

Healthwatch North Tyneside policies and procedures

Safeguarding Adults

July 2026

1. Policy

Healthwatch North Tyneside (HWNT) values and encourages the involvement of members of the public in its work. We are committed to promoting their wellbeing ensuring the protection of their health, safety and general welfare while in the company or care of our staff or volunteers.

Protecting people and safeguarding is a priority for HWNT. We recognise that in the course of our activities, our representatives may come into contact with adults who may be experiencing, or at risk of, harm, abuse or neglect; have needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and, as a result of those care and support needs are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect. Adults at risk of abuse may:

- have an illness or condition affecting their mental or physical health
- have a learning disability
- suffer from drug or alcohol problems

Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances. Abuse and neglect can have devastating effects on individuals, families and wider society. Promoting the safeguarding of adults will permeate our conduct.

Therefore, we will:

- make sure that trustees, employees, volunteers and other staff know about safeguarding. They will be asked to complete safeguarding children and adults training appropriate to their role and will follow the guidance in the Care Act 2014
- ensure that adults are safeguarded whilst working for, volunteering or interacting with us

- have appropriate procedures in place
- check that people are suitable to act in their roles
- know to spot and refer or report concerns
- have a clear system of referring or reporting to relevant organisations as soon as they suspect or identify concerns
- set out risks and how they will manage these in a risk register, which is regularly reviewed
- be quick to respond to concerns and comply with the North Tyneside safeguarding adults procedural framework
- treat failure to address safeguarding issues as a very serious matter
- in line with Charity Commission requirements, review this policy every year.

2. Guiding principles

We value and encourage the involvement of people who may be vulnerable, both in our own work and in the work of other organisations. We are committed to promoting the well-being and enjoyment of adults at risk, and protecting their health, safety and general welfare while in the company or care of our staff or volunteers.

3. Procedure

Selection of staff, trustees and volunteers

We will take all available steps to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with vulnerable adults.

A thorough selection procedure for positions, both paid and unpaid, which could involve unsupervised contact with a vulnerable adult will be implemented to assess a person's suitability. This includes an enhanced DBS check where relevant to the role.

Applicants for positions that may involve contact with a vulnerable adult must provide:

- Details of previous experience working with vulnerable adults, either voluntary or paid
- A reference from their current or most recent employer or, if they have no employment history, from a lecturer, teacher or other appropriate professional
- Details of any 'unspent' convictions;
- Details of 'spent' convictions, where the role necessitates a DBS check
- Consent for a criminal record check to be undertaken.

Shortlisted applicants for posts, whether paid or unpaid will be offered an interview at which information contained in the application form will be probed and we will question any previous job or volunteering history connected with vulnerable adults and determine why applicants left. Any gaps in work history will be probed and motives for working with vulnerable adults discussed fully. We reserve the right to contact referees if we have concerns about any claims made by applicants or suspicions about omissions.

During the first 6 months a new volunteer or employee will be supervised closely, especially if they have never worked with vulnerable adults before. They will not be left unsupervised or be working alone with a vulnerable adult over an extended period during the first 6 months.

Working with adults at risk

This policy is intended to support staff and volunteers working within HWNT to understand their role and responsibilities in safeguarding adults. All staff and volunteers are expected to follow this policy.

The key objectives of this policy are for all employees and volunteers HWNT to:

- have an overview of adult safeguarding
- be clear about their responsibility to safeguard adults
- ensure the necessary actions are taken where an adult with care and support needs is deemed to be at risk

This policy is based on:

- The Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support statutory guidance
- The North Tyneside safeguarding adults procedural framework

What is Safeguarding adults?

Please refer to the Council's video for safeguarding awareness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pff0f5Xqwb8&feature=youtu.be>

'Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.'

All adults should be able to live free from fear and harm. But some may find it hard to get the help and support they need to stop abuse.

An adult may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to many reasons, including their mental or physical incapacity, sensory loss or physical or learning disabilities. This could be an adult who is usually able to protect themselves from harm but maybe unable to do so because of an accident, disability, frailty, addiction or illness.

HWNT adheres to following the six key principles that underpin safeguarding work (See Care Act guidance)

- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Proportionality
- Protection
- Partnership
- Accountability

HWNT will not tolerate the abuse of adults. Staff/volunteers should ensure that their work reflects the principles above and ensure the adult with care and support needs is involved in their decisions and informed consent is obtained. HWNT will ensure that the safeguarding actions taken are the least intrusive response to the risk. Partners from the community should be involved in any safeguarding work in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. HWNT should be transparent and accountable in delivering safeguarding actions.

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)

MSP means a case should be person-led and outcome-focused. The individual should be involved in identifying how best to respond to their safeguarding situation by giving them more choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.

HWNT will not tolerate the abuse of adults. HWNT will ensure that adults are involved in their safeguarding arrangements and each individual is dealt with on a case by case basis. As adults may have different preferences, histories and life styles, the same process may not work for all.

Who do adult safeguarding duties apply to?

The Care Act 2014 sets out that adult safeguarding duties apply to any adult who:

- has care and support needs, and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect, and
- is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect, because of those needs.

Who do I go to if I am concerned?

The named responsible persons for safeguarding duties for HWNT are the Director and the Board safeguarding lead.

All staff and volunteers must contact the Director or the Board safeguarding lead for any concerns/queries they have regarding safeguarding adults. A log of the concern must be kept.

The Director and the Board safeguarding lead are responsible for decisions about notifying adult social services if required and may consider alternative actions, where necessary.

The Director and the Chair of Trustees will also ensure that the safeguarding adults policies and procedures are in place and reviewed annually. They will ensure a safe environment is promoted for staff and volunteers and adults accessing the service.

The Director and the Chair of Trustees will ensure staff and volunteers are up to date with their safeguarding adults training.

What should I do if I am concerned?

Staff and volunteers at HWNT who have any adult safeguarding concerns should:

1. Respond
 - Take emergency action if someone is at immediate risk of harm/in need of urgent medical attention. Dial 999 for emergency services
 - Get brief details about what has happened and what the adult would like done about it, but do not probe or conduct a mini-investigation
 - Tell the individual that HWNT's policy is to inform the authorities if we suspect there is a serious risk of harm and you may make a referral after discussion with HWNT's safeguarding lead. Make note of any response.
2. Discuss and report

- Report any potential safeguarding concerns to the Director or to the HWNT Safeguarding Board Lead or if unavailable, contact North Tyneside Council on (0191) 643 2777. Use North Tyneside Safeguarding Adults Board Decision Support Tool to support your decision making [Resources — North Tyneside Safeguarding Adults Board \(ntsab.org\)](#). Agree on whether a safeguarding referral is necessary or whether another action may be needed.
3. Record
- If you have an immediate concern about the safety or welfare of a vulnerable adult in North Tyneside, complete the Council's [online reporting form](#). The Director will normally do this on behalf of HWNT.
 - Keep records about safeguarding concerns confidential and in a location where the alleged abuser will not have access to the record. Access should not be given to any unauthorised personal for accessing confidential information including the sharing of passwords.

What are your roles and responsibilities?

All employees, trustees and volunteers at HWNT are expected to report any concerns to the named person for safeguarding. If the allegation is against one of HWNT members, volunteers, trustees or directors, seek advice from HWNT safeguarding lead (the Director or HWNT Board Safeguarding Lead as appropriate).

HWNT will not conduct its own safeguarding enquiry unless instructed to do so by the local authority. The local authority will decide on who will lead on a safeguarding enquiry should it progress to that stage.

Staff and volunteers should, as much as possible given the role of HWNT, ensure that the adult with care and support needs is involved at all stages of their safeguarding enquiry ensuring a person-centred approach is adopted.

Why is it important to take action?

It may be difficult for adults with care and support needs to protect themselves and to report abuse. They rely on you to help them.

Confidentiality and information sharing

HWNT expects all staff, volunteers, trustees to maintain confidentiality at all times. In line with Data Protection laws, HWNT does not share information if not required. Please see our confidentiality policy

It should however be noted that information should be shared with authorities if an adult is deemed to be at risk of immediate harm. Sharing the right information, at the right time, with the right people can make all the difference to preventing harm. For further guidance on information sharing and safeguarding see:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/safeguarding-adults/sharing-information/keymessages.asp>

4. Other relevant policies, guidance and information

This policy should be implemented in conjunction with other policies, information and guidance including:

- HWNT Induction and Training Policy and Procedure
- HWNT Conduct Policy and Procedure
- HWNT Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- HWNT Grievance Policy and Procedure
- HWNT Comments, Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedure
- HWNT Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure
- HWNT Equalities Policy
- HWNT Volunteer Policy
- HWNT Disclosure and Barring Policy
- HWNT Whistleblowing Policy
- HWNT Risk Management Policy
- North Tyneside Council's Safeguarding Adults Policy
- The Care Act 2014

Document classification	Public	Document reference	
Document category	Organisation	Policy introduced	May 2014
Reviewed by	Paul McKelvie	Date updated	July 2026
Approved by	Board	Date approved	July 2026
Next review due	July 2027		