



Safeguarding Adults at risk of Abuse

General information



GwASB

Bwrdd Diogelu Oedolion Gwent Gyfan
Gwent-wide Adult Safeguarding Board

Safeguarding Adults at risk of Abuse

General information

Everyone has the right to have their human dignity respected and live their life free from abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding and protecting the most vulnerable in society, when they need it, could ensure a better quality of life for many people. Some adults may be particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have their human rights routinely disregarded.

Local Authorities, Police, Health, Regulators and other public services work together and are committed to ensuring that adults at risk of abuse are safeguarded and will take immediate action where necessary, to protect them and keep them safe from harm.

Who may be an adult at risk?

The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 states that an “adult at risk”, is an adult who:

- (a)** is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect,
- (b)** has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and
- (c)** as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

This may include people with physical, learning or sensory disabilities. Factors that increase vulnerability include age, mental health problems, chronic illness, challenging behaviour, lack of mental capacity, social and emotional problems, poverty, homelessness or substance misuse.

What is 'abuse'?

The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 states that:

"abuse" means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse taking place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place

"neglect" means a failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being.

Abuse is mistreatment by someone who does or says things that can hurt, upset you or make you frightened. This includes behaviour that can cause or has the potential to cause actual physical harm. Abuse can involve treatment that ignores your human and civil rights, causes mental or physical suffering and can significantly affect your quality of life. Abuse can be one single event or multiple acts repeated over time. It includes deliberate acts and non deliberate acts or omissions.

Abuse can happen anywhere - in a residential or nursing home, a hospital or health setting, in the workplace, a persons own home, at a day centre, in an educational establishment, in supported housing or in the street.

Forms of abuse include:

Physical abuse such as hitting, pushing, pinching, shaking, using too much medication or not allowing a person to take their medication.

Sexual abuse such as forcing someone into unwanted sexual activity, being touched inappropriately, rape, sexual assault, or sexual acts which you have not have consented to, or which you were pressurised into consenting to.

Psychological or emotional abuse such as being intimidated, threatened, verbally abused or humiliated, being blamed, controlled or harassed, being ignored on purpose or isolated from friends, family, services or support.

Financial abuse such as fraud or exploitation, stealing or withholding your money or spending it inappropriately, putting pressure on you to make changes to your will or misusing your property, inheritance, possessions or benefits.

Neglect such as ignoring your medical or physical care needs, preventing access to health, social care or educational services, not caring for you properly, not providing you with adequate food, or putting you at risk.

Any of these forms of abuse can be either deliberate or be the result of ignorance, or lack of training, knowledge or understanding. Sometimes people may be being abused in more than one way.

Who might cause abuse?

The person who is responsible for the abuse may be known to you and could be:

- A paid carer or volunteer
- A health worker, social care or other worker
- Friend or neighbour
- Another resident or service user
- Partner (Husband/Wife boyfriend/girlfriend)
- A relative (children/uncle/aunt/niece/nephew)
- Someone who deliberately exploits vulnerable people
- Anyone else

What should I do?

If you are being abused or think someone else is being abused, you should tell someone. Don't assume that someone else will tell and don't worry if you think you might be wrong - it is still important for someone with experience and responsibility to look into it. Social Services have a legal duty to do this.

If you or someone you know is being abused and is in immediate danger, you need to do something straight away to stop them or others being hurt. You should ring 999 and tell the operator what is happening.

If you think a crime might have taken place, such as rape, assault or theft, please ring the police and be careful not to remove or destroy any evidence.

If you are worried about contacting the police you can always contact social services to talk things over first. If you feel nervous about talking to social services, you could ask someone to talk to us on your behalf. This could be a nurse, a carer, an advocate or a friend or relative you trust.

Wherever you live, whether it's a care home or your own home or whichever place you have visited, if you've experienced or witnessed abuse, please contact social services.

Staff members who work with adults at risk may be worried about the consequences of reporting abuse. However, you must tell someone what is happening. If you don't say who you are, it may be more difficult for us to investigate and protect you or the person being abused.

Staff members in the Local Authority, Police, Health and Probation Services have a legal duty to report their concerns to Social Services.

What will happen if I report the abuse?

When abuse is reported enquiries will take place that will follow national policies and procedures, and this may result in a formal investigation. This may involve several agencies such as health, social services or the police. Action will then be taken to ensure you or the person being abused is protected.

You will be offered support and advice to help you to make any decisions and to enable you to take action to end the abuse and ensure that it doesn't happen again.

Anything you say will be treated sensitively, but other people may have to be told to help investigate the concern.

Confidentiality

When an allegation is made, there will be information that we may need to share with others such as the police or people who monitor the quality of registered services. We take care to ensure that this information is only shared with those people involved in the process.

Contact details:-

If you have concerns or would like more information, please contact:

If you live in Blaenau Gwent:

tel: 01495 315700

email: info@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

fax: 01495 315265

minicom: 01495 355959

If you live in Caerphilly:

tel: 01443 864563

email: povateam@caerphilly.gov.uk

fax: 01443 864664

If you live in Torfaen:

tel: 01495 762200

email: socialcarecalltorfaen@torfaen.gov.uk

fax: 01633 648794

If you live in Newport:

tel: 01633 656656

email: info@newport.gov.uk

If you live in Monmouthshire:

tel: 01291 638928

email: monpovaduty@monmouthshire.gcsx.gov.uk

If it is an emergency and you need to contact us outside of office hours please call our

Emergency Duty Team on: Tel: **0800 328 4432**

Further information can be obtained from:

www.gwasb.org.uk

This leaflet is also available in large print, Braille or other language formats upon request.