



# Brighton and Hove Speak Out

## Guidelines for Safeguarding Adults at Risk

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These Guidelines have been written in-line with the **Sussex Safeguarding Adults Procedures**. More information can be found here:

<https://sussexsafeguardingadults.procedures.org.uk/pkotq/sussex-safeguarding-adults-procedures/recognising-and-reporting-abuse-and-neglect>

# 1. Recognising when someone has been abused or is at risk

Everyone is responsible for preventing abuse by raising any concerns they have – it really is ‘Everyone’s Business’. No-one should have to live with abuse or neglect. It is always wrong, whatever the circumstances. Don’t assume that someone else is doing something about the situation.

Abuse and neglect could be prevented if concerns are identified and raised as early as possible. It is important that everyone knows what to look for, and who they can go to for advice and support.

Changes in someone’s physical or emotional state, or injuries that cannot be explained, may be a sign of abuse.

## 1.1 Types of Abuse

The Care Act identifies different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and the different circumstances in which they might take place

### Physical abuse

This is the ‘use of force, or any action, or interaction which results in pain or injury or a change in the person’s natural physical state’ or the ‘non-accidental infliction of physical force that results in bodily injury, pain or impairment’. Examples are: hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint, inappropriate physical sanctions and hair pulling.

**Some indicators of physical abuse** which can be evident or hidden:

- Any injury not fully explained by the history given
- Injuries inconsistent with the lifestyle of the adult
- Bruises and / or welts on face, lips, mouth, torso, arms, back, buttocks, thighs
- Cluster of injuries forming regular patterns or reflecting the shape of an article
- Burns, especially on soles, palms or back; from immersion in hot water, friction burns, rope or electric appliance burns
- Multiple fractures
- Person showing signs of fear or emotional distress

### Sexual abuse

This is the direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without valid consent. This includes: rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sex acts.

### **Some indicators of sexual abuse**

- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse.
- Changes to urinary continence or soiling
- Person appears withdrawn, depressed or stressed
- Poor concentration
- Unusual difficulty or sensitivity sitting or walking
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Bruises, bleeding, pain or itching in the genital area

### **Financial or material abuse**

This includes theft, fraud, scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs (including wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions) or the misuse of property, possessions or benefits.

### **Some indicators of financial abuse**

- Change in living conditions
- Inability to pay bills or unexplained shortage of money
- Unexplained withdrawals from an account
- Unexplained loss or misplacement of financial documents
- The recent addition of authorised signatories on a client or donor's signature card
- Sudden or unexpected changes in a will or other financial documents

### **Neglect and acts of omission**

This can be the result of an intentional or unintentional act(s) or omission(s). Neglect includes ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

### **Some indicators of neglect**

- The person's physical condition is poor, e.g. bed sores, unwashed ulcers
- Clothing in poor condition, e.g. unclean, wet, ragged
- Inadequate physical environment, inadequate protection for the sun or heat, inadequate heating
- Inadequate diet, insufficient fluid intake, malnutrition, dehydration
- Untreated injuries or medical problems
- Inconsistent or reluctant contact with health or social care agencies

**Self-neglect** is when an individual is:

- Either unable or unwilling to provide adequate care for themselves,
- Unable or unwilling to obtain necessary care to meet their needs, and/or
- Declining essential support without which their health and safety needs cannot be met

### **Indicators of self-neglect**

- Living in a very unclean environment, e.g. rodent infested or living with a toilet completely blocked with faeces.
- Having eccentric behaviour or lifestyles such as obsessive hoarding
- Poor diet and nutrition
- Refusing necessary help from health or social care staff in relation to personal hygiene and care
- Neglecting household maintenance therefore creating hazards or fire risks

### **Psychological abuse**

This includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact with others, humiliation, blaming, controlling, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber-bullying, isolation or unreasonable or unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

### **Some indicators of psychological abuse**

- Change in appetite
- Low self-esteem, deference, passivity, and resignation
- Fear, defensiveness and ambivalence
- Emotional withdrawal
- Sleep disturbance
- Self-harming

### **Discriminatory abuse**

This includes forms of harassment and slurs because of race, gender, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. The principles of discriminatory are embodied in legislation including:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010

### **Some indicators of discriminatory abuse**

- Lack of respect shown to an individual
- Signs of a sub-standard service offered to the individual

- Repeated exclusion from rights afforded to the citizen such as health, education, employment, criminal justice and civic status.
- Failure to follow aspects of a person's agreed support or care plan that reflects their individual identity.

### **Modern slavery**

This can be perpetuated against men, women and children, UK nationals, and those from abroad. It includes sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude and forced criminal activity.

### **Some indicators of modern slavery**

- Victims may show signs of physical and psychological abuse, look malnourished or unkempt, or appear withdrawn.
- Victims may rarely travel on their own, seem under the control or influence of others, rarely interact or appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work.
- Victims may be living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation, and/or living and working at the same address.
- Victims may have little opportunity to move freely and may have had their travel documents retained.

### **Domestic abuse**

This is "an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member, regardless of gender or sexuality. The age for domestic abuse starts at 16 years old. Examples include: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse and so called 'honour' based violence.

### **Organisational abuse**

This includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or care in a person's home. This may refer to one-off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

### **Some indicator of organisational abuse**

- Inappropriate or poor care
- Misuse of medication

- Inappropriate restraint methods
- Sensory deprivation, e.g. denial of use of spectacles or hearing aid
- Lack of respect shown to person
- Denial of visitors or phone calls
- Poor communication and recording of essential care information

## 1.2 Individual Risk Factors

**Some Individual Risk Factors** include:

- Poor communication and communication difficulties
- History of falls
- Physical or emotional dependence on others
- Having a role as a carer
- Aggression
- Substance misuse
- Rejection of help

**Some Interpersonal Risk Factors** include:

- Unequal power relations including coercive or controlling behaviour
- Increased reliance on others by the person
- History of abuse in family
- Financial difficulties
- Significant and long term stress of the carer
- Lack of understanding about the person's condition, leading to inappropriate care
- Role reversal or significant change in the relationship between the person and their carer.

**Some Environmental Risk Factors**

- Overcrowding
- Poor or insecure living conditions
- Unsuitable living conditions
- Homelessness
- Geographical isolation
- Poor management, high staff turnover or insufficient staff
- Other adults with challenging behaviour

## 1.3 Being observant

Being **alert** to abuse means:

- Thinking about what you see and asking if the practise is acceptable
- Working strictly in accordance with equality practice
- Taking seriously what you are told
- Being alert to hints/signals/non-verbal communication that could indicate abuse which is being denied or deliberately hidden

## 2. Responding to a disclosure/ suspected abuse

### 2.1 Creating the atmosphere for someone to tell you what is wrong

Some people who have been abused appear able to speak to someone about it and wish action to be taken. Others seem to be very reluctant to talk about the experience. There may be several reasons for this:-

- There may not be an opportunity to see someone, who is trusted, privately
- There may be anxiety about repercussions from the perpetrator or others if things are reported
- There may be a worry about “where it will all end”, for example if the police are told, or perhaps a fear of going to court
- The victim may just be prepared to put up with it

It is very important, if abuse is suspected, to try and create the opportunity for the person to disclose what is happening without putting the person under overt pressure or putting yourself or them at further risk

The following might help to create the right atmosphere:

- Talk in a private place
- Where there is factual evidence available, it may be useful to let the person know it has been observed so that the person does not feel they are talking about something that is a complete surprise.
- Because the person might be worried about losing control of the situation it might be helpful to tell them that they will be kept informed of what’s happening; their wishes will be considered throughout; they will be involved in the process **but do not guarantee that you will keep to yourself what they want to tell you.**

## 2.2 Key points to remember about disclosure

- Many incidents of abuse or crimes only come to light because the abused person themselves tell someone.
- You must be aware that the person may not appreciate the significance of what they are sharing. They may not realise or accept they are being abused.
- Disclosure may take place many years after the actual event or when the person has left the setting in which they were afraid
- Even if there is a delay between the actual event and the disclosure – you should demonstrate to the person that you believe them unless it is absolutely clear and provable that the events they are describing could not have happened.

## 2.3 Checklist for responding to possible incidence of abuse

- Remain calm and try not to show any shock or disbelief.
- Listen very carefully to what you are being told.
- Demonstrate a sympathetic approach by acknowledging regret and concern that this has happened to them.
- Do not stop someone who is freely recalling significant events; allow them to share whatever is important to them.
- Do not ask questions or press the person for more details and avoid making comments about what has happened.
- Reassure the person by telling them that:
  - They have done the right thing by sharing the information with you
  - You are treating the information seriously
  - The abuse is not their fault (if the information is being shared by the victim)
- Do not contact the alleged 'abuser' or alleged 'victim' depending on who is sharing the information.)
- Do not be judgmental (e.g. why didn't you try and stop them?)
- Never promise the person that you'll keep what they tell you secret/ confidential; explain who you will tell and why



- Tell the person you are concerned and explain that you have to share the information with a staff member at Speak Out.
- Reassure the person that if you have to talk to anybody outside Speak Out that this will be done sensitively and with their involvement wherever possible.
- Explain to the person how they will be involved and kept informed.
- Provide information and advice on keeping safe and the safeguarding process

### 3. Recording information

You should make a written account of what has happened as soon as possible, including:

- What you saw/heard/were told – use the person’s own words
- How the incident occurred – do not speculate
- The time and place
- The names of the people involved including other potential witnesses
- Highlight if the person alleged responsible is themselves a vulnerable adult
- Any obvious evidence e.g. weapon, blood
- The state of the clothing of the abused person and perpetrator
- Any injuries that the abused person, the alleged perpetrator or others have received. Use a body map to help with this
- The behaviour and attitudes of the people involved in the incident

When you are recording a disclosure or allegation:

- If writing by hand, ensure the report is legible
- Keep the information as concise and factual as possible
- If it is appropriate to include an opinion or third-party information, ensure this is made clear
- Sign and date your report
- Ensure the report is filed/ stored securely
- Keep the information safe and secure

The detailed account will be scanned/ uploaded and held securely in Speak Out’s data base. If the person is a Speak Out service user the report will be uploaded to their client record.

A summary of the incident must be recorded on Speak Out’s central safeguarding register.

#### **4. Immediate response to an incident or disclosure**

- Make an evaluation of any risks and take steps to ensure that the adult or others are not in immediate danger. Ensure that other people are also not in danger.
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- If a crime is in progress, or life is at risk, dial emergency services on 999
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- Safeguard any potential evidence. Do not tamper with, clean up or move any potential evidence if a crime is suspected. Expert advice may be needed from the police.
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- Encourage and support the person to report the matter to the police if a crime is suspected and not an emergency situation.
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- Report the incident to Adult Social Care (see below)
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- Children's Services must be contacted if a child or young person is also at risk via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) - see below.

#### **5. Reporting Concerns**

- If there is no immediate risk of harm volunteers should contact the Speak Out office as soon as possible.
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- Staff should inform their line manager, unless the manager is implicated, in which case they must talk to an appropriate independent manager.
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- An initial internal meeting or phone conversation, will be arranged within 24hours involving at least one manager or the Volunteer Coordinator and the member of staff or volunteer, as appropriate. This will decide on the best course of action and whether to contact Adult Social Care or other appropriate people.

Whilst the service user may not want any further action to take place or may not want others to be told about the situation, a decision may be made to break confidentiality and inform outside agencies about the suspected abuse, without the individual's consent. This decision will be made by appropriate Speak Out staff and managers.

Confidentiality will only be breached if the person or other persons are considered to be at serious risk (see Speak Out's Confidentiality Policy). If this is the case the person will first be told why this is going to happen, who will be told and what information will be shared.

- As far as is possible this situation will be handled in a way that supports the person with a learning difficulty to maintain some control over the situation.

- Act in accordance with the person's wishes if possible. Ask them what they want from the situation. If the person does not consent to calling the emergency services, confirm the reasons and include in your write up.
- Support and reassure the person throughout.

## 6. Alerting outside agencies

Speak Out staff and volunteers will follow the **Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures** and **Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Manual** will be followed when reporting incidents of suspected abuse.

Speak Out staff will support volunteers through the process of alerting the relevant Social Services Department/ Inspection authority.

**For safeguarding concerns about a vulnerable adult contact:**

### **Brighton and Hove City Council**

Contact the Access Point on 01273 295 555

Email [accesspoint@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:accesspoint@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Online <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/social-care/keeping-people-safe/report-abuse-or-neglect>

The person reporting the situation may be asked to fill out a [safeguarding adults at risk form](#) via the Brighton and Hove Council website recording the incident (see recording information above).

**For safeguarding concerns about a child or young person (under18)**

### **[Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#) / Front Door for Families**

C/O Whitehawk Community Hub and Library  
179A Whitehawk Road  
Brighton  
BN2 5FL

Telephone: 01273 290400

Email: [FrontDoorForFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:FrontDoorForFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

[Online Referral Form](#)

### **Out of Hours Emergency Duty Service**

Telephone: 01273 335905 or 335906

Any further investigation will be carried out by Social Services Department and/or the police, following the Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures (link on page 1) or the [Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Manual](#). The safeguarding teams are experienced in dealing with these situations with sensitivity.

## **7. Support someone through a Safeguarding Investigation**

It is not the role of a Speak Out staff member or volunteer to carry out an investigation. However, in some situations they may be asked to give evidence or take part in a subsequent adult protection strategy meeting.

It may become the advocate's role to support the service user through the investigation. Speak Out managers will support advocates and volunteers through supervision to ensuring that the following take place:

- Gain confirmation whether the alert has been accepted
- Where the alert has been declined, on occasion, ask that it be reassessed
- Identify who the Safeguarding Lead for this case is
- Seek confirmation of protective measures put in place to keep the person safe
- Get confirmation of the Safeguarding Strategy Plan
- Seek information on the safeguarding plan to keep the person safe
- Support the person through every stage of this process, where they wish to have advocacy support, and ensure as far as possible that they understand the safety plan.

A record of actions and outcomes relating to the Safeguarding investigation will be kept securely in the service user's case notes in the Speak Out database. A summary of the alert and the response/outcome must be added to Speak Out's Safeguarding Record.

Ultimately Speak Out staff and advocates will work to ensure all measures are taken to keep the person safe and provide support following any incidents.

## **Glossary**

### **Abuse**

- A violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons
- Can be a singular or repeated act or a lack of action

### **Alerting**

Informing a manager about an allegation, concern or disclosure of abuse

### **Allegation**

When a person says they are or someone else is being abused.

### **Capacity**

The capability of a person to understand, at the time it is made, the nature of a decision and its implications

### **Disclosure**

When a person tells someone they are being abused

### **Family Support Unit**

A special police unit which deals with the protection of children and vulnerable adults

### **Financial Abuse**

- The inappropriate use or misappropriation of a person's financial resources or property
- It includes withholding or taking a person's money or property
- It is to the person's disadvantage

### **Forensic Medical Examiner**

This is a doctor who is employed by the police and is experienced in examining people who are victims or perpetrators of crime

### **Neglect**

- The deliberate withholding of or failure to provide help or support a person's needs to carry out activities of daily living
- It includes the failure to provide appropriate intervention or support to help a person, who does not have the capacity to assess risk, to deal with situations which are dangerous for them or others

### **Perpetrator**

The person responsible for the abuse of another person

### **Victim**

The person who has been abused