

Patient information factsheet

Adult safeguarding

Every adult has the right to be safe and feel safe. If you, or someone you know, is experiencing harm, abuse or neglect, tell a health worker at our hospital.

We hope this factsheet will help to answer some of the questions you may have about adult safeguarding (for people aged 18 and over). If you have any further questions or worries, please do ask us.

Who is at risk of harm, abuse or neglect?

An adult at risk could be someone who:

- is elderly and frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment
- has a learning disability
- has a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment
- has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder
- has a long-term illness or condition
- misuses substances or alcohol
- is a carer (for a family member or friend) and is subject to abuse
- does not have capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of a person's human and civil rights by another person. It's when someone does something to another person that puts that person at risk of harm or has a negative impact on their quality of life.

Abuse can be:

- something that happens once
- something that happens repeatedly
- a deliberate act
- something that was unintentional, perhaps due to a lack of understanding
- a crime

Abuse can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time, and can be caused by anyone.

It might be:

- a partner or relative
- a friend or neighbour
- a paid or volunteer carer
- other service users
- someone in a position of trust
- a stranger

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Different kinds of abuse

Abuse can take many forms. It might include:

- **Physical abuse** such as being hit, kicked, locked in a room or inappropriate restraint.
- **Sexual abuse** such as being made to take part in a sexual activity when the adult has not given or is not able to give their consent.
- **Psychological abuse** such as being shouted at, ridiculed or bullied, as well as being made to feel frightened.
- **Financial or material abuse** such as theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with financial matters or misuse of someone else's finances.
- **Organisational abuse** is where poor working practices in care homes or hospitals cause mistreatment.
- **Neglect** involves the failure to provide care or support that results in someone being harmed.
- **Discriminatory abuse** involves treatment or harassment based on age, gender, sexuality, disability, race or religious belief.
- **Modern slavery** includes human trafficking and forced labour.
- When abuse occurs between partners or by a family member, it is often called **domestic violence and abuse**.
- **Self-neglect** is when an adult declines essential support with their care and support needs, and this is having a substantial impact on their overall wellbeing.
- **Radicalisation** is when someone starts to believe or support extreme views, and in some cases, then participates in terrorist groups or acts.

How can I spot abuse?

Some possible signs of abuse are:

- unexplained bruises, marks or injuries
- changes in behaviour, such as being withdrawn, angry or scared
- changes in appearance, such as being shabby or unkept
- shortage of money for no apparent reason
- tearfulness or crying for no reason and not saying why
- a carer who is unwilling to let another person have contact with the person they are caring for

What you can do

No one should have to live with abuse. By reporting abuse, you can help bring it to an end.

- **If you are experiencing harm, abuse or neglect, you can report this by telling a health worker at our hospital.**
- **If you think someone you know may be experiencing harm, abuse or neglect, you should report your concern by telling a health worker at our hospital.**

If you feel unable to speak to a health worker, you can ask to speak to a member of staff from the University Hospital Southampton safeguarding team, or you can report the abuse to your local social services. See the 'Contact details' section for a list of telephone numbers for local social services.

We all have a responsibility to safeguard others from abuse and neglect. Doing nothing is not an option.

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Who can report a concern about harm, abuse, or neglect?

Anyone can raise a concern, including:

- health workers, like nurses and therapists
- members of staff
- volunteers
- you

Others may report a concern if you have told them you are being harmed, or if they have a reason to suspect you may have been abused or neglected. They will only share information that is necessary and with agencies that are relevant. Whenever possible, they will tell you they are going to share information.

What happens next?

When you report abuse, people will:

- listen to you
- take your concerns seriously
- respond sensitively
- make enquiries about the concerns
- consider the wishes of the adult at risk
- talk to the police if it is a criminal matter
- support the adult at risk to achieve the changes they want, wherever possible
- develop a plan with the adult at risk to keep them safe in the future
- consider anyone else at risk, this could be adults or children

Any information shared will be in line with the law and will only be that which is necessary to prevent harm

Always remember:

- abuse is always wrong
- you can let the person being abused know that help is available; you could give them this leaflet
- try to include the person in the decision to seek help
- if someone is injured you may need to help them get to a doctor or call **999** for an ambulance
- if you think a crime has been committed, you can call the police
- you can always get advice. You can do this anonymously.

Contact details

If you feel unable to speak to a health worker, you can contact your local social services:

Hampshire social services: Telephone: **0300 5551386** / Out of hours: **0300 5551373**

Southampton social services: Telephone: **023 8083 3003** / Out of hours: **023 8023 3344**

Portsmouth social services: Telephone: **023 9286 0810**

Isle of Wight social services: Telephone: **019 3881 4980**

In an emergency, call **999**.

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Useful links

University Hospital Southampton website

Safeguarding page: www.uhs.nhs.uk/PatientsAndVisitors/Safeguarding/Safeguarding.aspx

Southampton Local Safeguarding Adults Board website

Home page: southamptonlsab.org.uk/

NHS website

Abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults page: www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/abuse-and-neglect-vulnerable-adults/

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit: **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**