

**What should you do if someone tells you they are being harmed or abused?**

**DO**

- ✓ Stay calm and listen to them.
- ✓ Take what you are being told seriously.
- ✓ Offer support to help them stop the abuse happening.
- ✓ Be aware that medical or other evidence might be needed so keep the evidence safe.
- ✓ Write down what the person tells you in their own words.
- ✓ Contact Adult Social Services or the Police at once.

**DO NOT**

- ✗ Ask the person for more details.
- ✗ Assume that someone else is aware of the situation and will take action.
- ✗ Contact the person alleged to have caused harm.
- ✗ Promise to keep it a secret.
- ✗ Be afraid to contact Adult Social Services or Police to discuss it.
- ✗ Delay.

**If you are being abused or harmed suspect someone is being abused/harmed you can discuss your concerns by**

Contacting Adult Social Services or the Police. Or ask someone you trust to contact them for you.

If you think someone may be at immediate risk of serious harm contact the Police.



**Contact**

Borough of Poole  
Telephone: 01202 633 902

Bournemouth Borough Council  
Telephone: 01202 454 979

Dorset County Council  
Telephone: 01305 221 016

Police  
Telephone: 999 in an emergency  
and 101 at all other times.

**Out of Hours Service**  
Evenings and Weekends  
Telephone: 01202 657 279



**Information in other formats**

You can ask for this leaflet in large print, Braille, audio format or in other languages on any of the above telephone numbers.

## Keeping Adults Safe



## What do we mean by harm or abuse?

Abuse is when someone does something to another person which damages their quality of life or puts them at risk of harm. Abuse can happen once or repeatedly. It may be deliberate or unintentional.

## Which adults may be at risk of abuse?

Some people over 18 years of age may be more at risk than others. This can include people who:

- Depend on others for their care.
- Are older, frail and unable to protect themselves.
- Have mental health problems.
- Have a learning disability.
- Have a physical disability.
- Have a sight or hearing impairment.
- Have dementia or memory loss.
- Misuse alcohol or drugs.
- Have long term health needs.
- Are carers.

## Who can abuse or harm?

Anyone can cause harm. It is usually someone the person knows.

## Where does it happen?

Abuse can happen anywhere: at home, in a care home, hospital or day centre, in a public place.

## Types of abuse

Abuse can take many forms and may include:

- **Physical**  
Hitting or injuring someone.  
Restraining someone inappropriately.
- **Emotional**  
Intimidating, threatening, or humiliating. Abusing racially, verbally or psychologically.  
Exploiting someone.
- **Sexual**  
Involving a person in sexual activity which is unwanted or not understood. Giving unwanted sexual attention.
- **Sensory Deprivation**  
Lack of stimulation.

- **Neglect**

Not providing food, drink, clothing, attention or care.

Withholding aids or equipment for continence, walking, hearing or sight. Putting someone at risk of infection. Failing to provide access to health or social care. Misusing, overdosing or withholding medication.

- **Imposed isolation**

Refusing someone the company of others either at home or outside.

- **Financial / Material**

Stealing or misusing money, property or possessions.  
Pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance.

- **Discriminatory**

Treating someone less favourably and unfairly because of race, religion or belief, age, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Self-inflicted injury may be a sign that abuse is taking place.