

Factsheet 2: What to do if you are concerned about someone

Living a life that's free from harm and abuse is everyone's fundamental human right. We all need to act as good neighbours and citizens in looking out for one another and seeking to prevent the isolation that can lead to abusive situations and put adults at risk of harm. One of the fundamental principles of communities is that we're all fair, compassionate and caring to each other.

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. Local people, professionals and services must work together to spot those at risk and take steps to prevent abuse from happening, and to protect people at the earliest opportunity. Abuse can happen to adults, particularly when they have care and support needs.

The following six statutory principles underpin all adult safeguarding work:

- **Empowerment** – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent. *"I'm asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens."*
- **Prevention** – It's 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'm sure that the professionals will work in my interests as I see them, and they'll 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'm 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's helpful and necessary. I'm 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."*

Abuse may fall under one, or a combination, of the following categories:

- **Physical abuse** – This is non-accidental harm to the body. It can include hitting, slapping, pushing, punching, kicking, pulling hair, rough handling, spitting, misuse of medication or inappropriate use of restraint
- **Psychological abuse** – This can include being threatened, abandoned (being deliberately left alone for a long time or being ignored), intimidation and bullying, being tormented, or being humiliated and blamed
- **Financial abuse** – Finance or material abuse includes having money or property stolen, someone borrowing money without permission or not giving it back, fraud, misuse of benefits, exploitation, internet scamming, being bullied about wills, property or use of benefits

- **Neglect** – This can include ignoring medical or physical care needs, such as being left in wet or dirty clothing, or not being given enough to eat or drink, not respecting privacy or dignity and being left in poor environmental conditions
- **Sexual abuse** – This includes rape or attempted rape, sexual assault or sexual acts such as being touched and kissed when it's not wanted. It also includes acts of sexual harassment or non-contact abuse such as pornography
- **Discriminatory abuse** – This can include ignoring religious beliefs, making comments and jokes about a person and other oppressive attitudes towards race, gender, cultural background, religion, physical and/or sensory impairment, sexual orientation and age
- **Organisational abuse** – This can occur in any service provided to people with care needs, can involve tolerating abusive behaviour, repeatedly failing to prevent abuse or neglect and may include incorrect use of restraint, neglect or instances where care routines are rigid to suit staff rather than the person
- **Domestic abuse** – This abuse can be physical, sexual, psychological or financial that takes place within family and intimate relationships, it's not just about physical abuse. Domestic abuse can also include forced marriage and so-called 'honour crimes'
- **Self-neglect** – There are many types of self-neglect and many factors that can contribute to people neglecting themselves and putting themselves at risk. This can cover a wide range of behaviour, such as neglecting to care for your own personal hygiene, health or surroundings, and includes behaviour such as hoarding
- **Modern slavery** – This can include human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude where people are force or deceived into a life of abuse and inhumane treatment

If you, or someone you know with care and support needs, is experiencing abuse or neglect, or are at risk of abuse or neglect, your first priority is with them, to make them safe (including reporting to the police if immediate action is required).

If you're not sure whether to raise a safeguarding concern, please ring the FPoC team for advice on **0345 678 9021**. Their opening hours are Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm, and Friday 9am to 4pm.

In urgent circumstances outside these hours, please phone the Emergency Social Work Duty Team on **0345 678 9040**.