



*Safeguarding Adults  
Is Everybody's Business*

# Alerters guide

A guide to identifying and reporting  
the abuse of vulnerable adults in  
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

[www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)

Tel: 0300 1234 131



## Other formats

If you would like this information in another format please contact:

Cornwall Council  
County Hall  
Treyew Road  
Truro TR1 3AY

Telephone: 0300 1234 100  
Email: [enquiries@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@cornwall.gov.uk)  
[www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)

The leaflet is also available on the Safeguarding Adults website at [www.cornwall.gov.uk/safeguardingadults](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/safeguardingadults)

For further copies of the leaflet, please call 0300 1234 100.

“ This leaflet is aimed mainly at workers in Health or Social Care. However, if you are a member of the public, the information will still be useful if you are concerned that a vulnerable adult is experiencing abuse. ”

# Why do we need to safeguard adults?

- Everyone has the right to live their life free from violence, fear and abuse.
- All adults have the right to be protected from harm and exploitation.
- Not everyone can protect themselves.
- All adults have the right to independence, which may involve some risks.

This booklet will help you to identify if someone is at risk from, or experiencing abuse. We all need to know what abuse is, how we can recognise it, and what our role is in safeguarding people who are vulnerable.

“ We are all responsible for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. ”

# Who is a vulnerable adult?

A vulnerable adult is a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

(“No Secrets” – Dept. of Health, 2000)

# What is abuse?

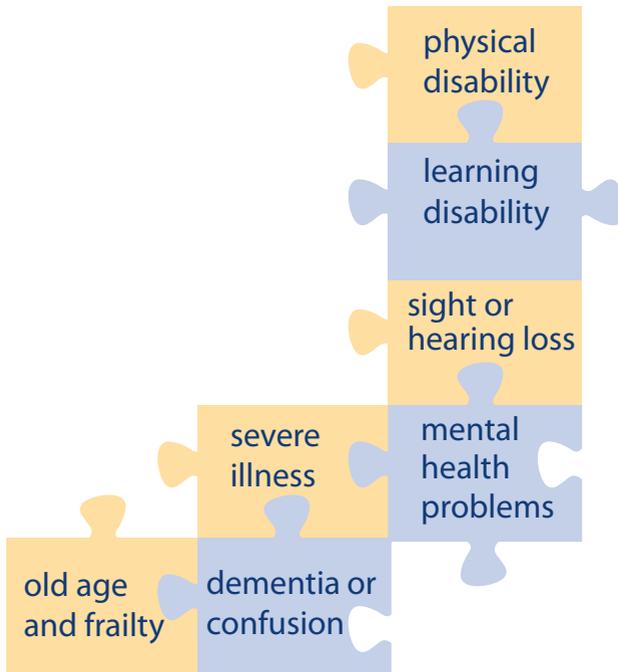
Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse can occur in any relationship, both formal and informal, and may result in significant harm to or exploitation of the person subjected to it. Abuse may consist of single or repeated acts.

(“No Secrets” – Dept. of Health, 2000)

# Things that may make people vulnerable to abuse

Some adults might be more at risk of abuse than others. The following things could increase the risk of abuse:



Also, people who depend on others to look after them may not be able to stop someone else from hurting them or taking advantage of them.

# Abuse can happen in many different places:

- someone's own home
- a care home
- a hospital
- a day centre
- a public place

# Anyone could be an abuser and it is often someone who is known and trusted.

It might be:

- a family member or partner
- a neighbour
- a health or social care worker
- another professional worker, for example a financial advisor or solicitor
- a volunteer worker
- a friend
- a service user

# What do you need to do?

## Recognise

Abuse comes in many forms and more than one type of abuse may be happening at the same time. The following are some examples of abuse:

**Physical abuse:** being hit or slapped, being given the wrong medication on purpose, being locked in or force-fed.

**Psychological abuse:** being threatened, not being given choices, being bullied or isolated from other people.

**Financial abuse:** having money or property stolen, being pressured into giving people money or changing a will, misuse of benefits, not being allowed access to money.

**Neglect:** ignoring medical or physical care needs, withholding food or drink, not allowing access to appropriate health or social services, being left in wet or dirty clothes.

**Sexual abuse:** being touched or kissed when it is not wanted, being made to touch or kiss someone else, being raped, being made to listen to sexual comments or forced to look at sexual acts, or materials.

**Discrimination:** ignoring spiritual or religious beliefs, comments or jokes about a person's disability, age, race, sexual orientation, or gender / gender identity, ignoring cultural needs, for example diet or clothing.

**Institutional Abuse:** lack of individual care, no flexibility of bedtimes or waking, deprived environment and lack of stimulation.

# Respond

You may suspect abuse because:

- You have general concerns about someone's well-being.
- You see or hear about something which could be abuse.
- Someone tells you that something has happened or is happening to them, which could be abuse.

**X Remember, it is not your role to investigate any concerns you may have.**

**✓ It is your role to pass on any concerns you may have.**

### **You must:**

- ✓ Call the police and / or an ambulance if the person is in immediate danger.
- ✓ Listen carefully to what you are being told and reassure the person that you are taking what they say seriously.
- ✓ Tell your manager what has happened.

### **You must not:**

- ✗ Touch or clear away any evidence.
- ✗ Agree to keep it a secret – you cannot do this. Explain to them that you will have to pass the information on. If possible, name the person you will pass the information to.
- ✗ Interrupt the person or ask “leading questions.”
- ✗ Contact the alleged abuser.
- ✗ Talk to other staff members or service users about the information shared with you.

## Record

If you witness abuse or someone tells you about it;

### **You must:**

- ✓ Write an account of what you have seen or heard as soon as possible. Make sure you include the time and date.
- ✓ Make sure the information is factual and accurate.
- ✓ Note down what the person said, using their own words.
- ✓ Describe the circumstances and identify anyone else who was there at the time.
- ✓ Use a body map to record any injuries.
- ✓ Sign and date your report, noting the time and the location.

## Report

You must never assume that somebody else will recognise and report what you have seen or heard.

It can be difficult if the allegation is about a colleague or it is difficult to believe what you have heard – but you must still report any alleged abuse, or concerns that you have.

You should normally report your concerns to your line manager as soon as possible and they will then contact the relevant organisations.

However, if you think that your line manager is involved in the abuse, or does not take what you say seriously, you must contact the Directorate of Adult Care, Health and Wellbeing.

“ If you are a member of the public, or a manager, or can't speak to anyone in your organisation, please refer to the contact numbers on page 14. ”

# Safeguarding Adults in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

The Safeguarding Adults Board is made up of people from organisations who have a role in preventing the abuse of vulnerable adults, including Health, the Police, the Directorate of Adult Care, Health and Wellbeing and representatives from independent and voluntary organisations. The Board looks at ways in which vulnerable adults can be safeguarded from harm and exploitation and it has produced a Multi-Agency Policy which all organisations have agreed to follow.

The Safeguarding Adults Unit oversees and monitors safeguarding adults work in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

In order to safeguard people from abuse it is important that everyone knows what to do if they suspect someone is being abused. This booklet is one way in which we are sharing information about safeguarding vulnerable adults in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

# Contact Numbers

## Single point of access for all Cornwall safeguarding adults alerts.

The Adult Care, Health and Wellbeing Access Service and Triage Team screen and triage all Cornwall safeguarding alerts and decide which safeguarding alerts go into the formal safeguarding process.

## Cornwall Directorate of Adult Care, Health and Wellbeing

General **0300 1234 131**  
Emergency duty service **0300 1234 131 (option 1)**

## Devon and Cornwall Police

For emergencies **999**  
Non emergencies **101**

## Council of the Isles of Scilly

Council of the Isles of Scilly **01720 424 000**  
Out of Hours **01720 422 699**

You can find more information about Safeguarding Adults at:

[www.cornwall.gov.uk/safeguardingadults](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/safeguardingadults)

# Notes

It is very important that you know who to contact in your organisation in case you need to raise a concern about abuse. Please find out who this person is and fill in their details below.



If this person is not available you will need to contact someone else in your organisation, or Adult Care, Health and Wellbeing, on 0300 1234 131.

## Remember

Recognise, Respond



Record, Report

**If you would like this information  
in another format or language please contact:**

**Cornwall Council, County Hall,  
Treyew Road, Truro TR1 3AY**

**Tel: 0300 1234 131**

**Email: [achw@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:achw@cornwall.gov.uk)**

**[www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)**

