



What do I do if I have an adult safeguarding concern?

A guide for anyone with a concern about the abuse or neglect of an adult with care and support needs. Remember suspicion is enough!

What is adult safeguarding?

Adult safeguarding is about stopping or preventing abuse or neglect of adults with care and support needs.

Who are adults with care and support needs?

Adults with care and support needs could be someone over the age of 18 years who:

- has a learning disability
- has mental health needs including dementia and other mental disorders
- has a long term illness/condition/disability
- is elderly and frail due to ill health, disability or cognitive impairment for example dementia.

Whose job is it to safeguard adults with care and support needs?

Anyone could be the first person to identify or suspect abuse, including family members, carer, neighbours, remember that suspicion is enough. Professionals have a duty to take appropriate action if they become aware of an adult with care and support needs who may be experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect.

The Care Act 2014 says that safeguarding an adult from abuse or neglect has to be done with their involvement to the greatest extent possible. Everyone has the right to be involved in the decisions made about their lives. This approach is known as 'making safeguarding personal'.

What is abuse and neglect?

Adults with care and support needs can be victims of many different types of abuse or neglect. The Care Act 2014 identified 10 types of abuse;

- **Physical abuse** such as hitting, slapping, shoving, kicking, rough handling or inappropriate restraint.
- **Sexual abuse** for example any type of inappropriate sexual behaviour including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or innuendo, showing of indecent photographs and sexual acts to which the adult has not consented.
- **Financial abuse** including fraud, theft assuming ownership of money or items, scamming, getting an adult to spend money unwisely.
- **Discriminatory abuse** this is often on the grounds of age, race, gender, gender identity, culture, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

- **Emotional/Psychological abuse** includes threats of harm, intimidation, harassment, coercion, cyber bullying, denial of cultural and religious needs.
- **Neglect (and acts of omission)** this includes ignoring medical, emotional or physical needs, failure to provide access to support services, withholding necessities such as food and heating.
- **Self neglect** this may be as a result of an adult's lifestyle choice and includes behaviour such as hoarding and extreme poor personal hygiene.
- **Organisational/Institutional abuse** Poor practice in a nursing/care or hospital setting or even in an adult's own home. This can be one incident or a series of incidents as a result of an organisations poor practice, policy or procedure.
- **Domestic abuse** controlling or coercive behaviour, forced marriage, honour based violence, and includes physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse in the context of home or family relationships.
- **Modern slavery** includes slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.

Professionals will

- Speak to the adult to listen to their views about the concern. Ask them what they would like to see happen next.
- Consider the adult's ability to understand the concern (mental capacity). If they are not able to understand the professional will need to decide what to do in their best interests.
- Consider, if the adult declines support, if this is because they are scared of someone who may be trying to control what they say or do. Think whether or not this is an indication of domestic abuse.
- Discuss the concern and what to do with a supervisor unless this will cause a delay in protecting the adult at risk.

What happens after abuse has been reported

When abuse is reported professionals will:

- Listen to the adult or person with concerns
- Take the concerns seriously
- Respond sensitively
- Make enquiries about the concerns
- Consider the wishes of the adult at risk
- Talk to the Police if it is a criminal matter
- Support the adult at risk to achieve the changes they want wherever possible
- Develop a plan with the adult at risk to keep them safe in the future
- Consider if anyone else is at risk

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What do I do if I have a concern that an adult is being abused or neglected or is at risk of this?

Emergency

If the adult is seriously hurt, or the abuser is still with the adult and they are in immediate danger risk the Police on 999

Non-emergency

If the adult lives in Stoke-on-Trent:

0800 561 0015

If the adult lives in Staffordshire

0345 604 2719

Please visit the SSASPB website for more information.

www.SSASPB.org.uk

The SSASPB also have an adult safeguarding training package that is free to use on the website, we ask that a qualified trainer gives this training. A link to the package is below;

<https://www.SSASPB.org.uk/Professionals/Training.aspx>

