**GUIDANCE: FALLS AND SAFEGUARDING**

Falls can have multiple causes and may lead to serious physical and psychological damage, including pain and discomfort, bone fractures, loss of confidence and injuries that can lead to death. Although the risk from falls can often be reduced though personalised care planning and environmental changes, a fall does not automatically suggest abuse or neglect and each individual case should be examined in order to determine whether there is a safeguarding concern.

Issues around falls risks may be appropriately dealt with through e.g. care planning, quality monitoring, patient safety or complaints routes. Conversely, where there are concerns that a fall is as a result of abuse or neglect, including e.g. intentional over-sedation or failure to reasonably manage falls risks, then the local multiagency safeguarding adults procedures should also be followed, after taking any immediate action needed to minimise harm.

In addition you may be required to report medication incidents to e.g. the CQC or whoever commissions the service.

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

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| ***Falls: 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** |
| Isolated incident of fall (un-witnessed or witnessed) where person has received appropriate medical treatment.Repeated falls incidents where the care plan shows that all reasonable steps have been taken to review and reduce risk  | Failure to implement or review a falls risk assessment or care plan to reflect changing condition or frequent falls.Failure to consider environmental falls risks  | Harm resulting from failure to implement or review a falls risk assessment / care plan, to reflect changing conditionFailure to monitor or seek appropriate medical advice, treatment or support following a fall. | Repeated failure to seek appropriate medical advice or support following a fall.Repeated failure to implement or review falls risk assessments. Unmanaged falls resulting from intentional over-sedation Harm as a result of not following falls risk assessments / care plans failure  | Fall resulting in irreversible harm or death, due to neglect or abuse (Including failure to review or follow care plans).Fall resulting in irreversible harm or death due to breaches in health and safety legislation.  |

**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.**