



## What is abuse and neglect?

Information for family and friends with concerns about someone's wellbeing

# What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect occur when a person is treated in a way that harms, hurts, exploits them or makes them feel frightened or unhappy. Abuse and/or neglect can happen to anyone, regardless of age or gender.

Abuse and neglect are not always intentional and can even occur if someone is under stress and trying to do their best. It can also happen because of a lack of understanding or knowledge or due to inadequate training. Whatever the reason, neglect and abuse is never acceptable.

## Different forms of abuse and neglect

### Abuse

Being abused means a person is being treated with cruelty or violence. Abuse can vary from a minor incident, such a person treating someone without dignity and respect, to extreme punishment or mistreatment. Abuse can consist of a single act or repeated acts.

**Financial or material abuse** – This can include theft, fraud, internet scamming and intimidation leading to access to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements. This can vary from access to someone's will, property, inheritance, or misuse of property, possessions or benefits.

**Physical abuse** – Physical force e.g. assault, slapping, pushing, hitting, misuse of medication, or restraint.

**Neglect and acts of omission** - Ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health care and support. It can also include refusal to give medication, acceptable nutrition and heating.

**Sexual abuse** - This includes rape, sexual assault, indecent exposure, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo. It may also include witnessing sexual acts, or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented.

**Psychological abuse** – This can include emotional abuse, threats of harm, humiliation, controlling and intimidation. Other behaviours may be harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or not allowing someone to see others.

**Organisational abuse** - Neglect or poor care being delivered in a care setting, such as a hospital or care and residential home, or even care you receive in your own home. It can range from a one-off incident to ongoing poor treatment. Neglect may take place due to poor professional practice and incorrect policies within an organisation.

**Discriminatory abuse** - Including forms of harassment, insults or similar treatment because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

**Self-neglect** - This covers a wide range of behaviour such as not taking care of personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

**Domestic abuse** – This can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse.

**Modern slavery** - Involves slavery, human trafficking and forced labour. Trafficking and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to force individuals into a life of abuse and inhumane treatment.

## **Neglect**

Neglect is a form of mistreatment by individuals resulting from inadequate attention, especially through carelessness or disregard for the needs of others. Neglect can be intentional or unintentional.

Some examples of neglect include:

- Not being provided with enough food or with the right kind of food
- Not being taken proper care of
- Leaving you without help to wash or change dirty or wet clothes
- Not getting you to a doctor when you need one
- Not making sure you have the right medicines

## Who can commit abuse and neglect?

Anyone can abuse or neglect someone. This could be a stranger or someone that a person knows. It may also be one person or a group of people.

## Where does abuse or neglect happen?

Abuse or neglect can happen anywhere. This could be in someone's home, at a day centre, at a place of work or college. It could also happen in a hospital, at a residential or nursing home or at a local social club.

## When should I report abuse or neglect?

You can report abuse or neglect if:

- You are concerned that someone is being hurt, frightened or intimidated and is not getting the help or care they need
- You feel that someone is being taken advantage of because of their age, disability or illness
- Someone is being made to do something against their will
- Someone is not being treated in a dignified or respectful manner
- Someone is not caring for their personal hygiene, health, nutrition or surroundings to the extent that it threatens personal health and safety

## Help if you are living in fear of abuse or neglect

Some adults who experience domestic abuse may not be 'vulnerable' in terms of requiring adult social care support.

If a person is being abused by a family member, for instance, they may need specialist support.

No matter whether someone is living at home or in a care setting, they shouldn't suffer abuse. If you or someone you know is being abused, there are people you can talk to about it. The NHS has a list of organisations that may be able to help.

 **Go online:** [nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/getting-help-for-domestic-violence](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/getting-help-for-domestic-violence)

## Who can I contact?

If you feel a person is in **immediate danger**, please **dial 999**.

For less urgent concerns, please complete the Safeguarding Concern form on our Care Advice Buckinghamshire website:

-  **Go online:** [careadvice.buckinghamshire.gov.uk](https://careadvice.buckinghamshire.gov.uk)
-  Click on 'Report a concern about abuse or neglect'
-  Click on 'Are you concerned about an adult?'
-  Select 'Safeguarding Concern form'

You can also reach us by phone or email:

 **Call:** Safeguarding Adults on **0800 137 915**  
9am to 5:30pm Monday to Thursday  
9am to 5pm on Friday

or

Emergency Duty Team on **0800 999 7677**

Available outside of working hours

 **Email:** [ascfirstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:ascfirstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

## Use this space to write down things you need to remember to tell us

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## How to contact us

### Adult Care Services

To get more information about adult social care services you can:

-  **Go online:** [buckinghamshire.gov.uk](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk) and click on 'Care for Adults'
-  **Call:** Social worker: \_\_\_\_\_ Team: \_\_\_\_\_

### Are you worried about somebody?

If you or someone you know is at risk of abuse or neglect:

-  **Call:** 0800 137915 (24 hours a day)

### If you would like to give us feedback

-  **Go online:** Please complete the online form at [buckinghamshire.gov.uk](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

If you prefer you can:

-  **Call:** 01296 387844
-  **Email:** [complimentsandcomplaints@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:complimentsandcomplaints@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)