

Workforce

The Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board wants to ensure the workforce has easy access to information to support adults with care and support needs from abuse or neglect.

- [Recognise](#)
- [Respond](#)
- [Record](#)
- [Report](#)

What is an adult at risk?

An adult at risk is a person who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and:

- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse and neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or experience of, abuse and neglect.

Things that may make people vulnerable to abuse

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

- Physical disability
- Learning disability
- Mental ill health
- Sensory loss
- Old age and frailty
- Dementia / confusion

Also people who depend on others to care for them may be unable to stop someone else from harming or taking advantage of them.

Abuse can happen in many different places and anyone could be an abuser; it is often someone who is known and trusted.

Signs and Indicators of abuse

You may become concerned that someone is being abused in a number of ways:

- the person may tell you
- the person may say something that concerns you
- you may see something – an incident, an injury or some other sign

What might cause concern?

You might see and/or hear something happen, or there might be physical signs

- someone being bullied or intimidated
- someone being made to feel frightened or unhappy
- someone in a situation of unnecessary risk

There might be physical signs or unexplained or unusual injuries, such as bruises, slap marks, burns.

There may be other signs, such as inappropriate or dirty clothes, no food/drink available for the person, or a shortage of money.

The person may say things or behave in a way that worries you – for example, appearing frightened or anxious without identifiable cause, or experiencing sleeping problems.

The behaviour of a colleague or other person may appear dismissive or intolerant, or they might overstep their professional boundaries with clients.

You may suspect abuse because:

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

Safeguarding is everybody's business. It is your role to pass on any concerns you may have.

You must:

- call the police if the person is in immediate danger
- listen carefully to what you are being told and reassure the person you are taking what they say seriously
- tell your manager and / or safeguarding lead what has happened

You must not:

- Touch or clear away any evidence
- Agree to keep it a secret. Explain to them you will have to pass the information on.
- Interrupt the person or ask any leading questions
- Contact the alleged abuser
- Talk to other staff members or service users about the information shared with you

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 has 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 location.

If you are worried about an adult at risk, please don't stay silent.

Call Adult Social Care on 0300 123 2224

Email Adults@somerset.gov.uk

Contact the **Police** on 101 or, in an emergency, 999

Questions you may want to ask yourself:

- If nothing changes, or if I do nothing, in what way is the person likely to be harmed?
- What is it I am most worried about?
- Have I asked consent from the person to share this information? If not, why not?
- What is prompting me to ask for help or support now? Has the problem or issue worsened recently?
- What needs or concerns have been identified?
- What has already been done to address the needs or concerns?
- What positive resources and abilities does the person and 'family' currently have?
- What do we already know about the person's issues and capacity?