

Patient Information Leaflet

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for practice news and information



Safeguarding Adults

For further information visit

www.nhs.uk or www.patient.co.uk

Safeguarding adults is about protecting those at risk of harm (vulnerable adults) from suffering abuse or neglect. Abuse can happen anywhere. It can happen at home, in a residential or nursing home, in a hospital, at work or in the street.

Who is at risk?

Those who need safeguarding help are often elderly and frail, living on their own at home, or without much family support in care homes. Other people at risk of suffering harm are those with physical or learning difficulties or people with mental health needs.

What are the different types of abuse?

- *Physical* - being hurt or harmed either deliberately or through rough, careless or thoughtless behaviour.
- *Emotional abuse or bullying* - being humiliated or put down or made to feel anxious or frightened.
- *Financial abuse or theft* - someone using your money or possessions in a way that you don't want.
- *Neglect* - not being given the things you need to feel safe and comfortable or not making sure you get the care or treatment you need.
- *Sexual abuse* - being made to do something that you don't want to do.

How to spot adult abuse...

General signs of abuse:

- Frequent arguments between the carer and the elderly person.
- Changes in personality or behaviour in the person being abused.

Physical abuse:

- Unexplained signs of injury such as bruises, burns or scars, or more serious unexplained injuries such as broken bones.
- Report of a person taking too much of their medicines or not taking their medicines regularly (a prescription has more remaining than it should).

- Broken eye glasses or frames.
- Signs of being restrained, such as bruises on the wrists.
- Staff in a care home refusing to allow you to see the elderly person alone.

Emotional abuse:

- Threatening, belittling, or controlling behaviour by the abuser.
- Behaviour from the abused person that seems like dementia, such as rocking, sucking, or mumbling to themself.

Sexual abuse:

- Bruises around the breasts or genitals.
- Unexplained genital infections.
- Unexplained bleeding from the vagina or from the back passage.
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear.

Neglect by caregivers or self-neglect:

- Unusual weight loss because of not eating enough food or drinking enough fluids.
- Untreated physical problems, such as bedsores.
- Dirty living conditions: dirt, bugs, soiled bedding and clothes.
- Being left dirty or unwashed.
- Unsafe living conditions (no heat or running water; faulty electrical wiring, other fire hazards).

What to do next?

If you are being abused or concerned about someone else being abused, it is very important to talk about your concerns.

You can obtain help just by talking to someone you trust or by talking to:

- A Doctor or Nurse
- A social worker or care manager
- Home carers
- Community or District Nurses
- Daycare Workers
- Hospital staff

If you are worried that there is an immediate danger of harm then you should contact the police. If you think the person is in immediate risk of serious harm from physical violence then you should dial **999**.

How to report your concerns

Police:

If you think it is an emergency (the adult is at immediate risk of serious harm) then refer the adult immediately to the police (call 999) and social services for immediate action.

Dorset Safeguarding Adults Board:

Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board (DSAB) ensures and oversees the effectiveness of the arrangements made by individual agencies and the wider partnership to safeguard adults from abuse. Its remit is not operational but one of co-ordination, planning and commissioning. It contributes to the wider goals of improving the wellbeing of adults. (www.dorsetforyou.com)

Helplines

During Office Hours

Dorset County Council: **01305 221016**

Care Direct: **01202 454979**

Help Desk—Poole Borough Council: **01202 633902**

Out of Hours

01202 657279

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