

## What is meant by abuse?

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by someone else. Abuse might be unintentional, the important factor is whether the vulnerable person is harmed or not. Abuse can be:

**Physical abuse** - any form of assault, over-medication, restraint or poor manual handling practice.

**Sexual abuse** - rape or any sexual act which was not actively consented to or the person did not have the capacity to understand.

**Psychological / emotional abuse** - threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment.

**Financial abuse** - theft, borrowing money without repayment and any pressure in connection with wills or property, possessions or benefits.

**Neglect** - ignoring medical or physical needs, not providing access to appropriate care, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate food, water and heating.

**Discriminatory abuse** - all forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment based on a person's disability, ethnic origin, gender or sexuality. This is often called hate crime.

**Institutional abuse** - repeated instances of poor care, ill treatment of vulnerable adults, and unsatisfactory professional practice. This is often an indicator of more serious problems.

This leaflet provides information about the agencies that can listen and act on reports of abuse directly.

The information you give will be treated in the strictest confidence within the limits of the law, which requires that the Police are informed where there is serious risk to life, or information about a serious crime is discovered.

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**THE BOVEY TRACEY  
AND  
CHUDLEIGH PRACTICE**

**WORRIED  
ABOUT  
ABUSE?**

**HOW TO REPORT ABUSE OR  
CONCERNS  
ABOUT  
POTENTIAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS**

**HELPING YOU RAISE YOUR  
CONCERNS SAFELY AND IN  
CONFIDENCE**

## We are all responsible for the care and welfare of children

If you are worried about a **child or young person** and think they may be being neglected or abused please contact someone at the number below:

**Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub  
(MASH) - 0345 155 1071**

If the offices are closed call the  
Emergency Duty Team—0845  
6000 388

If the child is at immediate risk  
ring the Police on **999**.

## What happens then?

You'll be listened to and asked for more details. The more you can say, the more it will help. The child's social worker takes the lead in deciding what needs to be done to make sure the child involved is safe. They have to work quickly.

This may mean talking to the child's teacher, health visitor or doctor. They may also talk to the police. All this helps them work out if further investigation or action is needed and whether or not there is cause for concern. They will let you know what happens as a result of your call.

## Vulnerable adults - what should I do if I suspect abuse?

Doing nothing isn't an option. You must report your concerns. If you are worried about a **vulnerable adult** contact:

**Devon Adult Safeguarding Team -  
0845 155 1007 (Mon-Fri 8am - 8pm  
& Saturday 8am-1pm)**

**Emergency Duty for Out of Hours -  
0845 6000 388**

Tell them:

- why you're concerned
- the vulnerable adult's name, age and address
- if anyone lives with them
- if they're getting help from any organisation
- who may be doing the abuse

Don't delay in reporting abuse if you're not sure about some of these details. If reporting the abuse puts you at risk you can choose to do so anonymously.

## **What happens next, after I have re- ported my concerns?**

All allegations of abuse are treated very seriously.