



Social Care Information Sheet

Adult Safeguarding – what it is and why it matters

The aims of adult safeguarding are to:

- stop abuse or neglect wherever possible;
- prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs;
- safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live;
- promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned;
- raise public awareness so that communities as a whole, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect;
- provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult; and
- address what has caused the abuse or neglect.

There are six key principles that underpin all adult safeguarding work

- Empowerment – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.

“I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.”

- Prevention – It is better to take action before harm occurs.

“I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.”

- Proportionality – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

“I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, as I see them and they will only get involved as much as needed.”

- Protection – Support and representation for those in greatest need.

“I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want.”

- Partnership – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.

“I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me.”

- Accountability – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

“I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.”

The safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting 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.

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

What are abuse and neglect?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can consist of a single act or repeated acts and can take the following forms:

Physical abuse – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Domestic violence – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.

Sexual abuse – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological abuse – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Financial or material abuse – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Modern slavery – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Discriminatory abuse – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and acts of omission – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

Self-neglect – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Who abuses and neglects adults?

Anyone can carry out abuse or neglect, including:

- spouses/partners;
- other family members;
- neighbours;
- friends;
- acquaintances;
- local residents;
- people who deliberately exploit adults they perceive as vulnerable to abuse;
- paid staff or professionals; and
- volunteers and strangers.

Where does abuse & neglect happen?

Abuse and neglect can happen anywhere, for example:

- in someone's own home
- in a public place
- in hospital
- in a care home
- or in college.
- It can take place when an adult lives alone or with others.

What are the signs of abuse & neglect?

Possible signs of abuse and neglect could include:

- Injuries – bruises, broken bones and burns
- Lack of personal care
- Bills not being paid
- Sudden loss of assets, friends of family threatening an individual to gain access to money
- Not getting to medical appointments
- Change in behaviour or mood
- Unexplained withdrawal from normal activities and friends, family or community

How can I report my suspicions of abuse & neglect?

Initially you should tell someone you can trust. This could be:

- A family member
- A friend
- A member of staff
- A social worker or nurse
- An advocate

If you or the individual is in immediate danger, need medical attention or if a crime has been committed call the emergency services on 999.

If you or an adult you know may be at risk of abuse you should contact Gloucestershire County Council's Adult Helpdesk on 01452 426868.