



## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE

1

### **Background**

Abuse is a violation of a person's human and civil rights by any other person. It's where someone does something to another person that puts that person at risk of harm or it has a negative impact on their quality of life. Abuse may be deliberate or may be the result of ignorance or lack of training and can happen once or repeatedly.

2

### **Why it matters**

Vulnerable adults have the right to live their lives free from abuse and harm. They should be able to choose how to live their lives independently, receive support in doing this and be treated with respect and dignity.

3

### **Information**

Some adults may be at more risk of harm than others, including people who depend on others for care, because of age or illness, suffer from mental ill health, have learning or physical disabilities, have sight or hearing impairment or loss, have dementia or misuse drugs or alcohol.

4

### **Definition of Abuse**

- Physical: Hitting, smacking, pushing, shaking, or misuse of medication.
- Sexual: Any sexual activity that is unwanted or not understood.
- Emotional: Intimidation, threats, humiliation, isolation, verbal or psychological abuse.
- Neglect: Ignoring medical/ physical care needs, withholding food, heating, and medication.
- Discriminatory: Being treated differently because of ethnicity, sexuality, gender, age or disability.
- Financial or material: Theft or misuse of money, property or personal belongings, taken without consent or under pressure.
- Domestic: May include any of the above, including undermining of self-confidence by a person who is, or has been, in a close relationship.
- Institutional: Poor working practices in care homes or hospitals that cause poor or inadequate care.

5

### **Who can abuse**

Anyone can be an abuser - a relative, friend or neighbour, a paid or volunteer carer, professional worker or another vulnerable person. Abuse can happen anywhere - in the person's own home, in a care home, in hospital or in a public place.

6

### **Questions to consider**

If you are in any doubt about reporting your concerns don't think "What if I'm wrong?" think "What if I'm right?"

It may help to look at our multi-agency [Risk Matrix and Safeguarding Thresholds tool](#) to help understand the type of abuse or neglect, the level of risk involved, and how you might respond.

Try and find out what the adult wants. Share concerns with any agency involved. Think family – is anyone else at risk because of the self-neglect? Call 0161 217 6029 to speak to someone in Stockport Adult Social Care about your concerns.

7

### **Report a concern**

Unless there is an immediate risk of danger for the individual, you should speak with your organisation's safeguarding team. Safeguarding is everybody's business.

Contact Adult Social Care on 0161 217 6029 or by using the [online portal](#).

Out of office hours contact 0161 718 2118 or [adultsocialcare@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:adultsocialcare@stockport.gov.uk)