



Neglect and Acts of Omission

This leaflet explains what Neglect and Acts of Omission is and what you can do about it if you are worried that you or someone you know is experiencing it. We have also published other leaflets about adult safeguarding.

Abuse is when someone does or says something which harms someone or makes them upset and scared.

Abuse is always unacceptable. Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. No-one has the right to abuse other people.

Abuse can happen once or can be something that happens over weeks, months or years. It can be accidental or deliberate. Just because there is no injury

that someone can see it does not mean there is no abuse.

What is Neglect and Acts of Omission

Neglect is when a person's needs and requirements are not fulfilled. This can include not providing care in a way the person likes, ignoring their likes and dislikes and not ensuring they get access to a range of activities and stimulation.

Neglect often occurs when people are not given care/support with basic care needs such as having food they like at a time they want it, getting medication regularly and on time, having clean clothes, and supported with care and help they need in a timely manner. Neglect can be intentional, but it can also be unintentional, and harm can be caused by not following proper policies, procedures and support plans, by informal carers being overwhelmed, and by a lack of understanding of what dignity is, and what people need to live a good life.

Neglect is different to organisational abuse in that it might be just one person who is not having their needs met, perhaps due to a staff member who has

not read a support plan properly or been properly trained. Whereas organisational neglect is about a range of failings within an organisation which causes neglect and harm to a number of people.

Who could carry out Neglect and Acts of Omission?

Most people will not abuse BUT anyone could abuse. It might be someone the person being abused knows or a stranger. It can be anyone who uses their 'power' over someone else. Anyone can carry out abuse or neglect, including:

- A partner, spouse, child or relative
- A friend or neighbour
- A parent or guardian
- A health or social care worker
- Staff in a residential or nursing home or hospital
- A volunteer worker
- Anyone else whose job it is to work with people who have care and support needs

It is likely that the person responsible for abuse is known to the person experiencing abuse, and is in a position of trust and/or power.

Possible signs and symptoms of Neglect and Acts of Omission include:

- Failure to provide or allow access to food, shelter, clothing, heating, stimulation and activity, personal or medical care
- Failure to provide care in the way the person wants
- Failure to allow choice and preventing people from making their own decisions
- Failure to ensure appropriate privacy and dignity

Neglect and poor professional practice may take the form of isolated incidents or pervasive ill treatment and gross misconduct. Neglect of this type may happen within an adult's own home or within a service such as a hospital, care home or day service. Repeated instances of poor care may be an indication of more serious problems.

Possible indicators of Neglect and Acts of Omission include:

- Poor hygiene/cleanliness of the person who has been assessed as needing assistance

- Repeated infections
- Dehydration / unexplained weight loss / malnutrition
- Repeated or unexplained falls or trips
- Withholding of assistance aids, for example, hearing aids or walking devices
- Pressure sores or ulcers
- Untreated injuries and medical problems
- Inconsistent or reluctant contact with medical and social care organisations
- Accumulation of untaken medication
- Uncharacteristic failure to engage in social interaction
- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing
- Soiled or wet clothing
- Exposure to unacceptable risk

Who to contact if you are worried about abuse or neglect:

Somerset County Council's Adult Social Care service has the lead for adult safeguarding for all adults with care and support needs in Somerset, and works closely with other organisations including the police and NHS. If a crime has been committed you should always contact the police.

Adult Social Care:

- **Telephone: 0300 123 22 24** (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm, Saturday and Sunday closed.)
- **Email: adults@somerset.gov.uk**

The phone number for Adults and Mental Health out of hours is **0300 123 23 27**

Police:

101 or in an emergency 999

Further information:

Please use the following link to view other leaflets on our website: bit.ly/SSABLeaflets

