

Safeguarding adults at risk of abuse



Recognise it ... Report it ... Stop it ...

What to do if you suspect an adult is being abused or neglected, or you are a vulnerable adult and you are being abused.

What do we mean by abuse?

Abuse is when someone does something to another person that hurts them, damages their quality of life or puts them at risk of harm. It can be a criminal act or something done consciously or unconsciously. It can happen once or repeatedly.

Who might be at risk of abuse?

This leaflet is about adults, all those who are 18 or over. Some may be at more risk than others including:

- people who depend on others for care
- people with mental health problems
- people with learning or physical disabilities
- people with physical or sensory impairment
- people who have dementia
- people who misuse substances
- people with long term health needs
- people who have problems related to old age

These people are called **vulnerable adults** or **adults at risk of abuse**.

Who can abuse?

Anyone can be an abuser. Usually the person is in a position of Trust, such as a relative, a carer, a friend, an adviser or a neighbour. A vulnerable adult may abuse another vulnerable adult.

Where does it happen?

Abuse can happen anywhere. At home, in a health care setting, in a residential home, in a police station. Anywhere.



Abuse can take many forms and may include one or more of the following:

- **Physical:** being hit or injured on purpose, restraining someone inappropriately; administering medication against someone's will or inappropriately giving medication such as overdosing or withholding.
- **Emotional:** intimidation, threats, bullying, verbal or psychological abuse refusing social contacts or sensory stimulation.
- **Neglect:** failure to provide suitable care or food, aids or attention and failure to provide access to appropriate Health and Social care.
- **Financial:** includes taking or misusing another person's money benefits or possessions without their full permission; the use of pressure to change wills property or other financial transactions.
- **Sexual:** includes any sexual act to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or does not have the capacity to consent.
- **Discriminatory:** includes types of abuse aimed at a vulnerable adult because of their colour, ethnicity, religion, age appearance or sexuality.
- **Institutional:** occurs in a social or health care setting i.e. care home, hospital etc and may range from poor practice to ill treatment and gross misconduct.

What can you do if you suspect someone is being abused?

If you see, hear or suspect a vulnerable adult is being abused in any way, you **MUST** tell someone about it. Always contact the police if you think a crime may have been committed.

Do:

- stay calm
- take what you see or are being told about, seriously
- contact one of the following:

Care Connect	01934 8888 01
Police - Safeguarding Coordination Unit	01823 363 666
Care Quality Commission (CQC)	03000 616 161

If you need to report the matter in the evening or at weekends call the North Somerset Emergency Duty Team on 01454 615165

- **If you are a vulnerable adult** yourself, or a relative, friend etc, then also contact Care Connect on **01934 888 801** or one of the other numbers above.



- **If you are a worker** you will be protected if you think your job may be at risk. Either tell your manager or call one of the above.

Remember if an emergency, dial 999

What we will do

We will:

- Listen to what you have to say
- Take what you say seriously
- Treat you with dignity and respect
- Take action as necessary
- Keep you informed

We are all working together to prevent abuse and to stamp it out.

This publication is available in large print, Braille or audio formats on request. Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English. Please contact **01275 882 851**.

Updated April 2012