

Ten things to know about safeguarding

1. What is safeguarding?

Any abuse is wrong, everyone has the right to live their life free from violence, fear, and abuse. We all have a role to play if we suspect that someone is being abused or neglected and we need to act promptly to prevent this.

2. Safeguarding adults

Raising a worry about an adult who has or appears to have care and support needs, who is subjected to or may be at risk of, abuse or neglect and who may be unable to protect themselves from the abuse or neglect or risk of it.

3. Safeguarding children

Any worry about a child or young person who is subjected to or may be at risk of abuse.

4. Examples of abusive or controlling behaviour

- Physical – such as hitting, pushing, kicking, shaking, restraint
- Domestic violence – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, “honour” based violence
- Sexual – such as inappropriate touching, rape, sexual assault or sexual acts of any kind to which the adult at risk has not consented, or could not consent, or to which they were pressurised into consenting.
- Psychological or emotional – includes being shouted at, ridiculed or bullied, as well as being made to feel frightened or pressured into decisions.
- Financial or material – means misusing, withholding or stealing someone’s money or belongings. When people take control or steal your money.
- Discriminatory abuse – poor treatment or harassment based on age, gender, sexuality, disability, race or religious belief.
- Organisational abuse – when any of these types of abuse are caused by an organisation, it might be called ‘Organisational abuse’.
- Neglect – this is failure to provide care or the provision of inappropriate care, that results in someone being harmed.

5. Signs of abusive or controlling behaviour

Abuse comes in many forms, not all of which are physical. When someone repeatedly uses words to demean, frighten, or control someone, it’s considered verbal abuse. Coercive behaviour is a pattern of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten victims. Controlling behaviour can be used to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support and

regulating their behaviour. You may notice a number of signs if someone is being abused for example:

- Behaviour – they may become withdrawn, depressed or tearful. They may also be angry or aggressive for little reason.
- Personal hygiene – they may not take as much care as normal with their appearance, such as not bathing, shaving or washing their hair.
- Lifestyle – they may lack money, be anxious about having to stay at home, or have unexplained or frequent injuries.

6. Do not investigate

It is not your role to investigate your concerns. You can ask questions such as “who”, “what”, “how”, “when”, “where” to gather an objective account that you can then report. You should particularly avoid asking any questions that could create an alternative account, or suggest events that could have happened.

7. How to report concerns

For general safeguarding concerns, please raise these immediately with your volunteering organisation.

FOR ADULTS If in doubt, please call Adult Care Services 0300 123 4042

FOR CHILDREN If in doubt, please call Children’s Services on 0300 123 4043

In an emergency, always dial 999.

8. What will happen

You will be asked to give a clear, objective account of what has happened. You will be asked to give the individuals full name, date of birth and address. The safeguarding board staff will talk you through the concern and tell you whether it needs to be raised as an incident and will give you further advice and information. If it is considered to be a safeguarding incident, you will be asked to complete an incident form (which they will email to you) and you will return it to the address provided.

9. Other useful information

We recommend that you download the Herts Safeguarding app available for Apple and Android phones: search for “HSAB SAFA” in your app store.

10. Keep alert

Everyone, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, has a right to equal protection from harm. Keep alert for any signs of abuse – we can all play a part to end abuse.