

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Guidance

A **vulnerable adult** is someone who:

- Has care and support needs, and/or is experiencing or is at risk of harm, abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves.
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- As a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Therefore, people who, because of issues such as dementia, learning disability, mental ill-health, or substance abuse, have care and support needs that may make them more vulnerable to abuse or neglect.

Who may be at a higher risk?

People with care and support needs, such as older people, people with disabilities, people with communication difficulties are more vulnerable. They may be seen as an easy target; they may be less likely to identify abuse themselves; or to report it or to be able to alert others.

Sometimes people may not even be aware that they are being abused, and this is especially likely if they have a cognitive impairment.

Abusers may also try to prevent access to the person they abuse.

Safeguarding duties must be carried out alongside other duties of the Care Act or jurisdictional equivalents. This includes the duty to promote individual wellbeing, the duty to prevent or reduce the likelihood of further care and support needs developing and the duty to provide good information and advice.

The Six Principles of Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Act sets out the following principles that should underpin the safeguarding of adults:

1. **Empowerment** - This means that, if the person is capable, asking them to make decisions or help make decisions about the care and support they're given.
2. **Protection** - This means keeping the person safe from harm. It also means supporting and representing them when needed.
3. **Prevention** - This is about being aware of any risks and doing something about them before the person is harmed.
4. **Proportionality** - This means that when you respond to concerns, you should use the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented, so you don't intrude on the person's privacy and freedom any more than you need to.
5. **Partnership** - Councils, and services now have to work together with their communities to prevent, detect and report abuse.
6. **Accountability** - This means that whichever situation you're in, it's always clear who's responsible for safeguarding and what the vulnerable adults' policies and procedures are.

Following the 6 principles of safeguarding adults helps to ensure that vulnerable adults are given the care and support they need.

The following behaviour should never be sanctioned and will not be tolerated:

Allow or engage in inappropriate physical (includes inappropriate touching), verbal, sexual, psychological, emotional, or financial behaviours, games or online content.

Allow or engage in the use of inappropriate language, sexualised language, make sexually suggestive comments or engage in any sexualised conversation.

Allow a Vulnerable Adult to be exploited for the purpose of personal or group gratification including financial gain.

View, share, download, produce, sell, manipulate or create AI explicit images of a Vulnerable Adult.

Dismiss the concerns and or allow allegations made by a Vulnerable Adult to go unrecorded, unreported, or not acted upon.

Provide a Vulnerable Adult with any illegal substances.

Support for those who report abuse:

Staff, volunteers, stakeholders, and members of the community, who report abuse or raise a concern should know that:

- They will be listened to and taken seriously.
- Their concerns will be treated confidentially but may be shared with others if it is apparent there is serious or significant risk.
- There will be no pressure or intimidation.
- They will be kept informed and treated with respect and fairness.

You **must** report all Safeguarding concerns, allegations or incidents involving a Vulnerable Adult to the Safeguarding Team immediately and without fail.

Confidentiality is paramount in dealing with safeguarding concerns, therefore limiting the number of people who are aware of the concern.

The Safeguarding Team will triage and where safeguarding thresholds are met **must** report all safeguarding matters which involve a Vulnerable Adult to the relevant authorities.

The Safeguarding Team will be the point of contact for external agencies on behalf of the RNLI on all safeguarding matters (unless otherwise directed).

Where matters reported are criminal in nature, the Safeguarding Team will report to all relevant external agencies in a timely manner.