What happens when abuse is reported?
An easy to guide to how we protect adults from abuse in County Durham
If you have received this leaflet it means that either you or someone else has reported that you have been the victim of abuse. In this booklet we will explain what will happen after abuse is reported.

It is important to tell someone you trust if you, or someone you know, is being abused. They will tell the police or Durham County Council.

You can phone us yourself to let us know about abuse happening to you or to someone you know:

**In an Emergency** ☎ 999  
**Durham Police** ☎ 101  
**Social Care Direct** ☎ 03000 26 79 79

This booklet was designed by Durham County Council on behalf of the Durham Safeguarding Adults Board.

It is available on the internet at [www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info](http://www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info) Please see other easy read booklets “Stop abuse now” and “Staying safe” for further information.
What happens when we hear about abuse?

- If you tell us someone has abused you we will do everything possible to keep you safe from further harm. We can help you get to a safe place away from danger.

- To help us decide what to do we may need to talk to you and other people like your family, staff who support you and sometimes the police.

- If we think you or anyone you have told us about is at immediate risk of being badly hurt we will act quickly to protect you.
A meeting or discussion is held to decide who will investigate what happened, who should be talked to and how to support you. This is called the Adult Protection Strategy. We will try to do this within 5 working days.

The police may tell us that a crime has been committed. In this case the police will investigate what has happened. If the police are not investigating what happened then you may be spoken to by a manager, social worker or care coordinator, who will ask you what happened.

You will be able to say how you feel and what you want to happen.

When the investigation is finished there may be meetings or discussions to talk about what has happened and how to stop it happening again.
Going to meetings

You should be invited to meetings to discuss what happened and to plan your safety.

You can ask someone to go with you to the meeting, or to go in your place. This could be a family member, friend or advocate.

You do not have to go to meetings if you do not want to.

Sometimes it might not be possible to invite you to a meeting. This might be because other people are being talked about in the meetings.

The meetings are confidential which means that only the people who have been at the meeting will know what was said.

There will not always be meetings.
If there is a police investigation

You will not be in trouble for telling the police what happened.

The police will speak to the person who has hurt you. This person is known as the suspect.

Durham police have special police officers to support vulnerable adults. These police officers do not wear uniforms.

There is not always a police investigation.
What happens after a police investigation?

There are 3 things that could happen.

The suspect may be charged with a criminal offence.

If the suspect is charged they will go to court. It may take many months for their trial to happen in court.

The suspect may be cautioned by the police.

This means the suspect will get a written warning which is kept on record and may count against them if they commit another crime.

No further action may be taken

This is often because there is not enough evidence of a crime to take the case to court.
If you are asked to go to court to answer questions a request can be made for ‘special measures’ to help you feel more comfortable in the court:

- The Judge may take off his or her wig.
- A person called an intermediary can support you in court.
- There can be screens in court so you can’t see the suspect.
- You may be able to give your evidence by a video camera in another room or building.
You may need extra support to talk about what has happened and how you feel about it. These are the people who might help you:

- Doctor
- Psychologist
- Nurse
- Social worker
- Care coordinator
- Counsellor
- Advocate
If you are unhappy about what has been said in the Adult Protection meetings or discussions, you can complain to the lead officer, your care coordinator or social worker.

You can ask for help and support at any time. If you suspect a neighbour, friend or family member is being neglected or abused or you are the victim of neglect or abuse call:

**Social Care Direct ☎️ 03000 26 79 79 (24 hours a day)**

Your concerns will always be taken seriously and your details will remain 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.

www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info
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