

3. What is Abuse and Neglect?

Abuse may take many forms and may include criminal activity. It may take the form of:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Self-Neglect
- Psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Discriminatory
- Modern Slavery
- Domestic Violence/ abuse
- Sexual Exploitation

Abuse may occur when an adult at risk lives alone or with a relative. It may also occur within education, nursing, residential or day care settings, in hospitals, custodial settings, support services into people's own homes and in other places previously assumed safe or in public places. It can take place anywhere! It can involve a combination of categories! It may involve any combination of the above and can be either intentional or unintentional. When supporting an adult at risk one must consider 'think family approach' and other vulnerable dependents such as children and pets.

3.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse results in bodily harm and/or mental distress. It includes physical assault, imprisonment, and misuse of drugs. The perpetrator may cause physical or mental pain by doing (e.g. hitting) or not doing (e.g. withholding food). Often the nature of the physical injury is not consistent with the account of how it occurred. Possible indicators of physical abuse include:

- Multiple bruising
- Fractures
- Burns
- Pressure ulcers
- Fear
- Depression
- Unexplained weight loss

3.2 Neglect and acts of omission

Neglect also results in bodily harm and/or mental distress. It can involve failure to provide help and support in daily living tasks. Often there is a failure to meet basic needs (e.g. warmth, nutritional diet). It can involve failure to intervene in behaviour which is likely to cause harm to a person or to others. Neglect can occur because of lack of knowledge by the carer. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (The Act) introduced two new criminal offences:

- Ill treatment and wilful neglect of a person who lacks capacity to make relevant decisions. These offences are known as Section 44 of the Act and applies to anyone Caring for a person who lacks capacity – this includes;
- family carers, healthcare and social care staff in hospital or care homes and those providing care in a person's home
- An attorney appointed under an LPA or an EPA, or a deputy appointed for the person by the court

These people may be guilty of an offence if they ill-treat or wilfully neglect the person they care for or represent. For further guidance access MCA Code of Practice.

Possible indicators of neglect include;

- Malnutrition
- Untreated medical problems
- Pressure Ulcers
- Confusion
- Over-sedation

3.3 Self-Neglect

This includes various behaviours; disregarding one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings resulting in a risk that impact on the adult's wellbeing, this could consist of behaviours such as hoarding. (Refer to TASPb Self Neglect policy for further guidance regarding safeguarding arrangements). Also consider how it may impact on other family members and whether this gives rise to a safeguarding concern.

The TASPb multi-agency risk management Protocol provides professionals from all TASPb partner agencies with a framework for the management of complex cases where, despite ongoing work, serious risks are still present and the Adult has not consented to intervention via the TASPb Multi Safeguarding Adult Procedures.

3.4 Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse results in mental distress and may affect a person's physical health. It can involve the denial of choice, dignity and respect. It can include the fear of violence, threats, harassment, humiliation, loss of liberty, name calling, the use of racist/sexist/discriminatory language. It can involve restricting or failing to present all of the options to the vulnerable person, over-riding consent, treating adults as children. A person may be subject to such treatment in one off incidents by strangers. Workers will ascertain if the incident is one off. If it is, support will be offered to the victim and records of decisions taken will be kept but no further enquiry will be undertaken.

Possible indicators of emotional abuse:

- Fear
- Depression
- Confusion
- Loss of sleep
- Unexpected or unexplained change in behaviour

3.5 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when an adult at risk is of abuse is involved in sexual activities she/he does not want to be involved in or does not understand, or to which she/he is unable to give informed consent. Possible indicators of sexual abuse:

- Loss of sleep
- Unexpected or unexplained change in behaviour
- Bruising
- Soreness around the genitals
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear
- A preoccupation with anything sexual
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy

Sexual Exploitation is a subset of sexual abuse. It involves exploitative situations and relationships where people receive 'something' (e.g. accommodation, alcohol, affection, money) as a result of them performing, or others performing on them, sexual activities.

3.6 Financial or material Abuse

Financial or material abuse includes the theft, misuse or withholding of money or possessions. It can involve the use of verbal, physical and emotional threats. The adult at risk financial and material position is exploited. Including theft, fraud, exploitation, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

3.7 Organisational Abuse

Organisational abuse in care practice can occur in any group living situation e.g. day centres, supported housing, residential, hospitals, or nursing homes etc. Any of the abuse described above could happen in an organisational setting. In addition it could be the institution itself that is the source of the abuse. Organisational abuse can involve the imposing of rules by staff without the consent of those living there (e.g. rigid rules for meal times). It can involve lack of privacy and the lack of individual attention. This can involve the deprivation of normal social contact and the involuntary withdrawal from valued activity.

Organisational abuse can also be caused by the policies of the institution if they fail to recognise the diversity of the communities that they serve. Possible indicators of organisational abuse:

- Inflexible and non-negotiable systems and routines

- Lack of consideration of dietary requirements
- Name calling; inappropriate ways of addressing people
- Lack of adequate physical care – an unkempt appearance

Possible examples of organisational abuse:

- "I visited my mother in a residential home and was surprised that everyone had to go to bed at the same time and that there was a line of people in wheelchairs outside the toilet. Everyone had to sit in the main lounge in a circle against the wall – there were no walking aids allowed in the room (these were taken away by the staff) and the television was on so loud, blasting out Top of the Pops, that nobody could hear what was being said. Is this right?"
- "The Home care worker always puts my teeth in the same bowl as my wife's at night to soak – I hate it and asked her not to do it time and time again, but she just ignores me. Should she give me my wife's medicine at night – it worries me, you know. The thing that really upsets me is that she says she can't help me to wash myself – I smell and look a mess. I was never like this before the stroke and I am sure her boss said that she had to help me wash myself – what can I do?"
- "I am grateful that my dad is in hospital now, but they took his teeth out before his operation and now cannot find them. They call him Freddy, instead of Mr Heathcote. He looks so much older - no one takes time to help him choose his meals or eat properly. He has lost all his dignity."

3.8 Domestic Abuse

The statutory definition of Domestic Abuse is documented in Section 1 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021:

- An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse...by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality.
- Includes: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour based violence; Female Genital Mutilation; forced marriage
- Age range extended down to 16 (for the purpose of the safeguarding adult arrangements, safeguarding children arrangements would be applied to a person under 18)

[Domestic Abuse Act statutory guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/domestic-abuse-act-2021)

3.9 Modern Slavery

Modern Slavery is the illegal Exploitation of people for personal/commercial gain. Victims trapped in servitude they were deceived or coerced into.

Modern Slavery is an international crime, it can include victims that have been brought from overseas, and vulnerable people in the UK. Slave Masters and Traffickers will deceive, coerce and force adults into a life of abuse, callous treatment and slavery.

www.gov.uk/government/collections/modern-slavery

3.10 Discriminatory abuse

Abuse can be experienced as harassment, insults or similar actions due to race, religion, gender, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation.

3.11 Safeguarding Children and Young People

Safeguarding Children is everyone's responsibility. Abuse within families reflects a diverse range of relationships and power dynamics which may affect the causes and impact of abuse. These can challenge professionals to work across multi-disciplinary boundaries in order to protect all of those at risk.

Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance (2018) states that when staff are providing services to adults, they should ask whether there are children in the family and consider whether the children need help or protection from harm. If you have a concern about a child or a young person, you will need to complete and submit a Multi-Agency Request for Service (MARS) using the secure Tameside link:

<https://secure.tameside.gov.uk/forms/mars/f1312mars.asp>

If you have immediate concerns about a child's safety and risk of harm you should ring 999

3.12 Abuse by Children

Parents experiencing abuse from their children may be reluctant to seek help, fearing judgement from agencies or negative consequences for their child. It is important to note that young people using violence against parents may sometimes have safeguarding needs themselves. Alongside raising a safeguarding adults concern for the parent/person at risk, there may also be a need to make a referral to the Children Services to assess the young person's needs, or to assess the immediate risk to other family members such as other siblings in the home.

