



Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
Health and Social Care Trust



NIAS Referral guidance

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Referral Procedure: UPDATE August 2023

Version 1.0.1 10/03/23	For use by:
	Advanced Paramedics
	Paramedics
	Registered Nurses (CSD)
	Emergency Medical Technicians
	Ambulance Care Attendants

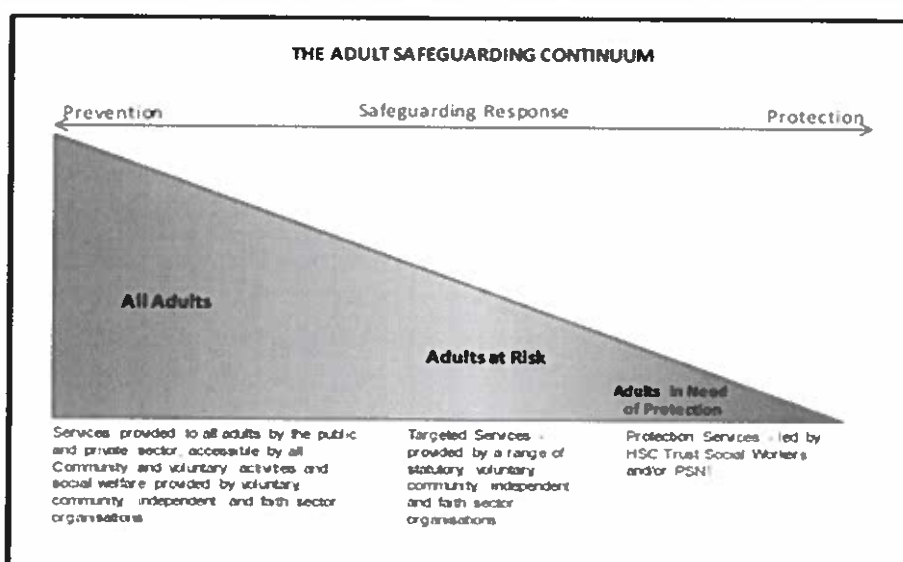
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1. Background

Safeguarding is a broad continuum of activity and is everyone's responsibility. It ranges from prevention and early intervention, to risk assessment and management of adults and children at risk of harm and in need of protection. At all stages along this continuum, safeguarding interventions will aim to provide appropriate information, supportive responses and services which become increasingly more targeted and specialist as the risk of harm increases. The Adult Safeguarding Continuum outlines the type of services which are required for patients at different levels of the safeguarding process.

The Adult Safeguarding Continuum



2. NIAS Safeguarding Background

Prior to September 2023 the NIAS safeguarding process has involved phoning all concerns, whether for a person at risk of harm or a person in need of protection, through to HSC Social Work teams or the regional Emergency Social Work Service. This has not always been the most appropriate referral route, and has caused challenges for NIAS operational staff. HSC Social Workers also encounter challenges when they are being utilised for cases which do not meet their statutory threshold, particularly emergency social work services.

Recognising these challenges with the current process we have worked collaboratively to develop two distinct pathways for NIAS Welfare and Safeguarding referrals.:

NIAS staff must use the inclusion criteria to decide which pathway they should use.

3. Person at risk of harm/welfare pathway

3.1. Inclusion Criteria- Person at risk of harm/welfare

A welfare referral should be made for any **adult 18 or over** if any of the following have been identified and **consent has been given:**

- Poor housing conditions
- Isolation/loneliness and requires support
- Carers needs e.g. struggling to provide care to a family member
- Food poverty
- Struggling to pay bills or heat house
- Self- neglect
- Current package of care is not meeting patient's needs

3.2. Exclusion Criteria - Person at risk of harm/welfare

- Less than 18 years old
- Consent refused (You must seek explicit consent from the patient)
- Patient meets 'in need of protection' threshold and requires a safeguarding referral

3.3. Making a referral for a person at risk of harm/welfare

To make a welfare referral please complete a datix and when prompted select **Welfare Referral** in the safeguarding section. The following information must be included:

- Name of person making referral and role within NIAS
- Name of person being referred
- Phone number of person being referred
- Address and post code of person being referred
- Reason for referral

***Consent must be given for this referral to be completed and this must be confirmed on datix when prompted.**

3.4. What happens after you complete a person at risk of harm referral

Once you have submitted a welfare referral on datix the NIAS safeguarding team will pick this up, ensure all details are included and will send the referral to the appropriate support service in their HSC Trust area.

The NIAS Safeguarding team will also contact the person who completed the referral to provide an update.

4. Person in need of protection/safeguarding pathway

4.1. Inclusion Criteria- person in need of protection/safeguarding

A safeguarding referral **MUST** be made where any of the following have been identified:

- Any safeguarding concerns involving children
- Any concerns in relation to a patient who is looked after by a HSC Trust
- Suspected or confirmed abuse or neglect:
 - Physical Abuse
 - Emotional Abuse
 - Neglect
 - Sexual Abuse
 - Financial
 - Domestic violence
 - Institutional abuse
 - Modern slavery

4.2. Making a referral for a person in need of protection

A person in need of protection requires Social Work intervention and **MUST** be referred by phone through to Social Work services which are available 24 / 7 across Northern Ireland. To make the referral, NIAS staff or persons / agencies working on behalf of NIAS should ring EAC on 02890 404021 and request the social work team number for the location they are in.

NB – The Regional Emergency Social Work Service (0800 1979995) (RESWS) manage all calls out of hours including weekends and bank holidays.

NIAS staff or persons / agencies working on behalf of NIAS will then contact the social work team and in addition to providing information about their concerns will also need to provide:

- Patient name
- Date of birth
- Address
- Incident number
- Crew name
- Contact number
- Next of kin details
- Does the patient have a community nurse / social worker? If so, please provide the name of this professional.
- Details of care facilities / services e.g. name of nursing home / residential home or domiciliary care agency
- Reason for referral – brief description of your concerns / suspicions?

A safeguarding referral **MUST** be made without delay even where some of the above information is not known.

The team will advise staff of their planned actions e.g. immediate home visit or follow up at a later date.

In addition to making a referral, all safeguarding concerns **MUST** also be reported via a Datix with the person completing selecting "Safeguarding Referral" when prompted. The UIR should detail your concerns and any immediate action taken. On receipt of the UIR, the NIAS safeguarding team will contact the other trust safeguarding teams to ensure that the appropriate action has been taken.

5. Immediate risk or a crime has been committed

In cases where there is an immediate risk of harm, or a you suspect a crime may have been committed, and you make contact with the Police Service. . You must also report the Safeguarding incident on Datix. Please be aware you will be expected to report your concerns by phone to the HSC Trust child or adult Protection Team or the Regional Emergency Social Work Service as this should not be done by a third party.

6. Catchment Area

Northern Ireland /Regional

NIAS referral procedure to Safeguarding/Welfare Pathways

