

A magnifying glass with a blue handle and frame is positioned over a white surface. The text 'Abuse don't tolerate it don't ignore it do report it!' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The magnifying glass is focused on the word 'Abuse' and the phrase 'do report it!', making them appear larger and more prominent. The background of the magnifying glass is a light blue gradient.

Useful information, services and contacts

What are abuse and neglect?

Abuse is behaviour towards a person that deliberately or unintentionally causes harm. It is a disregard of a person's human rights and in the worst cases can endanger life.

Abuse can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological, organisational, neglect, discriminatory, domestic abuse, modern slavery (human trafficking, forced labour). People are also at risk from self-neglect to their hygiene, health and surroundings.

What are the signs of abuse?

General signs that someone has been, or is being, abused include:

- Unexplained injury/repeated visits to a GP or Accident & Emergency Department
- Signs of fear or distress
- Withdrawal or isolation
- Unexplained pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease
- Self-neglect or basic physical and emotional needs not being properly met by others
- Not able to pay bills or buy food even though enough money should be available

Which adults are at risk of abuse?

'Adults at risk' are people aged 18+ who:

- May rely on other people or services to care for them or support them with day-to-day tasks – maybe because of their age, a physical or learning disability, other physical or mental health need or involvement in substance misuse
- May lack mental capacity
- May not be able to speak up for themselves

Where might the abuse happen?

Abuse can happen anywhere – in people's own homes, public places, day centres, residential homes, hospitals and GPs' surgeries, colleges, police stations and prisons.

Who abuses?

Anyone can be an abuser - professionals, volunteers, trades people, family members, carers, partners, friends, neighbours and other 'adults at risk'.

How to report it

Whoever you are, if you see or hear something that concerns you and you suspect that abuse may be happening, or someone tells you they have been abused, you should call:

Social Care Direct
03000 26 79 79
24 hours a day

You can call this number at any time of the day or night. Your concerns will always be taken seriously and your details will be kept confidential.

Concerns about children should also be reported to this number.

If the person is in immediate danger call 999 straight away, before contacting Social Care Direct.

What happens next?

We will treat every report of suspected abuse seriously and keep you informed of the outcome. We will take steps to ensure the immediate safety of the adult at risk and anyone else affected by the alleged abuse, including children.

We will talk with the 'adult at risk' (or a suitable representative or advocate on their behalf) to find out what is happening. We will work together with them to plan what we can do to help keep them safe and as independent as possible.

Where necessary, together with our partner agencies including the police, we will investigate allegations of abuse and take appropriate action. We will always do what we can to prevent abuse happening again.

You will also receive any advice you may need as a result of reporting your concerns.

What is Adult Protection?

Adult Protection is the term given to the provision of support and advice to any 'adult at risk', to enable them to live their lives free from abuse and neglect and to obtain the appropriate care and protection to live in safety and without fear.

We are always trying to improve the way we protect adults in County Durham. If you have any comments, suggestions, compliments or complaints about our service, please contact us using the details below:

www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info

What not to do:

- Don't promise to keep abuse a secret
- Don't alert the abuser, this might make matters worse and make it difficult for the police and social care staff to help the person at risk
- Don't delay - ring Social Care Direct as soon as possible or 999 in an emergency

Please help us to prevent adult abuse

Lots of cases of adult abuse go unreported. We need your help to make sure that people get the help they need to stay safe and independent.

For further information please visit www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info

Useful contacts

- Social Care Direct
Call 03000 26 79 79 to report an adult protection matter or to discuss a concern
- Domestic Abuse Services
Call Harbour 03000 20 25 25 www.myharbour.org.uk
- Hate crime
www.durham.gov.uk/hatecrime
- Modern slavery helpline
Call 0800 121 700 www.modernslavery.co.uk

Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.

03000 268 198

safeguardingadults@durham.gov.uk