

Safeguarding children and adults at risk from abuse

Please read this information and discuss with your manager to ensure you understand your responsibilities.

Safeguarding is everyone's business. This information guide is an introduction to safeguarding adults and children.

- What is meant by safeguarding
- Recognising possible indicators of abuse
- Your duty of care to safeguard children & adults at risk of abuse
- How to respond if an adult/child discloses abuse to you
- What to do and how to report a concern

Who are children and adults at risk from abuse?

A child - is anyone under the age of 18. Some teenagers prefer to be referred to as a 'young person' but the term 'child' helps professionals and the public focus on the fact that they are still children who may be at risk or being harmed.

An adult at risk from abuse is a person 18 years and over who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is supporting any of those needs) and;
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect

What to be aware of: forms of abuse

Physical Abuse

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, restraint or otherwise causing physical harm.

Sexual Abuse

- Forcing or enticing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening
- Sexual harassment, sexual teasing and innuendos
- Non-contact activities such as grooming, forcing someone to watch sexual activities, involving someone in the production of sexual images or encouraging

them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

Psychological Abuse

- Emotional poor treatment causing severe and persistent adverse effects on someone's emotional well-being and/or development
- Teasing or making fun of someone; telling them they are stupid, worthless or unloved; silencing and not giving them opportunity to express their views; preventing them from having social interaction
- Threatening to hurt or abandon, humiliating, blaming, controlling, intimidating or harassing them

Neglect and Self Neglect

- Persistent failure to meet someone's basic needs such as adequate food, clothing, shelter
- Failure to provide basic care such as not helping someone to change out of wet or dirty clothes or not taking them to the bathroom
- Lack of supervision or inappropriate care-givers
- Failure to provide access to necessary medical care and treatment
- Not protecting someone from harm or danger
- Self neglect: such as neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings such as hoarding that may affect the person's well-being

Financial or Material Abuse

- Stealing money or other valuables; not giving change when making purchases for another, using the person's money for their own use
- Coercing a person into spending in a way they have not chosen
- Online scams and doorstep crime: excessive charging for a job and/or intimidation into agreeing to it
- Misuse of possessions, money, benefits and property
- "Cuckooing" - drug dealers/other criminals take over the home of a vulnerable person to use it as a place from which to run criminal activity, which can risk their tenancy as well material abuse

Discriminatory Abuse

- Harassment, or similar unfair treatment relating to race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, or religion

Organisational Abuse

- Neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or the care provided in one's own home

- This may range from one-off incidents to on-going ill-treatment of one or more people
- It can occur through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation

Domestic Abuse

- Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so-called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage
- Coercive and controlling behaviour.

Modern Slavery

- Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude with no or little financial payment.

Other factors to consider

Behaviours that *may* indicate abuse is taking place

- Unexplained reactions to a person or situation
- Significant changes in behaviour e.g. anger, withdrawn, upset, confused
- Unexplained change in finances/possessions.
- Physical injury
- Frequent visits to GP/A&E *or* reluctance to accept appointments/treatment

Who may be the abuser?

Family - friends - partner - neighbour - paid care worker - school staff - other professionals - organisations - people who deliberately target vulnerable people - volunteers - self neglect

- *anyone can be an abuser*

Where can abuse happen?

Own home - home of family or friends - care homes - hospitals - public transport - clubs and social settings - online/social media - public places

- *abuse can happen anywhere*

What to do if someone discloses abuse to you

- Assure them you take them seriously
- Listen carefully to what they are telling you, stay calm

- Don't be judgmental or tell them what to do
- Avoid making assumptions or asking "leading questions" which may direct the person to say certain things
- Explain that you have a duty to report (even if they don't want you to, as there may be other children or adults at risk from abuse, and you have a duty to protect them too)
- For adults, reassure them they will be involved in decisions about what will happen

What to do if you suspect abuse

If you are concerned about the safety and/or well-being of a child or adult at risk you have a duty to report your concerns.

Your first point of contact is your Manager or Designated Safeguarding Officer: ensure you find out who this is in your organisation.

If your manager is not available - do not delay:

Key question: is the person safe?

If an emergency - contact Emergency Services 999.

If there may be a criminal investigation - be aware to preserve potential evidence

Report any concerns by phoning these numbers - you may wish to save these phone numbers to your phone so you can access them wherever you are.

Safeguarding adults 0118 937 3747

Safeguarding children 0118 937 3641

Emergency duty team (out of hours) 01344 786 543

Emergency services 999 (emergency) or 101 (non-emergency)