

Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

Adult Social Care & Health Factsheet no.2

What to do if you think a vulnerable adult is being abused

This leaflet is about Adult Abuse and what you can do if you are worried that a vulnerable adult(s) may be at risk.

What is adult abuse?

Abuse may be physical, sexual or it may be neglect. It may be financial or psychological or discriminatory. It may be domestic violence or institutional abuse. Sometimes it may be unintentional abuse, where someone thinks they are trying to help but in the wrong way.

- Physical abuse such as shaking, pushing, hitting, force-feeding, tying up or locking up;
- Sexual abuse sexual activity of any kind where the person does not give, or is unable to give, consent;
- Neglect such as leaving someone alone for inappropriate periods of time, failing to care for them or leaving them in soiled clothes;
- Financial abuse such as holding money back, cheating or stealing money;
- Psychological or Emotional abuse such as rejection, ignoring, humiliating, bullying, or the use of threats;
- Discriminatory abuse treating people in a way that does not respect their race, ethnic background, culture, age, sex, disability or sexuality;
- Domestic abuse is emotional, physical or psychological abuse by partner/other family member;

- Institutional abuse takes place in any form of institution, for example, hospitals, residential and nursing homes, day centres and includes any of the above and poor and unsatisfactory professional conduct, ill treatment or gross misconduct.

Although the above list is fairly comprehensive it is not exhaustive.

What can I do?

If you believe that someone is being abused contact Cheshire West and Chester on telephone: **01244 973400** or email: accesswest@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk 8.30am-5pm Mon-Thurs (4.30pm Fri). should phone our Emergency Duty Team on: **01606 76611**.

You will be listened to and you will be supported. Alternatively, speak to the police, doctor or nurse, or any of the organisations listed below:

- Housing advice (contact your local housing department);
- Women's Aid;
- Local Citizens Advice Bureau;
- Action on Elder Abuse Helpline: **080 8808 8141**;
- Age Concern Cheshire
- Mindor
- Mencap.

Cheshire Information Centres can provide contact telephone numbers of local organisations.

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What will happen next?

If you contact the Social Care Access Teams, you will be asked for basic information about the person you are concerned about, and who is the alleged abuser. You will be asked about yourself, and what you heard or saw. Information will then be shared with partner organisations on a “needs to know” basis, but you will be kept informed about who has to be told, for example, the Police if a crime may have been committed.

All the relevant agencies will work together with the person who may be being abused, to establish what has happened, and what action the person wants taking next. Work will also be done with the alleged abuser, and multi-disciplinary options will be created which will prevent, reduce or stop further abuse from happening.

Imagine if it was your mother or father, sister, brother, son or daughter. You would want someone to speak out if they thought they were being abused. You may be being abused yourself and need support.

Who does it?

Sadly it can be anyone including ones nearest and dearest. Research by Action on Elder Abuse suggests that as many as one in eleven older people in the UK are mistreated or neglected by those they trust the most. Two thirds of these are abused by members of their own family. Care staff, too, can be abusers. There are many examples of this, including those where the abusers have deliberately chosen to work in environments where there will be vulnerable people, such as those with learning disabilities.

Any types of abuse may be carried out as the result of deliberate actions, negligence or ignorance.

Where does it happen?

Abuse can happen anywhere - in a person's home, in the street, in a residential or nursing home, at a day centre or resource centre, in a hospital or indeed any place where vulnerable people might be.

Break the silence, contact Cheshire West and Chester, or any of the organisations listed, you will be believed and given advice about what to do.

Further Information

Action on Elder Abuse

<http://www.elderabuse.org.uk>

Tel: **0808 808 8141**

Email: enquiries@elderabuse.org.uk

Help the Aged

http://www.helptheaged.org.uk/engb/AdviceSupport/AdviceLeaflets/as_health_adv_leaflets.htm

Tel: **020 7278 1114**

Samaritans

Tel: **08457 90 90 90**

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Samaritans is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide confidential, emotional support on any subject.

Care Homes

If you are concerned about bad practices, poor quality care or abuse in a care home, contact the appropriate organisation:

Care Quality Commission

The Care Quality Commission is the new health and social care regulator for England.

They oversee standards in hospitals, care homes and for care at home.

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/usingcare services/socialcare/usingsocialcareservices/abuseandneglect.cfm>

Tel: **03000 616161**

Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk