

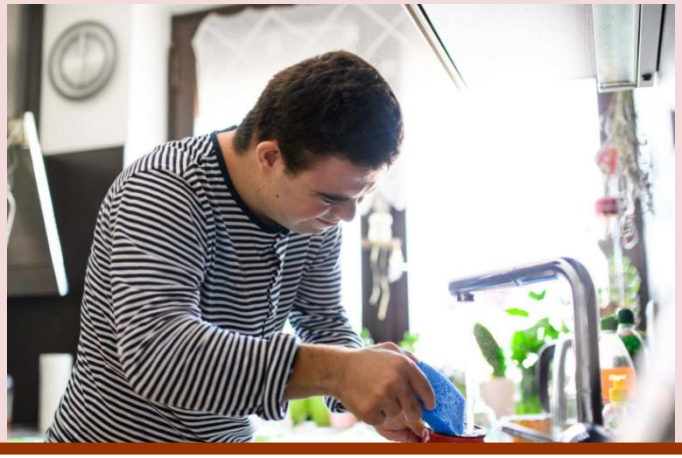

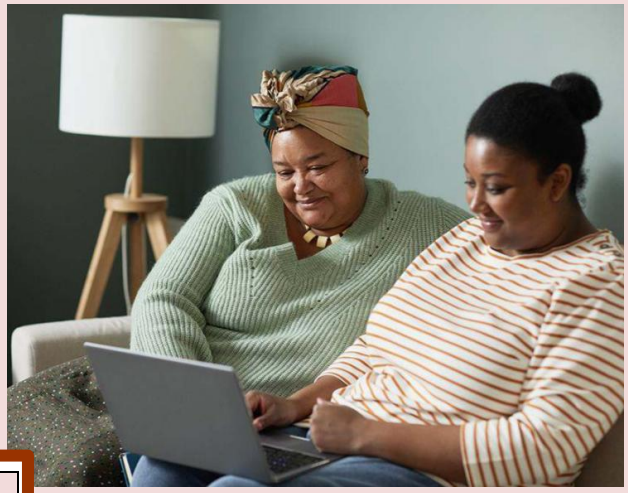

Provider Notifications

Low-Level Incidents Threshold -

Decision Making Guidance









Version 4- August 2026

Low-Level Incidents Threshold - Decision Making Guidance

Low-Level Incidents	If the quality of a service is reduced, adults using the service may be placed at risk. Incidents of this nature could indicate poor practice and poor-quality care **rather than** abuse or neglect. This guidance is to provide support when assessing and managing risks. Always consider the individual circumstances of each situation and use your professional judgement when deciding on the best course of action. The guidance includes examples of service provision issues frequently raised as safeguarding concerns that are quality issues and where alternative actions and notification using the online reporting form **Kent County Council - Low-Level Incidents.** Please also inform the Care Quality Commission (CQC) where appropriate. In addition, if you feel that the person concerned would require a **Care needs assessment** please raise a referral to the Local Authority.

Please find below examples of low-level Incidents;

Medication Errors –	**Trips and Falls -**	**Pressure Ulcers -**	**Incidents between adults with care and support needs -**
A **one off or isolated incident** around medication where the person has not come to harm. This could be due to staff error or a dispensing or prescribing error. The medication error was not deliberate. Appropriate action is being taken to ensure this does not happen again.	A person falls and this is witnessed and appropriate care plans/risk assessments are in place and have been followed. The person may have been injured, however the key factor here is that it was an accident and there has been **no abuse or neglect by anyone else which led to this**.	Categories 1 and 2 pressure ulcers should be considered for people with vulnerable skin; for example, where pain is experienced over at-risk areas or under devices, or when blanching erythema (area of redness that disappears on applied pressure) occurs or when skin colour and texture changes in darker skin tones.	An **isolated incident** between two adults with care and support needs where care plans have been followed appropriately and **no harm has occurred.** No harm means that the people involved have no injuries and have **not been distressed or upset by the incident**.

Adult Safeguarding Care Act (2014) - Section 42 - Statutory Eligibility Criteria	Safeguarding is not a substitute for: • providers' provision of safe and high-quality care and support. • commissioners assurance around the safety and effectiveness of commissioned services. • the Care Quality Commission (CQC) ensuring that regulated providers comply with the fundamental standards of care or by taking enforcement action. • the core duties of the police to prevent and detect crime and protect life and property. **The Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 sets out the statutory eligibility criteria for adult safeguarding enquiries, as follows;** 'Where a Local Authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there) **a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs);** **b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect;** **c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.** Then the Local Authority must make (or cause to be made) whatever enquiries it thinks necessary to enable it to decide whether any action should be taken in the adult's case, (whether under this Part or otherwise) and, if so, what should happen and by whom. This then constitutes a statutory Section 42 enquiry.'
	Please Note - This guidance is for low-level incidents only, if your concern meets the above Section 42 threshold, please raise a Safeguarding Concern using the following link; Tell us about an adult safeguarding concern.
	Below are examples of incidents such as pressure ulcers, trips and falls, medication errors, and Incidents between adults in a service that which would be considered lower-level incidents. **It is important to consider in the first instance whether someone is in immediate danger or has been the subject of a crime. Criminal acts must be reported to the Police and/or emergency treatment should be sought where necessary.**
	Please Note – The example's provided below are not an exhaustive list and professional judgement is required. **Please contact your own agency Safeguarding Lead if you require a consultation.**

Pressure ulcers

Description - Pressure ulcers are injuries to the skin and underlying tissue, primarily caused by prolonged pressure on the skin. **Category 1 and 2 pressure ulcers** must be considered as they may require early intervention to prevent further deterioration or damage. These categories of pressure ulcers should also be considered for people with vulnerable skin - for example, where pain is experienced over at-risk areas or under devices, or when blanching erythema (area of redness that disappears on applied pressure) occurs or when skin colour and texture changes in darker skin tones. The classic signs of skin damage are different in Caucasian and dark pigmented skin (please see resources below for further information).	**Low-Level Incidents** A Low-level incident is where the threshold for a safeguarding enquiry is unlikely to be met. However, provider managers will be expected to notify the local authority Adult Social Care department with written record of what happened and what action was taken via the notification form. Where there are several low-level incidents for a person, consideration should be given as to whether the threshold may be met for a safeguarding enquiry due to increased risk of harm. **Examples:** • Single incident of Category 1 or 2 pressure ulcer. • **Category 1** - Non blanchable erythema. The ulcer appears as a defined area of persistent redness (erythema) in lightly pigmented skin tones, whereas in darker skin tones, the ulcer may appear with persistent red, blue or purple hues, without skin loss. The patient may report pain or discomfort over the area. **Category 2** - Pressure ulcer with abrasion, blister, partial-thickness skin loss involving epidermis and or dermis.
Actions to consider	• Notify the Local Authority using the online reporting form – **Kent County Council - Low-Level Incidents**. • Refer to **KMSAB Pressure ulcers and safeguarding local guidance**. • Follow your own relevant internal policies and procedures. • Refer to the NICE guidance on pressure ulcers (2014). • Refer to the Pressure ulcers: how to safeguard adults.

	Further resources; • Department of Health and Social Care **Safeguarding adults protocol: pressure ulcers and raising a safeguarding concern**. • **Pressure Ulcer | National Wound Care Strategy Programme**. • **Skin assessment in dark pigmented skin: a challenge in pressure ulcer prevention | Nursing Times**. • **Colour awareness: A must for patient assessment (myamericannurse.com)**.
Trips and Falls	
Description - Some people who are frail or have mobility problems may have a greater risk of falling. Following a fall, the individual may require more intensive services for longer, and in some cases may never return to previous levels of mobility. A fall does not automatically indicate neglect, and situation should be examined to understand the context of the person's fall.	**Low-Level Incidents** A low-level incident where the threshold for a safeguarding enquiry is unlikely to be met. However, providers will be expected to notify the local authority Adult Social Care department with written record of what happened and what action was taken via the notification form. Where there are several low-level incidents, consideration should be given as to whether the threshold may be met for a safeguarding enquiry due to increased risk. **Examples:** • A fall where no injury has occurred **and:** • There is a reasonable explanation as to why this occurred. • A care plan and/or risk assessment is in place and being adhered to. • Actions are being taken to minimise further risk. • Other relevant professionals have been notified. • Full discussions with the person or people, next-of-kin, or any other representative. • There are no other indicators of abuse or neglect.
Actions to consider	• Notify the Local Authority using the online reporting form – **Kent County Council - Low-Level Incidents – Fill out form** • Follow relevant internal policies and procedures. • Review and revise current care plans /risk assessments. • For falls in older people refer to the NICE guidance (2013). • Share information with the Falls Prevention Service or Occupational Therapy service. • Share information with GP or other relevant health professionals for any medical issues.

Medication Errors	
Description - Mismanagement /misadministration /misuse of medication.	**Low-Level Incidents** Low-level **one off or isolated incident** around medication is where the person has not come to harm, and the threshold for a safeguarding enquiry is unlikely to be met. However, Providers will be expected to notify the local authority Adult Social Care department with written record of what happened and what action was taken via the notification form. Where there are several low-level incidents, consideration should be given as to whether the threshold may be met for a safeguarding enquiry due to increased risk of harm. **Examples:** • Incidents where the person is accidently given the wrong medication, given too much or too little medication or given it at the wrong time but there has been no impact. • Incidents where there is no impact but that has not been reported by staff members. • Prescribing or dispensing error by GP, pharmacist or other medical professional resulting in no impact.
Actions to consider	• Notify the Local Authority using the online reporting form – **Kent County Council - Low-Level Incidents** • Review of relevant policies and procedures. • Internal relevant training provided. • Review of existing care plans or creation of new care plans/risk assessments. • Complaints or disciplinary processes.
Incidents between adults in a service	
Description - Any interaction involving two or more service users in any setting, involving physical, psychological/emotional, sexual, financial/material, or discriminatory behaviour (including verbal and threatening), which results in the risk of, or actual harm.	**Low-Level Incidents** Low-level incident is where the threshold for a safeguarding enquiry is unlikely to be met. However, Providers will be expected to notify the local authority Adult Social Care department with written record of what happened and what action was taken via the notification form. Where there are several low-level incidents, consideration should be given as to whether the threshold may be met for a safeguarding enquiry due to increased risk of harm.

	Examples:
	• Incidents between people using a service where there is no apparent impact, and actions are undertaken to minimise the risk of reoccurrence.
	• More than one incident where there is no apparent impact, **and**:
	  • A care plan and/or risk assessment is in place and is being adhered to
	  • Action is taken to minimise further risk.
	  • Other relevant professionals have been notified.
	  • There has been full discussion with the person, their next-of-kin, or their representative.
	  • No other indicators of abuse or neglect.

Actions to consider	• Notify the Local Authority using the online reporting form – **Kent County Council - Low-Level Incidents – Fill out form** • Review of relevant policies and procedures. Internal relevant training provided. • Review of existing care plans or creation of new care plans/risk assessments. • Complaints or disciplinary processes.