



Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 Summary

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is the backbone of adult safeguarding in Wales. It provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and establishes specific duties around preventing and responding to abuse and neglect. Part 7 of the Act deals with safeguarding and underpins the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

The Act defines an “adult at risk” as an adult who is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, has care and support needs, and is unable to protect themselves because of those needs. It places a duty on relevant partners to report adults at risk to the Local Authority (sections 126 and 128) and a duty on Local Authorities to make enquiries where there is reasonable cause to suspect an adult is at risk. It also establishes Regional Safeguarding Boards and their functions.

How does this relate to Older Victim-Survivors?

Many older people meet the statutory test for being an “adult at risk”, particularly where there are care and support needs and dependency on others. The duties to report concerns and make enquiries mean that agencies in contact with older people (health, social care, housing, police, third sector) are legally required to act on suspicions of abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding Boards must consider abuse of older people within their work and procedures, providing formal structures Hourglass can influence and partner with.

Adult Protection and Support Orders (APSOs) can be used to gain access to a property to speak to an adult at risk in private – crucial where an alleged perpetrator is a family member or carer.