

# **GATESHEAD SAFEGUARDING ADULT BOARD**

## **Dignity in Gateshead Policy**

April 2015



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# Introduction

The Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board is committed to improving Dignity for people in Gateshead. The Dignity in Gateshead Policy is part of the Safeguarding Adults Board 'family' of policy documents.

The Policy outlines what is meant by the term 'Dignity' and how it applies to services used by adults in Gateshead. The Policy contains the Dignity in Gateshead Charter which clearly sets out what is expected from all of our services and provides information for service users, carers, employees and residents on our eight Dignity Principles.

One of the times at which people are most in danger of losing their dignity and their self-respect is when they have health and social care needs. Health and Social Care services are provided when people are most vulnerable - when they are feeling at their weakest, when they are afraid and when they have to expose the most intimate and personal parts of themselves (their bodies and their minds) to inspection and handling by others. However, although this Policy is especially relevant to the provision of health and social care services, it is not limited to these service areas. Within Gateshead, we feel that delivering Dignity should be embedded within all aspects of service delivery.

The Care Act 2014 imposes a duty on local authorities to promote wellbeing when carrying out their care and support functions. Wellbeing cannot be precisely described as this can mean different things to different people but the Act includes personal dignity as one of the fundamental principles of wellbeing and places particular emphasis on treating an individual with respect.

This Policy has been developed by officers within the Safeguarding team, with support from partner agencies. This policy is monitored by the Practice Delivery Group, which is a sub-group of the Safeguarding Adults Board.

# What is Dignity?

According to dictionary definitions, dignity is the quality or state of being worthy of esteem or respect. The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) defines dignity as consisting of;

**‘many overlapping aspects, involving respect, privacy, autonomy and self-worth’**

and the term Dignity in Care as;

**‘the kind of care, in any setting, which supports and promotes, and does not undermine, a person’s self-respect, regardless of difference’**

The Social Care Institute for Excellence states that ‘Dignity in Care’ means treating people who need care as individuals and enabling them to maintain the maximum possible level of independence, choice and control over their own lives. It means that professionals should support people with the respect they would want for themselves or a member of their family.

The ‘Dignity in Care’ Initiative was launched by the Department of Health in November 2006 to ensure all older people are treated with dignity and respect when receiving health and social care services. The initiative has gradually been extended to cover all health and social care services.

As part of the Dignity in Care Campaign, the Dignity Challenge was issued. Based on consultations with service users, carers and professionals, it lays out the national expectations of what constitutes a service that respects Dignity. It focuses on ten different aspects of dignity - the things that matter most to people:

- Have a zero tolerance of all forms of abuse,
- Support people with the same respect you would want for yourself or a member of your family,
- Treat each person as an individual by offering a personalised service,
- Enable people to maintain the maximum possible level of independence, choice and control,
- Listen and support people to express their needs and wants,
- Respect people’s right to privacy,
- Ensure people feel able to complain without fear of retribution,
- Engage with family members and carers as care partners,
- Assist people to maintain confidence and a positive self-esteem,
- Act to alleviate people’s loneliness and isolation.

In non-health and social care settings the delivery of Dignity is often synonymous with good customer service.

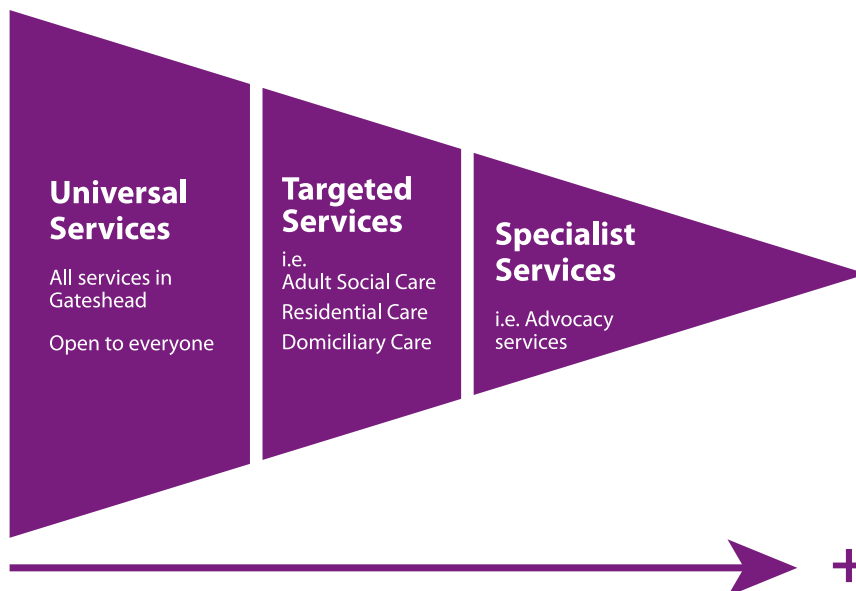
The Care Act states that a starting point when determining someone’s wellbeing must be to assume that the individual is best placed to judge their own wellbeing. The local authority and its partners must make efforts to ensure that the individual is supported when making decisions about their wellbeing and that they have freedom to make their own choices.

The concept of dignity is also complemented by the key principles of Safeguarding, with particular emphasis placed on Empowerment - to support and encourage people to make their own decisions, but also Protection and Proportionality - to determine the least restrictive option when addressing any risks.

# Dignity in Gateshead Principles

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has produced guidance which is designed for people who want to make a difference by improving standards of Dignity. We would like to adopt the eight main factors identified by SCIE that promote dignity as our Dignity in Gateshead Principles.

The eight Dignity in Gateshead Principles are to be applied across all aspects of service delivery; including Universal, Targeted and Specialist Services:



Whilst consulting on the Dignity in Gateshead Policy a number of key challenges were identified for each of the principles.

**Principle 1 - Choice and control:** enabling people to make choices about the way that they live and the care that they receive.

## Key Challenges:

- Ensuring that people are fully involved in any decision that affects their care
- Don't assume people are not able to make decisions
- Provide opportunities for people to participate as fully as they can at all levels of service
- Raise awareness of local advocacy service
- Encourage and support people to participate in the wider community

**Principle 2 - Communication:** speaking to people respectfully and listening to what they have to say

**Key Challenges:**

- Involve people in the production of information resources to ensure information is clear
- Provide information in an accessible format where possible
- Find ways to get the views of people using our services
- Make sure processes are in place so that people can tell us what they think about the quality of services without fear of repercussions.
- Stereotypical views are challenged and the valuing of diversities is demonstrated
- Keeping people informed and up to date with progress during service delivery

**Principle 3 - Eating and nutritional care:** providing a choice of nutritious, appetising meals that meet the needs and choices of individuals and support with eating where needed.

**Key Challenges:**

- Raise awareness of the risk of malnutrition / maintaining a healthy weight and the importance of good nutritional care
- Carry out regular consultation on menus with people using services
- Give people time to eat, they should not be rushed
- Make food look appetising
- In residential and care settings;
  - carry out nutritional screening on admittance
  - provide assistance discreetly to people who have difficulty eating
  - encourage people to drink regularly throughout the day and ensure that there is access to clean drinking water

**Principle 4 - Pain management:** ensuring that people living with pain have the right help and medication to reduce suffering and improve their quality of life.

**Key Challenges:**

- Raise awareness about:
  - Pain recognition and pain related behaviour
  - Older people are more likely to experience pain and less likely to complain about it
  - Pain can cause people to avoid activities and can increase social isolation

**Principle 5 - Personal Hygiene:** enabling people to maintain their usual standards of personal hygiene

**Key Challenges:**

- Raising awareness that having a clean and respectable appearance and pleasant environment is key to maintaining self-esteem
- Maintaining standards of cleanliness

**Principle 6 - Practical Assistance:** enabling people to maintain their independence by providing 'that little bit of help'

**Key Challenges:**

- Making use of personal budgets to provide people with the help they want and need
- Making use of volunteers
- Make use of and develop local services to provide help for people in the local community

**Principle 7 - Privacy:** respecting people's personal space, privacy in personal care and confidentiality of personal information

**Key Challenges:**

- Make issues of privacy and dignity a fundamental part of staff induction and training
- Ensure that only those who need information to carry out their work have access to people's records or financial information
- Respect privacy when people have personal and sexual relationships, with careful assessment of risk
- Personal preferences, cultural needs and the concerns of carers are taken into account

**Principle 8 - Social Inclusion:** supporting people to keep in contact with family and friends and to participate in social activities.

**Key Challenges:**

- Promote and support access to social networks
- Build links with community projects, community centres and schools to increase social contact between people from different generations
- Involve people in service planning and ensure ideas and suggestions are acted upon

# Dignity in Gateshead Charter

The Dignity in Gateshead Charter clearly sets out what is expected from all of our services whilst delivering the Dignity Principles. All Services in Gateshead will:

- Treat all individuals with respect
- Be ethical, honest, courteous and professional
- Respect confidentiality
- Not tolerate any forms of abuse
- Treat everyone fairly

## What are our responsibilities?

All employees have a duty and responsibility to:

- Treat patients / service users / carers / colleagues with dignity
- Identify any failure to provide dignity and to take appropriate action, or if more appropriate, to inform their line manager of the issues.

All managers are responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures that promote Dignity are implemented and that staff members receive the necessary education and training to provide support services with Dignity.

Partner organisations are responsible for ensuring that corporate support is available to assist in the implementation of this Policy at a strategic and operational level.

In line with the Care Act principles of Wellbeing including personal dignity, we will ensure that the Gateshead Safeguarding Adults process embraces the Making Safeguarding Personal agenda. This means that it will be person-led and outcome focussed. It will engage the person in a conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control, as well as improving quality of life, well-being and safety. It is also important that all safeguarding partners take a broad community approach to establishing safeguarding arrangements. All individuals have different preferences, histories, circumstances and lifestyles, so it is unhelpful to prescribe a process that must be followed whenever a concern is raised.

The primary focus/point of decision making should be as close as possible to the Adults, and individuals must be supported to make choices. Adults should be given accessible information, advice and support in a form that they can understand and have their views included throughout the Safeguarding process. It must be remembered that the Adult is best placed to judge their own wellbeing. All decisions taken by professionals about a person's life should be timely, lawful, reasonable, justified, proportionate and ethical.





If you would like any more information or to discuss this document further - please contact a member of the Community Safety Team on 0191 433 3990, email: [communitysafety@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:communitysafety@gateshead.gov.uk)

Produced by Gateshead Community Safety Board