

NO SECRETS IN BRISTOL

**A Multi-agency
commitment to
adult protection**



This leaflet explains

- Who are vulnerable adults
- What is meant by abuse
- Where does it happen
- What to do if you think someone is being abused or you are being abused yourself
- What happens next
- How to report concerns
- What information do I need to give
- Where to find more details about the No Secrets Policy

Who are vulnerable adults?

A **vulnerable adult** is someone over 18 who has, or may need, help with their everyday living tasks.

This includes disabled people who have physical or sensory impairments, learning difficulties, who experience mental illness or emotional distress, are frail older people, or who for any other reason are unable to care for or protect themselves

What is meant by abuse?

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It may be something that is done to the person or something not done when it should have been. It does not necessarily have to be intentional, if the vulnerable person experiences it as abusive it is considered abuse.

It may be:

Physical Abuse, which includes hitting, pushing, inappropriate use of medication, sanctions or restraint.

Sexual Abuse, which includes rape and any sexual act which was not freely consenting.

Psychological/Emotional Abuse, which includes threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment.

Financial Abuse, which includes theft, and pressure in connection with wills or property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect which includes ignoring medical or physical needs, not providing access to appropriate health or social care, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Discriminatory Abuse, which includes all forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment based on a person's disability, ethnic origin, gender or sexuality, often called hate crime.

Institutional Abuse, which can include repeated instances of poor care, ill treatment of vulnerable adults, and unsatisfactory professional practice. This is often an indicator of more serious problems within a paid and/or regulated care environment.

Where Does It Happen?

Abuse can occur in any setting.

- at home
- in sheltered housing
- in supported living settings
- at day centres and other day services
- in care homes
- in hospitals

wherever people are dependant on the care of others for their well-being.

Abuse happens to people in all sections of society.

What to do if you think someone is being abused or you are being abused yourself

Everyone in contact with vulnerable people has a duty to identify abuse, and report it to Health and Social Care via Care Direct, or in an emergency to the Police.

You must respond to any suspicions you have, or allegations you hear.

You should respect the vulnerable adults wishes, but in certain situations you may need to report concerns without their agreement.

What happens next when I report my concerns?

All allegations of abuse are treated very seriously.

The information will be treated in the strictest confidence within the limits of the law, which requires that the police are informed where there is serious risk to life, or information about a serious crime is discovered.

A team manager will be responsible for making sure the proper action takes place, that the vulnerable person's voice is heard, and that they are supported.

How to report concerns:

The agencies below will respond to your concerns

Health and Social Care – Care Direct

Telephone 0117 922 27000

The Police

Telephone 0845 456 7000

If you need immediate help when you cannot stop abuse that is happening at the time ring 999

What information do I need to give?

Don't delay reporting suspected abuse, but try if possible to have this information ready

- the vulnerable person's name and age
- where they live and who they live with
- which organisations are providing help or services
- why you are concerned
- details of the person(s) who may be abusing the vulnerable person

All agencies involved in social and health care in Bristol are signed up to the No Secrets in Bristol.