

## Thresholds for initiating Safeguarding Procedures

### What degree of abuse justifies intervention through Safeguarding Procedures?

In determining what degree of harm justifies intervention through Safeguarding Procedures, the factors to consider will include:

- the vulnerability of the victim
- balance of power between victim and alleged perpetrator
- capacity of victim and perpetrator
- the nature and extent of the harm caused
- the frequency of incidents
- the impact on the person
- the views of the person and their carers
- whether the harm caused constitutes a criminal offence
- whether others (vulnerable adults or children) are at risk

It is important to note that abuse may not be deliberate or intentional; however, where significant harm has occurred as a result of an act or omission, whether intentional or not, then Safeguarding Procedures should be initiated.

Determining whether or not abuse of a person has taken place is not always a straightforward matter, particularly when the concerns relate to neglect. A judgement will be required about whether an act or an act of omission has caused significant harm. The multi-agency arrangements for responding to concerns exist to establish whether or not abuse has occurred. It is very important that these arrangements (Strategy discussion and Strategy meeting) are triggered if there is a possibility that abuse has occurred. Some very serious abuse only comes to light because people raising the alert have drawn the attention of social care or police to what may appear to be relatively minor concerns. In some cases it is the repetition of minor actions or omissions that collectively will amount to abuse. The expectation in the Cheshire West and Chester multi agency Safeguarding Adults Procedures of anyone suspecting abuse is if in doubt report.

However, there will be occasions when it is appropriate for provider agencies to respond to incidents of poor practice without the need to initiate multi-agency Safeguarding Procedures. Poor practice will always require a response because if not challenged it can result in a further deterioration in standards leading to longer-term difficulties or even catastrophic consequences for some individuals. However, in many instances the Provider Manager will be the appropriate person to take appropriate action.

The following Guidance may be used to assist in distinguishing between poor practice i.e. failure to meet a service user's care needs, which should be managed by a provider agency and abuse which should trigger Safeguarding Procedures. The following table illustrates **examples** of circumstances in which investigations should be led by providers and those which should be led by Adult social care teams; please note this is **not** an exhaustive list.