

Who are vulnerable adults?

Many adults, because of illness or disability, may be unable to protect themselves from abuse. Vulnerable adults may be certain older people, people with learning disabilities, physically disabled people, people with mental health needs or those with a short or long term illness.

What is abuse?

Abuse may happen as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance. Here are some examples of abuse:

Physical abuse

This includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medical/chemical restraint.

Sexual abuse

This includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not, or could not, consent and/or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological abuse

This includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, or isolation from others.

Financial or material abuse

This includes theft, fraud, exploitation; pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions; or the misuse of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect

This includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Institutional abuse

This is repeated instances of poor care of individuals or groups of individuals. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of structures, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.



Responding to Abuse

- Obtain medical treatment and contact the emergency services if this is needed.
- Listen carefully if a vulnerable adult tells you about abuse to ensure that they know that they are being heard and are not discouraged from reporting abuse.
- Clarify the bare facts of the reported abuse or grounds for suspicion of abuse, but do not go into detail about the abuse with the victim and do not speak with the alleged perpetrator about what has happened.
- Explain that you should tell someone about what you have been told. See how the victim feels about involving the Police or other agencies.
- Make an accurate record of the allegations or grounds for suspecting abuse.
- Report your concerns to Adult Social Care Services or the Police as soon as possible.