

What if the adult doesn't want anything to happen?

If you are the adult and the abuse is happening to you, you have the right to say what you want to be done about it. You will always be asked what you want to happen and who you want to be involved to help you. We will work with you to make sure that all reasonable steps are taken to help you.

You have the right to decline support and to refuse to consent to any safeguarding adults' activity. We will respect your wishes to decline assistance or refuse consent. However, in certain circumstances, we will need to consider whether there is an overriding public interest, which would justify us sharing information about you. An overriding public interest would be when other people were at risk of serious harm or abuse or when sharing information may be required to investigate a criminal offence.

Sometimes, there may be other adults at risk of, or experiencing abuse or neglect, who are in the same situation as you. If this is the case, and the abuse or neglect is too serious for people to do nothing then action will be taken.

Professionals and other people have a duty of care to you and other adults with care and support needs and they may have to do something that you don't want them to do and take action to help and protect people. You will always be told if this is going to happen and why this needs to happen.

What if the adult is not happy?

If you are not happy with the action taken within the safeguarding process, we would like you to tell us why. You can speak to the Designated Adult Safeguarding Manager for your case who can review the information and action taken. This information can be provided by Adult Social Care Direct using the details overleaf.

How can I raise a Safeguarding Concern?

If you are worried that you may be experiencing or at risk of abuse, or if you know that another person is experiencing abuse then you can contact Adult Social Care Direct to raise a Safeguarding Adults Concern using the contact details on the back of this leaflet.

For further information contact:

Adult Social Care Direct

Tel: 0191 433 7033, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Email: adultsocialcaredirect@gateshead.gov.uk

Safeguarding Adults in Gateshead

what we can do to
prevent abuse.



What does Safeguarding Adults mean?

Living a life that is free from neglect and abuse is a fundamental right of every person. Adult Safeguarding aims to:

- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible;
- Prevent harm;
- Reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with needs for care and support;
- Raise public awareness so that communities are empowered to report abuse and neglect; and
- Achieve the outcomes that the adult wants to achieve from the situation.

What is abuse?

Abuse happens when somebody or some people do something to a vulnerable person that puts him or her at risk of harm. It may be deliberate or unintentional. It may happen once or repeatedly.

Abuse can be:

- **Physical**
- **Domestic Violence**
- **Sexual**
- **Psychological/emotional**
- **Financial**
- **Modern Slavery**
- **Discriminatory**
- **Organisational**
- **Neglect**
- **Self-Neglect**

Potential signs of abuse

If an adult is being abused or neglected, they may show no obvious signs of abuse, however, some adults behave differently or their appearance may change. The adult may be withdrawn or isolated, or may show signs of fear or distress. The adult may have an injury that cannot be explained. They may not have money to buy food or pay bills despite having sufficient income.

Where can abuse or neglect happen?

Abuse or neglect can happen anywhere - for example: in a person's own home; a public place; in a care home or a hospital; in day centres or in education centres.

Who can cause abuse or neglect?

Anyone can cause abuse or neglect - for example: family members; friends; neighbours; social workers; nurses; teachers; carers; volunteers or strangers.

Who can be abused or neglected?

The Care Act 2014 states that safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

What can we do to prevent abuse or neglect?

When we receive information, which indicates that an adult may be at risk of, or is experiencing abuse or neglect, we will take all necessary steps to coordinate the action which will ensure the immediate safety of the adult. These steps will include:

- **Collecting information** - we will make efforts to find out more about the reported abuse.
- **Finding out what care and support needs the adult has.**
- **Involving the adult** - if the adult concerned is able to speak for themselves, we will speak to them directly to find out what is happening and what they want as an outcome from the investigation. If this is not possible, the adult can choose a person to act on their behalf. This person may be a family member or friend or an independent person, known as an advocate.
- **Involving people** - we will work with a wide range of people to take action to prevent further abuse or neglect. We will involve all necessary agencies and organisations such as hospitals, health providers, the police, and housing officers. We will keep everyone informed of the outcome and provide support where needed.
- **Meetings** - sometimes meetings will be needed. It may be appropriate to invite the adult or the person acting on their behalf to attend the meetings. During meetings, all concerns will be discussed about the alleged abuse or neglect and decisions will be made about what action should be taken. We will make sure that all of those actions are carried out and that updates are provided.
- **Safeguarding Plans** - in some cases, it may be necessary to agree a plan to protect an adult and keep them safe. This information will be shared with the adult or their representative or advocate.