



SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

The Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer is: Alan Holland

1. WHO IS AT RISK OF ABUSE?

A vulnerable adult is anyone over the age of 18 who may be unable to protect themselves from abuse or harm and is receiving or in need of community care services. This vulnerability may be due to the fact that a person is older and frail, has a physical or learning difficulty or a mental health problem.

Remember abuse can happen to men and women and is any behaviour that causes that person harm, endangers life or violates his/her rights.

ABUSE MIGHT BE:

1. Physical

- Such as hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, inappropriate/careless handling and other forms of assaults that may or may not leave visible signs of injury.
- Beating (with or without an implement), scalding, unnecessary restraint and other forms of assault that leaves injuries.
- Stabbing, strangulation, poisoning and wounding (breaking the skin) and other forms of assault that cause serious injuries or death
- Medical mistreatment such as withholding or inappropriately altering or administering medication or other treatments.
- Inappropriate use of restraint or other sanctions

2. Sexual - Any of the following actions to which the individual has not consented, or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting:

- Offensive or suggestive sexual language or action
- Touching, fondling, caressing, kissing, masturbation
- Oral sex on alleged victim, oral sex by alleged victim on perpetrator
- Sexual intercourse
- Involvement in prostitution or pornography

3. Psychological – such as any of the following:

- Use of treats or fears to over-ride a person's wishes
- Lack of privacy or choice
- Denial of dignity
- Deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation
- Being made to feel worthless
- Threat(s) to withdraw care or support or contact with friends
- Humiliation, blaming

- Treating an adult as if they were a child
 - Verbal abuse.
4. **Financial abuse or exploitation** – such as any of the following:
- Stealing, theft of money or property
 - Deceiving or manipulation of a person out of their money or property
 - Withholding or misusing money or property
 - Stripping the person of his or her assets
 - Exploitation of dependence for personal gain
 - Misuse of benefits by others
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5. **Discriminatory** – such as harassment related to a person's race, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability or illness. (please see our equality and diversity policy for further details)

Who Abuses?

Anybody can abuse another. Mutually abusive relationships involving two or more adults also exist. The abuser is frequently, but not always, known to the person they abuse.

Abuse occurs for many reasons and the causes are not always fully understood.

The risk is known to be greater when:

- The vulnerable person is socially isolated.
- A pattern of family violence exists or has existed in the past.
- Drugs or alcohol are being misused.
- Relationships are placed under stress.

Where services are provided abuse is more likely to occur where staff are:

- Inadequately trained.
- Poorly supervised.
- Lacking support.
- Working in isolation.

As well as the known risk factors a range of other factors may increase the likelihood of abuse:

- Where the person has an illness which causes unpredictable behaviour.
- Where the person has communication difficulties.
- Where the person exhibits challenging behaviour or major changes in personality, disorientation, aggression or sexual disinhibition.
- Where the person concerned demands more than the carer can give.
- Where the family undergoes an unforeseen change in circumstances e.g. sudden illness, unemployment, bereavement or divorce.
- Where a carer has been forced to change his or her lifestyle as a result of caring.
- Where a carer is isolated and can see no end to, or relief from, caring.

- Where a carer experiences regularly disturbed night
- Where there has been a reversal of role.
- Where there are persistent financial problems.
- Where other relationships are unstable or placed under pressure by the caring task.

What are the signs?

The signs of abuse are not always clear. The Following m, however, suggest the possibility of abuse:

- Direct reports from the victim
- Reports of concern from a third party
- Admissions that abuse has occurred
- Someone expressing fears that abuse might happen
- Evidence of unreported injuries
- Injuries suggesting a possible non-accidental cause
- Explanations that are incompatible with injuries presented or where conflicting explanations are given.
- A History of persistent illness, infection or injury
- The inappropriate use of medication
- Possessions or money going missing or bills not being paid
- Property being sold without owners consent or understanding
- Sudden or unexpected removal of an individual from a care setting
- Where a person is uncharacteristically withdrawn, without apparent reason
- Where a person is found alone and at risk without adequate explanation
- A long time Lapse between injury or illness and going for medical or other care
- Abrupt or frequent changes of doctors or care agency
- Unexplained weight loss
- Uncharacteristically unkempt appearance
- Where agencies have repeated difficulty in getting to see someone
- Where it is made difficult to speak to a person alone without their carer
- Evidence of avoidance, including regularly missed appointments, refusal of help, etc.
- Evidence of alcohol or other substance misuse
- Signs of stress.
- History of previous abuse or violence in the family
- Unexplained pain, itching, infection or injury in the annul, genital or abdominal areas
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing.

Get Me Out The Four Walls Responsibility

Get Me Out The Four Walls recognises that the welfare of a Vulnerable Adult is paramount and that they have equal rights of protection. Get Me Out The Four Walls has a duty of care when Vulnerable Adults are in our charge and will do everything it can to provide a safe and caring environment. Get Me Out The Four Walls will work with Social Services and the police to try to protect vulnerable adults by seeking to stop abuse happening and dealing with it when it does.

Get Me Out The Four Walls will:

- Treat all adults with respect and celebrate their achievements.
- Carefully recruit and select all adults whether paid or voluntary.
- Respond to concerns and allegations appropriately.

When there are concerns about the welfare of an adult, it should be brought to the attention of the designated officer, whose responsibilities are:

- Monitor and record concerns.
- Make referrals to Adult Social Services or the Police Adult Abuse Investigation Team.
- Liaise with other agencies.
- Arrange training for all staff.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY:

If Get Me Out The Four Walls becomes aware of current abuse, the individual will be made aware of our requirements to pass this information on to the relevant care agency.

3. STAFF ALLEGATIONS

Concerns about the behaviour of adults within Get Me Out The Four Walls will be referred without delay to the adult protection officer who will contact the relevant authority.

Contact Names and Numbers

Adult Protection Coordinator Norfolk County Council	0344 800 8014
Police Adult Protection Units	
• Norwich	01603 276316
• Swaffham	01760 720207
• Gorleston	01603 275784
Main police switchboard or in an emergency ring 999	01953 424242 / 0845 456 4567
Social Services Access Service Teams:	0344 800 8014 (24 hours)