Retention and Destruction of Safeguarding Records:

If anyone within UCLPartners has a concern about the welfare of a child or an adult at risk, it is vital all relevant details are recorded. This is done regardless of whether the concerns are shared with other organisations such as the Local Authority or the Police. We keep these records to help us:

- Identify concerns at an early stage
- Identify patterns of concern and build a more complete picture of what a person may be experiencing
- Monitor and manage the safeguarding practices in our organisation to ensure we are always protecting the safety and wellbeing of those we are working with

<u>Storage of Records:</u>
UCLPartners staff are required to fill out and submit an internal Safeguarding Reporting Form after every disclosure or incident.

Forms are completed and submitted to the Safeguarding Leads/Deputies via MS Forms. Access to the MS Forms data is restricted to only the Safeguarding Leads/Deputies. Staff must notify the Safeguarding Team of the successful submission immediately.

Safeguarding Lead/Deputies review submitted form and supporting files to ensure all appropriate actions have been taken and the reporting form is complete. If complete, the information gets moved to an individual's Safeguarding Case File for our retention period. Safeguarding Case Files are stored on Sharepoint and are permissions protected with only Safeguarding Leads and Deputies authorised to access them.

<u>Retention of Records:</u>
An individual's Safeguarding Case File will be retained for a period of 6 years from the last contact with UCLPartners. During this retention period, they will remain within Sharepoint in a permissions protected folder with only Safeguarding Leads and Deputies authorised to access them.

<u>Destruction of Records:</u>
Once it has been confirmed by the Safeguarding Lead/Deputies that Safeguarding Reporting Form is complete and has been transitioned into a Safeguarding Case File, staff who have submitted reports will destroy their original copies of the information. Any physical information will be shredded and disposed of in the confidential waste within the UCLPartners office; whilst all files should be deleted and purged from the system.

After the retention period of 6 years has elapsed, the Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will be required to delete and purge the Safeguarding Case File from the system. If deleted/purged by the Safeguarding Lead, a Deputy should check and confirm removal of the files; and vice versa.

If an individual would like to make a request to access a copy of the information in their Safeguarding Case File, please make a request directly to the UCLPartners Safeguarding Team: safeguarding@uclpartners.com