

What will happen if you report your concerns to Social Services or to the Police?

Every reported concern about abuse or suspected abuse will be assessed as a matter of urgency to determine an appropriate course of action.

The agencies involved (often the police and health professionals and voluntary organisations together with social services) will consider what actions may be required. This often includes an investigation and/or an assessment of the situation. The vulnerable adult's welfare will always be the focus of the work and their views and wishes will influence any actions taken.

Who do you contact?

If you live in Kent you can contact your local Social Services Office or contact us at:

Adult Services Policy Unit
Social Services
Brenchley House
123/135 Week Street
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 1RF

Tel: 08458 247100

If you live in Medway, contact us at:

Medway Council
Compass Centre
Pembroke
Chatham Maritime
Kent
ME4 4YH

Tel: 01634 306000

For out of hours emergencies for Kent and Medway:

Tel: 0845 7626777

Further copies of this leaflet are available from:

Social Services Leaflets
Contact Centre
Invicta House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 1XX

Tel: 08458 247100
Email: socialservices.leaflets@kent.gov.uk

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Introduction

This leaflet is about Adult Abuse and what you can do if you are worried that a vulnerable adult(s) may be at risk.

If you have concerns that a vulnerable adult is being abused you may contact your local Social Service's office and ask to speak to the duty officer. They will answer your questions and explain the referral process.

Protecting vulnerable adults from abuse e.g. harm and exploitation is the aim of Kent and Medway's Adult Protection Policy and Protocols. It is the right of every adult to live in a safe environment free from abuse.

Who is a vulnerable adult?

An adult (a person aged 18 or over) who:

- Is or may be in need of community care services

AND

- Is or may be unable to protect themselves from harm.

What do we mean by abuse?

Abuse is a breach of an individual's rights, which may be a single act or happen repeatedly over time. This abuse may be deliberate but it may also happen as a result of poor care practices or ignorance. The vulnerable adult may be neglected, persuaded to agree to something against their will or taken advantage of because they do not fully understand the consequences of their choices or actions.

Abuse can take many forms and may include:

- Physical Abuse
Hitting, slapping, pushing, rough handling, misusing medication, and deprivation of food, clothing, warmth and appropriate health care.
- Sexual abuse
Any kind of sexual activity where a vulnerable adult has not or is unable to give consent or has been pressured into.
- Financial Abuse
Misuse or theft of money, possessions, property or other goods; exploitation or pressure in connection with wills or property.
- Psychological Abuse
Shouting, threatening punishment, swearing, using degrading language – most types of abuse also result in emotional abuse.
- Neglect
Ignoring medical or physical care needs intentionally or unintentionally by failing to understand and meet the care needs of the vulnerable adult.
- Discriminatory Abuse
Discrimination by disability, sex, age, colour, language, culture, religion or politics, harassment.

Who can abuse?

Anyone may abuse but it is usually someone known to the vulnerable adult.

Where does it happen?

Abuse can happen anywhere. It may happen at home, in a residential or nursing home, hospital, day centre or in a public place. Abuse may also constitute a criminal offence.

What actions should you take if a vulnerable adult tells you that they are being abused or are frightened about being abused.

Do

- Stay calm and listen to them, Take what you are being told seriously, Be aware that medical evidence might be needed, Offer them support to help them to stop the abuse happening, make a written note of what you have been told and contact social services or the police.

Do not

- Press the person for more details (these will be taken at a later date). Do not assume that someone else is aware of the situation and will take action. Do not contact the alleged abuser. Do not promise to keep the disclosure secret. Do not be afraid to contact social services or the police to discuss the disclosure.

What should you do if you suspect or have witnessed a vulnerable adult being abused?

You should contact the local social services office and ask to speak to the DUTY OFFICER in ADULT SERVICES on **08458 247100**

If you wish to discuss your concerns outside normal office hours you may contact the OUT OF HOURS team on **0845 762 6777**. If you think that they may be at immediate risk of harm then you should contact the police by calling **999**.