

Good Practice when Preserving Evidence

Your priority when abuse is suspected or has taken place is to safeguard the individual **first** and **foremost**.

Has a criminal offence occurred?
Is emergency medical assistance required?



Do you need to contact emergency services?
Police, Ambulance or a GP

The 3 P's that you should consider are:

Person(s), Place(s) and Property

Why and what should be considered?



If sexual assault or rape is suspected or disclosed, the adult at risk should not change their clothes or wash. If the person wears incontinence aids they must be left in situ and not be destroyed. You should wear plastic gloves if at possible to prevent contamination of evidence. Is there CCTV footage? **Remember, Secure It!**



If you witnessed the abuse or you are the first person at the scene you should consider securing the room and other rooms where abuse or neglect may have occurred. You should always try to prevent anyone entering the scene(s) to prevent contamination of evidence this will assist the police should they need to gather evidence. Is there CCTV footage? **Remember, Secure It!**



If you suspect financial abuse, you should leave belongings such as bank statements and cheque books in situ wherever possible should the police need to gather evidence. If it is likely people will be able to access these types of property, you should consider securing that property. Wear plastic gloves, handle with limited contact e.g. by an edge and place in plastic bags to preserve any evidence e.g. fingerprints. Is there CCTV footage? **Remember, Secure It!**

You should:

1. Record the date and time of any disclosure made or when you witnessed/suspected the abuse or neglect.
2. Record the exact words of the adult at risk and **ASK** them what they would want to happen next.
3. Separate fact from opinion e.g. fact = it was 9.00am, opinion = I feel they were worried.
4. Record the location.
5. Record any other parties that were present e.g. staff, patients and times.
6. Sign any notes you have recorded, date them and keep them secure.
7. Share your concerns and recording/notes with your line manager or above.
8. Familiarise yourself with your own internal 'Whistleblowing/Confidential Reporting' policy.

You should not:

1. Make promises you cannot keep.
2. Investigate the abuse yourself, you should report to your 'line manager'.
3. Inform the family of the person unless this is their wish (seek guidance if there are issues relating to mental capacity).
4. Take photographs of the adult at risk, 'remember dignity and respect', use body maps. Appropriate advice should always be sought if needed.
5. Lead the adult at risk into any detailed questioning (you should always allow them to relay their own version of events only).
6. Interview any witnesses other than to obtain facts, e.g. the time, date, their location. This will assist in establishing a list of people, which may need to be given to the police or lead agency.
7. Interview, alert or discuss with the person(s) alleged to have caused harm or abuse (Managers should refer to their organisation internal Human Resources procedures or seek advice).

**Remember it is not your role to investigate.
Best Practice is to SECURE the SCENE should any criminality have occurred and allow the lead agency to investigate the concerns.**

**You can contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to report concerns
Office Hours: 01325 742030
Out of Office Hours: 08702 402994**

**For advice only contact the Safeguarding Adults Team
01325 406460/406747**