

Appendix 5. Dealing with Complaints about Potential Abuse in a Health Service.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Adult Protection referrals can come from many different sources for example, from the service user or patient themselves, staff members and from the complaints procedure.

There may be difficulties encountered when two processes are attempting to deal with the same issue.

All types of abuse (physical, sexual, psychological, financial, neglect and discriminatory) can occur within a range of Health services. In this Policy, a Health service includes:

- Hospital (including a hospital ward).
- GP surgery.
- Health clinics.
- Ambulance Service.
- Transport Service.
- District Nurse and Health Visiting Service.
- Other services allied to medicine.

2.0 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS

Any allegations of abuse against staff/volunteers or the organisation itself should be dealt with as previously stated in this Policy.

3.0 WHEN A COMPLAINT BECOMES AN ADULT PROTECTION REFERRAL

When a complaint meets one or more of the following criteria, an Adult Protection referral should be made immediately, prior to the start of the complaint investigation:

- When a crime may have been committed.
- Where there are specific allegations of abuse to a vulnerable adult by an individual for example, a visitor or another service user or patient.
- Where poor practice and neglect result in harm or potential for harm to a vulnerable adult.

- More than one individual case of alleged abuse is investigated in the same setting which may suggest the emergence of a pattern or,
- When health staff have a concern about the potential abuse of a vulnerable adult.

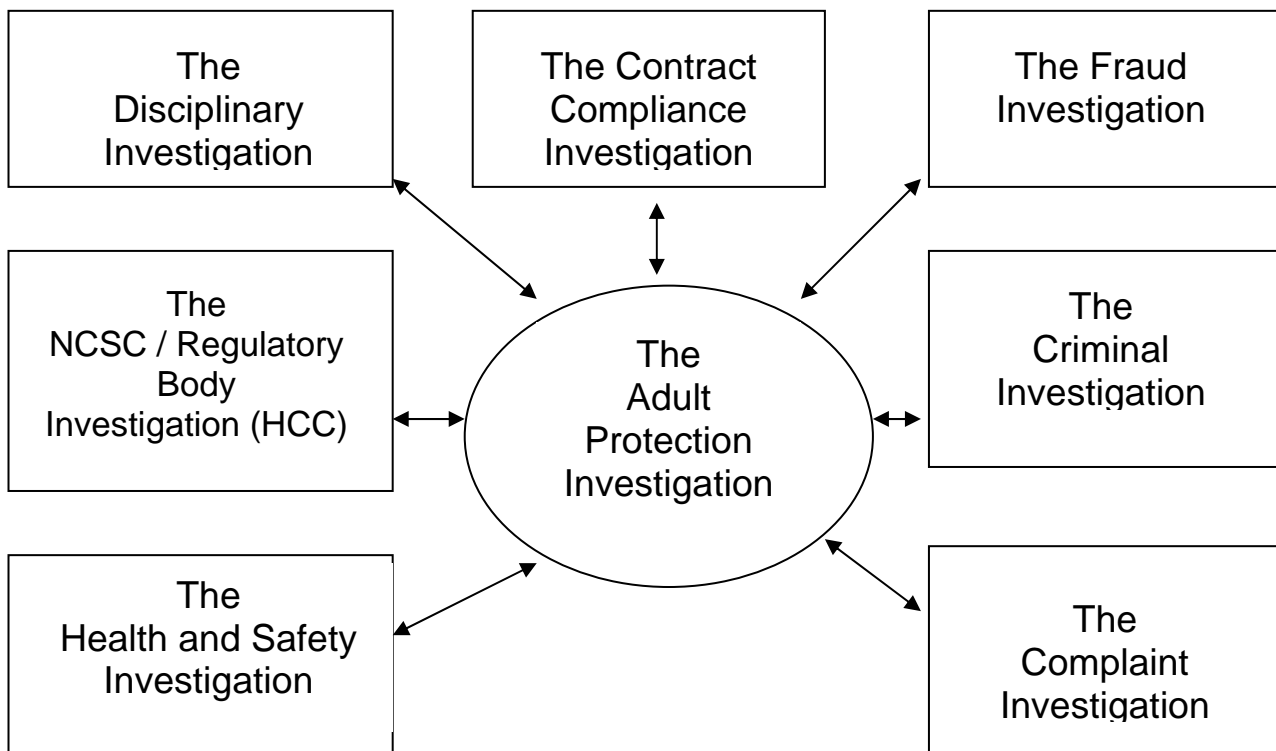
4.0 HOW COMPLAINTS LINK WITH THE ADULT PROTECTION PROCESS

Referrals should be made to the relevant Social Service Teams as outlined in Appendix 1.

Ideally referrals should be discussed with the line manager of the person identifying the concern to decide **who** is completing the Referral Form. However it is always acceptable to make an adult protection referral without a discussion with a line manager.

The responsibility for coordinating the Adult Protection investigation will remain with the relevant Social Service Team. The complaint investigation will then become part of the Adult Protection investigation process.

The following diagram illustrates how different types of investigation link with Adult Protection.



The Adult Protection investigation should always involve the manager of the relevant service and the relevant Joint Commissioner. Consideration will also be given to the involvement of the Strategic Health Authority, the Care Quality Commission, the Police and Health and Safety Officers.

It is the responsibility of the “authority of the moment” (i.e. where the allegation of abuse took place) to undertake the immediate assessment and lead the Adult Protection investigation (see Appendix 4.).