**GUIDANCE: PRESSURE ULCERS AND SAFEGUARDING**

Although risk of pressure damage can often be reduced through appropriate personalised care planning, pressure ulcers do not automatically suggest abuse or neglect. Only a minority of cases are likely to warrant raising a safeguarding concern with the local authority though Safeguarding Adults Procedures.

All concerns about pressure damage must however be reported to a registered health professional who will ensure access to appropriate health services and report it through the organisations internal patient safety reporting system..

A practising Registered Nurse (RN), with experience in wound management and not directly involved in the provision of care to the service user, will review the person’s care and complete An Adult Safeguarding Decision Guide Assessment to help determine if there are concerns about abuse or neglect. [See Appendix 3, Safeguarding Adults Protocol: Pressure Ulcers and the Interface with a Safeguarding Enquiry (Department of Health and Social Care 2018)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756243/safeguarding-adults-protocol-pressure-ulcers.pdf)

**The following table gives examples of situations and suggested responses (See overleaf for Key and further guidance)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Pressure Ulcers: Is it abuse or neglect and need does it need reporting to the Local Authority safeguarding Adults team?** | | | | |
| **Unlikely** | **Possibly** | **Probably** | **Definitely** | **Definitely & Consider Safeguarding Adults Review** |
| Any skin damage from pressure (Any category of Pressure Ulcer or suspected deep tissue injury) where a registered nurse with experience in wound management concludes that there are no safeguarding concerns (using the Safeguarding Decision Guide assessment or Root Cause Analysis). | Any skin damage from pressure (Any category of Pressure Ulcer or suspected deep tissue injury) where there is differing opinion as to whether there are safeguarding concerns (using the Safeguarding Decision Guide assessment or Root Cause Analysis). | Any skin damage from pressure where a registered nurse with experience in wound management concludes that there are safeguarding concerns (using the Safeguarding Decision Guide assessment or Root Cause Analysis).  Failure to respond or seek health support in relation to any category of skin damage due to pressure. | Repeated safeguarding concerns in relation to the prevention and management of skin damage due to pressure.  Safeguarding concerns relating a pressure ulcer(s) coincide with other safeguarding concerns. | Death from septicaemia as a result of un-managed pressure ulcer. |

**This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Joint Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy & Procedures and decisions should be underpinned by the six safeguarding principles: Empowerment, Prevention, Proportionality, Protection, Partnership and Accountability.**

**Every event or concern must be considered on it’s own merits, to determine whether there are concerns about abuse or neglect, that need to be shared with the local authority so that they can undertake safeguarding enquiries.**

**General Considerations**

* Whether the concern is about abuse (including neglect) of an adult(s) at risk.
* What the adult at risk wants to happen (or their best interests if they lack mental capacity to make the decision).
* Risk of abuse and neglect to others who may not be able to protect themselves from abuse.
* Whether safeguarding enquiries are needed reduce risk of further abuse.
* The severity of harm or risk of harm.
* The adult’s vital interests (to prevent serious harm or distress or life threatening situations).

***KEY***

**Unlikely: Could be addressed through single agency action, e.g. care management, quality or incident management systems, complaints or personnel policies.**

**Possibly: Consider safeguarding procedures, but could be addressed through single agency action, e.g. care management, quality or incident management systems, complaints or personnel policies.**

**Probably: Likely to require safeguarding adults procedures or discussion with local authority safeguarding team**

**Definitely: High expectation that concern will be shared with local authority though safeguarding Adults Procedures.**

**Definitely and SAR: High expectation that concern will be shared with local authority and considered for a Safeguarding Adult Review.**