

## What is abuse?

Abuse is behaviour towards a person that deliberately or unintentionally causes harm. It is a disregard of a person's human rights and in the worse case can endanger life.

Abuse can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological, institutional, neglectful or discriminatory.

## What are the signs of abuse?

General signs that someone has been or is being abused include;

- Unexplained injury / repeated visits to a GP or the Accident and Emergency Department of a hospital.
- Signs of distress.
- Withdrawal or isolation.
- Unexplained pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease.
- Self neglect or basic physical and emotional needs not being met by others.
- Not able to pay bills or buy food even though enough money appears to be available.

## Which adults are at risk of abuse?

'Adults at risk' are people aged 18 years and over. They may;

- Rely on other people or services to care for them or support them with day to day tasks, may be because of their age, a physical or learning disability, other physical or mental health need or involvement in substance misuse.
- Lack mental capacity.
- Not be able to speak up for themselves.

## Where might abuse happen?

Abuse can happen anywhere; in people's own homes, public places, day centres, residential homes, hospitals, GP surgeries, colleges, police stations and prisons.

## Who abuses?

Anyone can be an abuser including, professionals, volunteers, trades people, family members, carers, partners, friends and neighbours.

## How to report it?

Who ever you are, if you see or hear something that concerns you and you suspect that abuse may be happening, or someone tells you that they have been abused, they should telephone the Norfolk County Council 'Safeguarding Adults' Team at;

Adult Community Services  
West Wing  
Blickling Hall  
Blickling  
Norfolk NR11 6NF  
0344 800 8020

This number is manned 24 hours a day.

***This is also the number to call if you have concerns about the safety of children.***

## What happens next?

The safeguarding team will treat every report of suspected abuse seriously. They will take steps to ensure the immediate safety of the adult and anyone else affected by the alleged abuse. Where necessary, together with other agencies such as the Police and Health Professionals, the matter will be fully investigated.

Consent to release information from some parties may be required.

## **Safeguarding**

Everybody has the right to be safe, no matter who they are or what their circumstance.

Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect.

We are all responsible for the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults and must ensure that we are doing all we can to protect the most vulnerable members of our society.

The surgery has safeguarding policies to ensure both children and vulnerable adults are safe and our clinicians are trained to identify when people may be at risk of abuse.

This leaflet has been designed to highlight to people what abuse is, how it can be identified and reported to ensure people get the help they need to stay safe and independent.



**Heathgate Medical Practice**

## **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults**

**Heathgate Medical Practice  
The Street  
Poringland  
Norwich  
NR14 7JT**

**01508 494343 (T)  
01508 495423(F)**

**Surgeries at:  
The Street Poringland  
&  
The Street Rockland St Mary**

