



North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board

Duty to Report – Adult at Risk

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 came into effect in April 2016. It sets out what must and should be done to safeguard children and adults.

A report should be made whenever there are concerns for an adult at risk who:

- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect,
- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
- **and** as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

The use of the term ‘at risk’ means that actual abuse or neglect does not need to have occurred.

If any person has knowledge, concerns or suspicions that an adult is suffering, has suffered or is likely to be at risk of abuse, it is their responsibility to ensure that the concerns are referred to social services or the police who have statutory duties and powers to make enquiries and intervene when necessary.

All agencies are expected to report any safeguarding concerns in the same way as those with a specific duty to report. This includes both paid and non-paid practitioners in third sector organisations (this includes: independent contractors and sub-contractors, independent professionals and private organisations). Volunteers should agree to adhere to a code of conduct with the organisation in which they volunteer.

Definitions:

Abuse: can be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial (includes theft, fraud, pressure about money, misuse of money) take place in any setting.

Neglect: This describes a failure to meet a person’s basic needs physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person’s well-being (for example, an impairment of the person’s health).

The following behaviours could also place the adult at risk of abuse or neglect:

- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) this includes Female Genital Mutilation
- Modern Slavery
- Domestic abuse and violence against men
- Criminal exploitation
- Self-Neglect

There are no excuses for failing to carry out the duty to report an adult at risk of abuse or neglect.

However, subjective factors can influence decision-making:

- Fear of actual or perceived threats from the family and or community;
- Concern that the referral is a breach of trust;
- Wish to retain professional autonomy and manage the situation;
- Over identification with family/carers, making excuses and/or justifying potentially abusive behaviours;
- Concerns that the report will not be taken seriously;
- Worries that the report will result in considerable distress for the adult at risk and family/carers but no meaningful help and support will be provided because of lack of resources;
- Normalising a particular form of abuse or neglect because of the commonality of a particular situation e.g. alcohol or drug misuse and domestic violence
- A belief that the behaviour may be acceptable in a particular culture/religion.
- Over-optimism about a situation: seeing it as a one-off or accident;
- Reluctance to accept professionals or those in higher socio-economic groups can perpetrate abuse or neglect;
- Being re-assured by an abuser they have/will change and/or engaged with services.

If in doubt, discuss with your Safeguarding Lead.

A copy of the Adult Safeguarding Report Form can be found [here](#).

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<https://www.northwalessafeguardingboard.wales/>