

What is abuse and neglect?

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

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse or neglect is when a person is treated in a way that harms, hurts or exploits them, or makes them feel frightened or unhappy. It can happen to anyone, regardless of age or gender and is not always intentional. It can even occur if someone is under stress and trying to do their best, due to a lack of understanding or knowledge or due to inadequate training.

Whatever the reason, neglect and abuse are never acceptable.

Different forms of abuse and neglect

Abuse can consist of a single act or repeated acts and can be a minor incident or something more serious.

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. It may also include witnessing 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 by staff in a care setting. This may take place in a residential or nursing home, day centre, hospital or even your own home and can range from a one-off incident to ongoing poor treatment. Organisational abuse can occur as a result of inadequate training, policies or structures or due to poor practice.

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 is abuse carried out by someone who lives with you or who has a relationship with you that is not professional in nature, and can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse.

Modern slavery - Involves slavery, human trafficking, sexual exploitation and forced labour. It is the exploitation of people who have been forced, deceived, or coerced into a life of labour and servitude. People can be forced to pay off debts that realistically they will never be able to. It is a crime hidden from society where victims are subjected to abuse, inhumane and degrading treatment.

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

Key things to remember

- Anyone can abuse or neglect someone
- Abuse or neglect can happen anywhere

How to report the abuse of an adult

You can report the abuse of an adult to Buckinghamshire Council. We call this a safeguarding concern.

You can submit a safeguarding concern using our online service in the section 'report abuse of an adult' on our website careadvice.buckinghamshire.gov.uk

If you would prefer to speak to someone directly, please call the First Response Team on **0800 137 915**. Outside of working hours, call our Emergency Duty Team on **0800 999 7677**.

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

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


.....

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