

## Common safeguarding issues – Pressure Ulcers

This guidance is designed to help managers and professionals know when to report pressure ulcers in accordance with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board's procedures.

Pressure ulcers are primarily a clinical issue and should be referred to an appropriate health professional in the first instance. However, where there are obvious signs of neglect should be referred to safeguarding.

Many people who are frail and have restricted mobility are at risk of developing ulcers on the points of their body which receive the most pressure. These are known as pressure ulcers and are sometimes called bed ulcers or ulcers. Pressure ulcers start with skin discolouration but, if left untreated, they can become very deep and infected; in the worst cases they can be life threatening. With management and care, pressure ulcers can be avoided in most cases (some estimates suggest as high as 95%).

Whilst not all pressure ulcers are due to neglect (whether deliberate or unintentional) each individual case should be considered, taking into account the person's medical condition, prognosis, any skin conditions and other signs of neglect, such as poor personal hygiene and living environment, poor nutrition and hydration and their own views on their care and treatment.

Staff should also refer to:

1. Their own organisation's policies and procedures on pressure ulcers, and
2. Other relevant local and national guidelines, protocols and policies e.g. NICE Guidance, incident reporting policies.

For further details please refer to the Threshold of Needs matrix overleaf.

**Reporting:** To be reported within one working day of establishing it is a safeguarding issue.

### **Thames Valley Police**

Cases of serious neglect should be reported to the police.

Non-emergency number: **101**

In an emergency dial: **999**

### **Oxfordshire County Council**

Wherever possible please use the on-line referral form at:

<http://www.osab.co.uk/public/reporting-concerns/>

Telephone: 0845 050 7666

## Threshold of Needs Matrix:

**Guidance:** This tool does not replace professional judgement or aim to set a rigid threshold for intervention. It helps you consider the type and seriousness of abuse and the circumstances in which a referral to adult social care may be required.

Types of abuse and seriousness	Levels of harm and related indicators/examples			
Level	Lower Level Harm Would not normally be reported to safeguarding	Significant ↔ Very significant Harm Would normally need to be reported to safeguarding	Critical Must be reported to safeguarding in all cases	
Pressure Ulcers	Single or isolated incident of Grade 1 or 2 pressure ulcer	<p>Grade 3 &amp; 4, Unstageable and Suspected Deep Tissue Injury or multiple grade 2 pressure ulcers where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A care plan is in place</li> <li>• Action is being taken</li> <li>• Other relevant professionals have been notified</li> <li>• There has been full discussion with the patient, their family or representative</li> <li>• There are no other indicators of abuse or neglect</li> </ul>	<p>Grade 3 &amp; 4, Unstageable and Suspected Deep Tissue Injury pressure ulcers or multiple grade 1 and 2 pressure ulcers where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The care plan has NOT been fully implemented</li> <li>• It is NOT CLEAR that professional advice or support has been sought at the appropriate time. e.g. Tissue Viability Team</li> <li>• There have been other similar incidents or areas of concern</li> <li>• There are other indicators of abuse or neglect</li> </ul>	<p>Grade 3 &amp; 4, Unstageable and Suspected Deep Tissue Injury where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person has been as assessed as NOT having mental capacity and treatment and prevention NOT provided</li> <li>• No assessment and care planning has not been completed or is of very poor quality</li> <li>• No professional advice or support has been sought at the appropriate time, e.g. Tissue Viability Team</li> <li>• There are other indicators of abuse or neglect</li> <li>• Evidence demonstrates this is part of a pattern or trend</li> </ul>
		<p>Only exceptional cases of self-neglect, where the person has mental capacity and has refused treatment and prevention strategies, will trigger adult safeguarding. All standard interventions must be used first to manage risk, e.g. Care Management/Care Plan Approach/Multi-Disciplinary Team, providing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A clear capacity assessment is in place.</li> <li>2. Evidence is available to show concerns were raised and support was sought from a relevant professional e.g. Tissue Viability Team.</li> <li>3. There has been full discussion with the patient, their family or representative.</li> </ol>		