



Organisational Abuse

This leaflet explains what Organisational Abuse 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 Organisational Abuse

Organisational abuse occurs when an organisation or service such as a hospital, care home or mental health hospital, or an organisation like a care agency, fail to provide a standard of care and treatment which causes harm to a person.

Organisational Abuse is different to neglect as is about the throughout the organisation; with lots of people being affected.

Who could carry out Organisational Abuse?

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 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 Organisational Abuse include:

- Run-down, over-crowded establishment
- Authoritarian management or rigid regimes
- Lack of leadership and supervision
- Inadequate staff training and/or guidance
- Insufficient staff or high turnover resulting in poor quality care
- Abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using the service
- Inappropriate use of restraints
- Lack of respect for dignity and privacy
- Failure to manage residents with abusive behaviour
- Not providing adequate food and drink, or assistance with eating
- Not offering choice or promoting independence
- Misuse of medication

Possible indicators of Organisational Abuse include:

- Lack of care plans
- Contact with outside world not encouraged
- No flexibility or lack of choice, for example, the time to get up in the morning or go to bed, or what to eat
- Routines are engineered for the benefit of staff
- Lack of personal effects
- Strong smell of urine
- Staff not visiting for allocated time due to pressure resulting in some tasks not being fully carried out
- Poor moving and handling practices
- Failure to provide care with dentures, glasses, hearing aids
- Discouraging / refusing visits or the involvement of relatives, friends
- Lack of flexibility or choice for adults using the service
- Inadequate staffing levels
- People being hungry or dehydrated
- Poor standards of care
- Lack of personal clothing and possessions, and communal use of personal items

- Lack of adequate procedures
- Poor record-keeping; missing documents
- Few social, recreational and educational activities
- Public discussion of personal matters or unnecessary exposure during bathing or using the toilet

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

