

News story: Safeguard agreement for vulnerable adults in custody published

The Home Office has today published a [voluntary framework](#) to ensure that vulnerable adults suspected of an offence have access to justice and that their welfare is safeguarded.

The partnership agreement sets out how Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and local authorities can work together to commission and provide appropriate adults for vulnerable adults. This will help ensure that vulnerable people get the support they need when detained in police custody or questioned voluntarily elsewhere.

Appropriate adults are required to be present to help ensure suspects understand their rights and entitlements and that evidence isn't obtained in ways which, by virtue of someone's vulnerability, might lead to unsafe convictions. Commissioning appropriate adult services in England is led principally by local authorities, but it isn't always straightforward and differs across the country. This voluntary agreement sets out a collaborative approach to commissioning services in forces in England going forward.

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service, Nick Hurd, said:

When a vulnerable adult is suspected of an offence it's vital an independent person is there to ensure they are treated fairly and their needs are taken into account.

The document we've published today provides a framework for police and local councils to work together to make sure the right people are in the room when evidence is obtained to reduce the risk of miscarriages of justice.

The agreement has been developed in partnership with the National Appropriate Adult Network (NAAN), the Local Government Association (LGA), the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). Through bringing all the relevant agencies together we make sure everyone is signed up to the same way of working.

The role of an appropriate adult is set out in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and its codes of practice which outlines the rules and safeguards for policing in England and Wales.