

Age UK North West Kent believes that people using our services must be safeguarded from all forms of abuse. It recognises that it must at all times protect its service users from the risk of abuse and identify and deal with specific instances of abuse if they occur.

Age UK North West Kent is always aiming for the very best quality of care and will not be satisfied with anything that falls short of this. It takes every possible action to prevent abuse and to deal with it as promptly and effectively as possible if it occurs.

What are my rights?

- Everyone has the right to live their life free from violence, fear and abuse.
- Everyone has a right to be respected by other people.
- Everyone has a right to make choices about their life and things that affect them.
- Everyone has a right to live in safety.
- You have these rights whoever you are. It doesn't matter if you are an older person, or disabled person, or ill.
- You still have these rights.

What is abuse?

- Abuse is when someone does or says something to you which makes you upset or scared.
- Abuse is when someone tries to take away your rights.
- You may be afraid to say something to them to try and stop them.
- Sometimes a person doesn't realise that they are scaring you.
- Some people abuse others on purpose.
- Any abuse is wrong.

Who might be at risk of abuse?

This guide is about adults. This means people who are aged 18 or older.

Some adults might be more at risk of abuse than others.

There could be different reasons for this:

- They are elderly or frail.
- They have learning disabilities.
- They have mental health problems.
- They have physical disabilities.
- They have sight or hearing loss.

- They have dementia and might be confused or forgetful.
- They are very ill.
- They are not able to stop someone else from hurting them or taking advantage of them.
- They depend on someone else to look after them.

Different types of abuse

Physical abuse

Where someone physically hurts you.

This can be:

- Hitting.
- Kicking.
- Pulling hair.
- Pinching, scratching, shaking.
- Giving someone too much or not enough medicine.

Sexual abuse

Someone making you do sexual things that might make you sad, angry or frightened.

This can be:

- Being touched when you do not want to be.
- Being made to touch other people when you do not want to.
- Undressing or having sex when you don't want to.
- Being made to watch or say sexual things when you don't want to.

Emotional Abuse

When someone says things to you that hurt your feelings or scare you.

This can be:

- Calling you names.
- Threatening you.
- Laughing at you.
- Treating you like a child.
- Not letting you spend time with other people, or go out.
- Ignoring you.

Financial Abuse

When someone takes your money or things.

This can be:

- Stealing your money or things.
- Making you buy something you don't want to buy.
- Using your money to pay for their things.
- When you don't have a choice in how your money is spent.
- When someone tells you that you have to give them your money or your home.

Neglect

Not giving you things that you need.

This can be:

- Not having your prescribed medicine when you need it.
- Not being taken to the doctor if you are ill.
- Being cold a lot of the time.
- Being hungry a lot.
- Only having dirty clothes to wear.
- Not having your equipment when you need it. (like hearing aids, walking frames, wheel-chairs)

Discrimination

When people are treating you unfairly because you are different.

This could be:

- Because of the colour of your skin.
- Because of your religion.
- Because of your sex.
- Because of your age.
- Because of your disability.
- Because of your language.
- Because you are lesbian or gay.

Who could abuse you?

- Anyone.
- Most people will not abuse you.

Where could someone abuse you?

Abuse could happen anywhere:

- In your home.
- At a day centre or college.
- At work.
- In a hospital.
- In a care home.
- At a club.
- Outside.

- Most places will be safe

Who can I tell if someone is abusing me?

- Tell someone you trust.
- Tell them as soon as you can.
- Your family.
- A friend.
- A nurse.
- A doctor.
- A social worker.
- A carer at your care home, or day centre, or in your home.
- A religious leader.
- Someone from a charity, like Age UK North West Kent, or Mencap, or Mind.
- A lecturer or someone at your college.
- A care inspector – from the Care Quality Commission.
- The Police.

What happens next?

- The person you tell will listen to you carefully.
- They will make sure an official person knows.
- Someone who will take action to help you.

What will the official person do?

- They will listen to you carefully.
- They will help you stay safe.
- They will find out more.
- They will ask you what you would like to happen.
- They will give you help and support.
- They will help you stop the abuse happening.
- They will make sure no-one will treat you badly because you said you were being abused.

Age UK North West Kent seeks to work in line with local safeguarding authority policies and procedures and guidance from the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and seeks to comply in all respects with current safeguarding legislation and regulations.