The Six Principles of Adult Safeguarding

What each principle means, and what the adult should be able to say

1 Empowerment

People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.

THE ADULT CAN SAY

"I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens."

2 Prevention

It is better to take action before harm occurs.

THE ADULT CAN SAY

"I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help."

3 Proportionality

The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

THE ADULT CAN SAY

"I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, as I see them and they will only get involved as much as needed."

4 Protection

Support and representation for those in greatest need.

THE ADULT CAN SAY

"I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want."

5 Partnership

Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.

THE ADULT CAN SAY

"I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me."

6 Accountability

Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

THE ADULT CAN SAY

"I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they."

Making Safeguarding Personal

1. **Ask what matters to the adult** → 2. **Agree the outcomes they want** → 3. **Review: do they feel safer?**

⚠ **Worried about an adult?** Follow your organisation's safeguarding procedure. If someone is in immediate danger, call 999.

Source: Care and Support Statutory Guidance (Care Act 2014), paragraph 14.13. Applies in England.

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TEAM PRACTICE SHEET

Putting the Six Principles into Practice

Use this sheet in supervision, team meetings or induction. Each principle links to something you can do, and a question you can ask yourself, in everyday care.

Principle	What it looks like in care	Ask yourself
Empowerment	Ask what outcome the adult wants before suggesting solutions.	**Have I asked what they want to happen?**
Prevention	Give clear information about abuse and how to raise a worry. Act on early signs.	**Does the person know how to get help?**
Proportionality	Choose the least intrusive response that still manages the risk.	**Is this response in proportion to the risk?**
Protection	Help people to report and take part. Check whether they need an independent advocate (Care Act s.68).	**Does the person need support to take part?**
Partnership	Work with other services and the adult. Share only what is helpful and necessary.	**Who else should be involved, and does the person know?**
Accountability	Record what the adult wanted, what was decided and why. Be clear about roles.	**Could someone else follow my reasoning from the record?**

Use it in a team meeting

Pick one principle, discuss a recent (anonymised) situation, and agree one change to practice.

Making Safeguarding Personal: questions to start the conversation

- What is worrying you most?
- What would you like to happen next?
- Is there anything you would prefer not to happen?
- What would help you feel safer?
- Who would you feel comfortable involving?

Build your safeguarding knowledge

LIBM's Level 3 Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults course is CPD-accredited and self-paced online. It covers safeguarding legislation, adult safeguarding, communication in care and responding to concerns.

libm.co.uk/course/level-3-safeguarding-children-vulnerable-adults/

View the course

A practice aid. It does not replace your organisation's safeguarding policy or local procedures. The six principles come from England's Care and Support Statutory Guidance. Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own safeguarding frameworks.