

From Paul Burstow MP
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The Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP
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Dear Andrew

Thank you for your letter of 22 November about vulnerable adults.

Strengthening adult safeguarding arrangements is a key priority for this Government. We are committed to preventing and reducing the risk of significant harm to adults in vulnerable situations, whilst supporting individuals in maintaining control over their lives and in making informed choices without coercion.

On the 16 May, we published a *Statement of Government Policy on Adult Safeguarding*, which begins to set out a new framework for safeguarding and our intention to legislate for Safeguarding Adults Boards to put them on a stronger, statutory footing, which are better equipped both to prevent abuse and to respond when it occurs.

You ask whether there are any proposals to extend the criteria of 'vulnerable people.' The definition of 'vulnerable people' was set in the *No Secrets* guidance on safeguarding. The Law Commission has set out a number of recommendations in relation to adult safeguarding and Law Reform, including a recommendation about how the scope of adult safeguarding work is defined. We are looking closely at these recommendations, and we will provide more detail on our resulting proposals as soon as possible.

The *Statement of Government Policy on Adult Safeguarding* and *No Secrets* documents are available on the Department of Health website at www.dh.gov.uk by typing their titles into the search box.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely
Paul Burstow

PAUL BURSTOW