**Tips for Making Safeguarding Meetings Personal**

Neither the Care Act nor the statutory guidance talks about the need to hold safeguarding meetings. However, holding a safeguarding meeting can assist in ensuring the individual is aware of what the different parties are doing in response to the safeguarding concern. In addition, the meeting can assist in ensuring all parties are aware of the individual’s wishes and desired outcomes.

The Care Act guidance lays out clear expectations around involving people in their safeguarding enquiry stating:

“What happens as a result of an enquiry should reflect the adults’ wishes wherever possible, as stated by them or by their representative or advocate. If they lack capacity, it should be in their best interests if they are not able to make the decisions and be proportionate to the level of concern”.

Meetings should be organised and planned carefully to promote meaningful involvement of the person.

Effective involvement of the person and/or their representatives in safeguarding meetings requires professionals to be creative. Bear in mind these questions when planning the meeting:

* How should the adult be involved? Is it best for the person to attend the meeting, or would they prefer to feed in their views & wishes in a different way, e.g. a written statement? Is it best to hold one big meeting, or a number of smaller meetings?
* Where is the best place to hold the meeting? Where might the person feel most at ease and able to participate? Can you book a room at a local community venue?
* How long should the meeting last? What length of time will meet the person’s needs and make it manageable for them?
* What is the timing of the meeting? When should breaks be scheduled to best meet the person’s needs?
* What time of the day would be best for the person? Consider the impact of a person’s sleep patterns, medication, condition, care and support needs
* What will the agenda be? Is the person involved in setting the agenda?
* What preparation needs to be undertaken with the person? How can they be supported to understand the purpose and expected outcome of the meeting?
* What can the chair do to gain the trust of the person?
* Will all the meeting members behave in a way that includes the person in the discussion? How can meeting members be encouraged to communicate and behave in an inclusive, non-jargonistic way? Introductions shouldn’t involve acronyms eg CPN, O/T. The professional should state their role and how it is related to the safeguarding enquiry. Agree a format to enable the person to be heard.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to minimise face to face contact, Coventry City Council adult services supported managers to use digital technology for holding safeguarding meetings. [Guidance, including “top tips” in holding virtual meetings and ensuring adults and their family members are supported to attend “virtual” safeguarding meetings can be found here.](https://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/38280/top-tips-and-hints-for-holding-virtual-adult-safeguarding-meetings)

Feedback from practitioners about how adults and family members have experienced the use of technology has been overall positive, some saying that they have found this method of attending meetings more flexible and convenient. Therefore, practitioners and managers are encouraged to continue to consider the use of holding virtual meetings where it is felt appropriate.