

# SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE PEOPLE



## The Information Booklet



# INTRODUCTION

This booklet describes what happens when abuse is reported. Further information and the full SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Safeguarding Adults Guidelines can be found at [www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk)

This booklet will cover:

- Who is a vulnerable person
- What abuse is
- Who abuses people
- Where abuse takes place
- What you can do if you suspect somebody is being abused
- How to protect yourself from harm
- What we do if abuse is reported

## Who is a vulnerable adult?

**A vulnerable adult is any person aged 18 or over who:**

1. is or maybe in need of a community care service by reason of mental, physical or learning disability, age or illness.

**and who**

2. is, or maybe, unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

## What is abuse?

**Abuse can be:**

- Any act or neglect that harms another person.
- It can occur once or repeatedly.
- Done intentionally to cause harm or accidentally through a lack of understanding.
- A criminal act.

## Types of abuse

- **Physical abuse** includes hitting; slapping; pushing; kicking; shaking; inappropriately stopping someone doing something; misusing medication or misusing restraint. It may be caused when a parent or carer causes illness or makes up symptoms.
- **Neglect** involves the constant failure to meet a vulnerable person's basic physical and/or psychological needs.
- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a vulnerable person which causes severe and persistent effects on the person's emotional wellbeing. This may include verbal abuse, threats or intimidation, isolation or withdrawal from family, friends or carers.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing participation in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the vulnerable person is aware of what is happening. Sexual activities may also include non-contact activities, for example, forcing a vulnerable person to look at or produce abusive images, watch sexual activities or encouraging the vulnerable person to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Financial abuse** includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or theft of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Discriminatory abuse** may include racist or sexist remarks or comments based on a person's impairment, disability, age or illness, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- **Institutional abuse** is the ongoing failure of an organisation to deliver an acceptable level of care.

## Where can abuse happen?

Abuse can happen **anywhere** and at any time of **day or night**:

- At home, whether it is someone's own home or a residential home.
- In hospital.
- At work.
- In someone's place of study.
- In the community.

## How can you protect yourself?

If you suspect that you or someone else is being abused then it is important you tell somebody who can help you.

Ensure that it is somebody you trust and ask them to pass on the information. Alternatively you can report it yourself using the telephone numbers in the back of this booklet. If you prefer, you can do this without giving your name and, if you find it useful, a representative can speak on your behalf. Whatever you say will be kept confidential and only shared with those who need to know in order to keep you or whoever has been abused, safe.

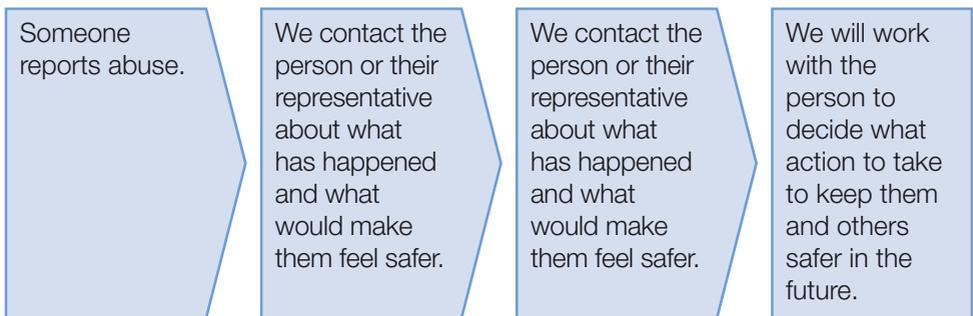
If you, or somebody else, have been hurt call for an ambulance or doctor and, if a crime has been committed call the police.

## How can you protect your finances?

If you are worried about your ability to continue managing your finances then you can give someone you trust control over them through 'lasting power of attorney'.

For further information visit <http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/opg>

## How do we investigate safeguarding concerns?



If we are told that you, or somebody that you know, is being abused or is at risk of harm we will:

- Seek permission to investigate (unless this would put the person or others at risk of harm).
- There are times when you may not consent to the investigation but we will still have to look into it. For example, you live in a care home and a carer has struck you. You decide that you do not wish to report it to the Police. The case coordinator will come and explain to you that we have to report it because you live in a care home and other residents could be at risk. It is in the public interest that we will have to report it.
- It is our legal duty to make a 'best interest' decision if someone doesn't have the mental capacity to consent to an investigation.
- If the person is not able to consent and has nobody appropriate to act for them then they will be represented by an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA).
- As part of the investigation, we will gather relevant information from others such as the Police, a doctor, a support worker or anybody else we feel can help.
- There are times where it is necessary to speak to the alleged perpetrator of the abuse. We will do this skilfully and sensitively, being mindful of the potential impact on your safety or relationships.
- Once we have gathered all necessary information, we will make recommendations about actions to try to stop the abuse happening.
- If financial abuse has occurred then we will arrange for the appropriate management of the person's finances, depending on capacity.

## What Happens at a Safeguarding Meeting?

We may hold a 'Safeguarding Meeting' as part of the process to stop the abuse. The case coordinator should explain to you before what will happen in the meeting.

- It can sometimes be upsetting to talk about painful experiences. The point of the meeting is to come up with a plan to stop the abuse happening again.
- Sometimes the person dealing with your case (Case Coordinator) and the person running the meeting (the Chair) will visit you before to talk about anything that's worrying you.
- You have the right to having an advocate or family member with you to support you at the meeting. An advocate is someone who speaks up for you. Please tell the person dealing with your case if you are going to bring someone with you to the meeting; they may not be able to come in if people aren't expecting them.
- The person in charge of the meeting is called the 'chair'. This person will be a manager who has looked at all the information. They will make sure that the meeting runs smoothly and safely. They will make sure that everyone there has time to speak without being interrupted. They can stop the meeting at any time for a break or to make sure everyone there is safe.
- The chair can ask any member of the group to leave the meeting at any time. The chair can also choose to hold the meeting in parts because people will be talking about confidential things.
- You can ask for the meeting to stop at any time.
- There will be a minute taker in the meeting. Their job is to summarise what has been said and record the actions that have been agreed.
- You will get the minutes from the meeting, so long as we don't think it will increase your risk of being hurt. You must keep these safe.
- The meeting minutes are confidential. There is a confidentiality agreement that the chair will read at the start of the meeting. You will be asked to sign your name that you understand this.
- You can ask the chair to change the minutes if there is anything in the minutes that isn't correct. The chair has to agree all such changes.

## Outcome Questionnaire

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire after the safeguarding meeting or during the last visit with your case worker, but only if you would like to. For people who don't have capacity to agree to the investigation, we will ask your advocate or family member.

The questionnaire asks what you thought about the investigations. We will use your answers when training staff and writing our procedures. We will give you this questionnaire and won't send it by post or e-mail. You don't have to complete it if you don't want to.

## Customer Standards Statement

The Southend Safeguarding Adults Board believes that every person has a right to live a life free from abuse and neglect.

These are the standards:

- You will be treated with dignity and respect.
- You have the right to privacy and confidentiality.
- You will be listened to and supported to tell us your opinion in your own way.
- You will be given information in a format you understand about the process in good time.
- You will be fully informed and involved throughout the process.
- You can choose someone to support or represent you.

# WHO CAN YOU CONTACT FOR HELP?

## Essex Police

To report a criminal act dial [101](#), or dial [999](#) in an emergency

## Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

The Access Team Dial [01702 215008](#) to raise a concern (Monday – Friday 8:45am – 5:15pm)

email: [accessteam@southend.gov.uk](mailto:accessteam@southend.gov.uk)

Out of office hours dial [0845 606 1212](#) to raise a concern

## Other sources of help & advice

**Ask SAL** – <http://www.asksal.org.uk/>

Safeguarding Adults Line 24 hour advice and information helpline [08452 66 66 63](#)

**Women's Aid** – provides refuges and has a survivors guide  
[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

**Age UK** – offers information and advice for older people  
[0800 169 6565](#) or [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

**MENCAP** – works with people with learning disabilities  
[01277 214210](#) or [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

**Action on Elder Abuse** – works to protect and prevent the abuse of vulnerable older adults – [0808 808 8141](#) or [www.elderabuse.org.uk](http://www.elderabuse.org.uk)

**Karma Nirvana** – works with people fleeing forced marriage.  
Forced Marriage Helpline – [0800 5999 247](#).  
Runs from 9am to 9pm 7 days a week, 365 days per year.

*With thanks to the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board.  
Thank you to Photosymbols 3 for the picture on the front cover.*