

Responding to potential or actual abuse of adults

Responding to disclosure

- Ensure the safety of the individual – call for help if necessary.
- Listen and believe.
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.
- Respond in a caring, respectful and reassuring way.
- Never promise not to tell anyone else.
- Follow the individual's wishes unless this would put them or others at risk.
- Reassure them that you will support them.
- Let them know they will be kept informed of what is happening.
- Do not be judgmental.
- Do not ask leading questions which could compromise evidence.
- Report to the relevant person as soon as you can.

Factors that could compromise evidence

- Contacting the alleged perpetrator.
- Asking leading questions.
- Touching or moving anything.
- Incomplete, inaccurate or altered records.

Who you might report to

- Internal reporting – line manager, supervisor or senior staff member (unless they are suspected perpetrator.)
- The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI.)
- The Health and Safety Executive if the complaint falls under their remit.
- Legal advisers – solicitors may be able to advise in some situations.
- The police if there has been a criminal act.

How to make a report

- Ensure the report is legible.
- In cases of disclosure, record or report what was said to you in the person's own words.
- Record or report if anyone else was there at the time.
- Record or report the date, time and setting in which the allegation was made or the event witnessed.
- Ensure that only facts are recorded, not opinions or other personal comment.
- Use diagrams, drawings or photographs (of location of injuries or the scene) may be used to support the report.

- Maintain confidentiality and do not discuss details with individuals not directly involved.
- Date and sign the report and keep a copy.

What happens next will depend on

- The seriousness of the incident/allegation.
- Whether a criminal offence has taken place.

Actions internal to the organisation may involve

- Supervision.
- A verbal or written warning.
- Further training.
- Further disciplinary action, including suspension or dismissal.
- Referral for inclusion on Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) list.

Actions external to the organisation may involve

- The purchasing authority (family and social services.)
- Commission for Social Care Inspection.
- The police.