

## 7 Minute Briefing – Duty to Safeguard Adults (January 2026)

### 1. Why is the Duty to Safeguard Adults Important?

Several [Salford Safeguarding Adult Reviews](#) (SARs) (Including SARs ‘Peter’, ‘Matthew’, ‘Francis’, ‘Harry’ & ‘Steven’) and [Child Safeguarding Practice Review ‘Yvonne’](#) have highlighted situations where the opportunity to safeguard an adult was missed because professionals have not fully understood the ‘duty to Safeguard’ according to the Care Act 2014.

If professionals don’t understand their duty to safeguard adults and concerns are not raised, the consequences can be tragic. This applies to those working with both adults and children as everyone should maintain a [‘Think Family’](#) approach.

### 2. What is the Duty to Safeguard Adults?

Under [Section 42 of the Care Act 2014](#), local authorities have a legal duty to carry out enquiries when they believe an adult may be at risk. **This duty applies when an adult:**

- **Has care and support needs** (regardless of whether the local authority is meeting those needs),
- **Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect,** and
- **Cannot protect themselves** because of their care and support needs.

This safeguarding duty applies even if the person does not meet the Care Act eligibility criteria for services. The Act also makes clear that safeguarding is not only about responding to risks—it is about promoting and protecting an adult’s overall wellbeing.

### 3. What are Care and Support Needs?

The Care Act defines *care and support needs* as the support an adult may require to manage daily life due to illness, disability, or age. Learning from SARs shows that less visible issues—such as emotional distress, coercive control, isolation, self-neglect, and alcohol or drug misuse—can significantly affect wellbeing and create care and support needs even when no physical help or funded services is needed.

### 4. Service Eligibility vs. Safeguarding

Eligibility for services focuses on whether an adult is unable to achieve two or more [eligibility outcomes](#), such as managing nutrition, personal hygiene, toileting needs etc. **Safeguarding is separate.** It is not determined by whether someone does not meet these outcomes or qualifies for services. Safeguarding is about risk, safety and wellbeing—specifically whether a person is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect.

### 5. Raising a Safeguarding Concern

If you are worried that an adult with care and support needs may be at risk of abuse, neglect, or harm, you must **raise a safeguarding concern as a priority** via the [Adult Social Care online portal](#). Some enquiries may have to be made even if the person is declining support. If you are unsure whether to raise a concern, seek

advice from your manager or safeguarding lead. Do not hesitate to ask for guidance, and if you remain unsure after doing so, **raise the concern**. Remember to dial 999 first if the adult is at risk of immediate harm or a crime has been committed.

## 6. After you Raise a Concern

After a safeguarding concern is raised in Salford, the Adult Social Care Safeguarding Team acknowledges the concern and reviews the information to assess risk and urgency. They may need to gather more information if the adult is not already known or pass the concern to the long term support teams. Don't worry if it doesn't lead to a safeguarding enquiry—**if you are worried raising a concern is the right thing to do**. Safeguarding is everyone's business. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, follow the [SSAB escalation policy](#).

## 7. Useful Resources

- [Adult Social Care online portal](#).
- [Worried About An Adult | Salford Safeguarding Adults Board](#)
- [Worried about a child•Salford City Council](#)
- [Think Family | Partners in Salford](#)
- [Care Act 2014](#)
- [7 Minute Briefings and Factsheets | SSAB](#)
- [Upcoming Training | Salford Safeguarding Adults Board](#)
- [Escalation Policy and Procedure | SSAB](#)