



Safer Seven

On: Safeguarding in Homelessness



1. Introduction

Homelessness can include sleeping rough but it also covers situations where households are at risk of losing their home and are struggling to find somewhere else that is suitable to live.

Adults who are homeless have a range of housing and support needs and are often vulnerable or contribute to the vulnerability of others. Those vulnerabilities may mean that people may need care and support from a range of agencies.

3. Homelessness and Trauma

Individuals who face homelessness may have experienced childhood trauma, physical and mental ill health, substance misuse and experiences of the care system, institutional care and those who have served in the armed forces.

Rough sleepers in particular are at risk of significantly reduced life expectancy through poor health. Homeless people may struggle to access GP and Health services.

5. Safeguarding Adults Reviews

Someone experiencing homelessness should not mean they are unable to access the healthcare they need. Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) in relation to deaths where homelessness was an element, highlight circumstances where agencies may have missed opportunities to protect adults at risk. Concerns include a lack of leadership and coordination between agencies, challenges in interpreting mental capacity assessments, lack of professional curiosity or normalisation of risk, a lack of suitable accommodation provision and poor hospital discharge arrangements.

2. Homelessness includes all the following:

- Sleeping rough
- Households living in shelters, supported housing, hostels, and temporary accommodation.
- Households who are at risk of losing their current home who cannot source a suitable alternative home.
- Hidden homeless - adults and households who are living with other households but don't have any housing in their own right e.g., lodgers or grown-up children still living with parents.

4. The Homelessness Reduction Act

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places duties on homeless services to assist all eligible households. This means that all households, whether they are in priority need or not, will be able to access assistance regarding both the prevention of and the resolution of homelessness.

The Act requires a clear focus on:

- Homelessness prevention and early actions
- Relieving homelessness for some households where homelessness cannot be avoided – including, for example, providing safe accommodation for people experiencing domestic abuse.
- Having a personal housing plan for each household so that both individuals and agencies are clear on what they need to do to resolve their housing needs.

There is also a duty on certain agencies to discuss the housing needs of their service users and to make a Duty to Refer to the homelessness team, with the consent of the service user. This can be done by emailing dutytorefer@dudley.gov.uk

6. Your Responsibilities

If you are concerned that someone who is homeless may be at risk of abuse or neglect, you can refer to [Dudley Adults Portal](#) or the [Dudley support level guidance and framework](#) for children and families or the Homelessness Prevention and Response Team hsgadvice.dachs@dudley.gov.uk

The following questions may be helpful in informing the decision to raise a safeguarding concern:

- Has the person got somewhere safe to stay or get help to meet their basic needs?
- Does the person understand the concerns or the level of risk to their well-being?
- What help they need and how partner agencies work together.

7. Further information:

For more information or housing advice contact 0300 555 2345 (9am-5pm)

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