

Safeguarding Adults - from harm or abuse

Information and support to help reduce the incidence of harm to adults at risk

Everyone has the right to live without fear of harm or abuse.

We work closely with our partner agencies in the field of adult safeguarding to reduce the incidence of harm, and to improve the lives of the adults at risk in our communities. Dorset Council promotes making safeguarding personal as the approach to adult safeguarding. This involves putting the person in control of their life and the outcomes they want from adult safeguarding investigations.

What to do if you suspect an adult is being harmed or abused:

- If you are a member of the public and you are concerned that someone you know may be harmed in any way, or you are being harmed: contact the Adult Access Team or the Out of Hours Service
- If you represent a care agency, care home or other commercial provider, or are a health or other care professional: contact the Safeguarding Adults Triage Team to make a safeguarding alert
- In a crisis, or if a crime is in progress or a life is at risk: dial 999 for the Emergency Service

Zero tolerance

Dorset Council operate a 'zero tolerance' approach to safeguarding adults and every contact will be taken seriously. We can visit you or the adult concerned and find out what is happening. We will work with you and discuss how best to respond to the safeguarding situation and through this involvement decides how to best resolve the situation. We can help you to report your concerns to the police. We can also help with any communication difficulties you may have.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspect care homes and home care agencies. They respond to complaints about poor standards of care.

What do we mean by 'Adult at Risk'?

An Adult at Risk is a person aged 18 years and over who:

- Is or may be in need of care and support. Perhaps because of mental ill health, a learning disability, age, physical disability or other illness
- Is experiencing or are at risk from abuse and neglect
- Is unable to protect themselves from that experience or risk

Anyone who comes to the attention of Dorset Council or the other agencies who are working to Chapter 14 of the Care Act 2014 may need to have their circumstances investigated if they are reported to be an 'Adult at Risk'.

What do we mean by abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect can be defined in many ways and there can be no exhaustive list, however the most recent guidance from the government identifies the following types of abuse and neglect:

- Physical abuse - including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- Domestic abuse - including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse', so called 'honour' based violence.
- Sexual abuse - including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure or sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.
- Psychological abuse - including emotional abuse, threats or harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable or unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.
- Financial or material abuse - including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- Modern slavery - encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
- Discriminatory abuse - including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- Organisational abuse - including neglect and poor care practise within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practise as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- Neglect and acts of omission - including 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.
- Self-neglect - this covers a wide range of behaviour, neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

What we do to safeguard adults

We will always take it seriously when someone tells us about abuse, or a situation which they think could lead to abuse. Everyone is different and will need different support or advice depending on their situation.

We will always make sure that an adult at risk of abuse receives the help and support they need to take action on their own behalf, to make choices and retain control over their life.