

Vulnerable Persons

Proactive Disclosure – providing information to third parties without the customer's or individual's consent

If you are satisfied that a child or vulnerable adult faces clear and significant risks to their welfare or safety, you are explicitly empowered by DWP policy and relevant legislation to take any reasonable steps which you feel are necessary in order to address these risks. This includes concerns about the:

- risk of injury
- ill treatment
- neglect
- physical abuse or sexual abuse
- exploitation

of children or vulnerable adults. The expectation is that action will be taken without any undue delay.

You should volunteer information which is directly relevant to the issue of concern to Social Services, Social Work Department in Scotland or the police, as appropriate, without the customer's or individual's consent.

In the case of a child, such information may be provided without the consent of the parents or guardian if a child's welfare is at risk. You do not have to tell the parents or guardian about the disclosure.

You should alert your management to any such disclosure.

Any information given must be factual and relevant. You should provide an outline of the facts of the case and your concerns to the relevant body, and only provide personal information such as name and address once they have confirmed that they can take the issue forward. It is unlikely to be necessary to disclose full details of the benefit claim.

In some areas of the country, Social Services ask DWP to tell our customer that we have informed Social Services. There is no obligation for DWP to inform our customer that we have approached Social Services. Additionally, some Social Services departments state that they have to disclose the source of allegations made to them. If you have any concerns about this, remember that you do not have to disclose any further details if you feel that this would put your own safety at risk. This is particularly the case when staff are disclosing information about PV/UCB customers where it may be obvious to the customer where the information has come from, e.g. a face to face meeting in their home, or signing on appointment.