

South Wales Policy and Procedures

The South Wales Adult Protection (SWAP) Inter-Agency Policy & Procedure was published in December 2001 in response to guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly in 2000 entitled 'In Safe Hands.'

The SWAP Forum is made up of local authorities, police, local health boards NHS trusts, voluntary and independent sectors and members of the public who work together to challenge and combat abuse and promote the rights of vulnerable adults.

The Vale of Glamorgan launched the Policy in February 2002

The revised policy is available in both English and Welsh language versions and a bilingual transcript of these together with copies of VA documentation is available on the South Wales Adult Protection Forum web-site **www.swapforum.org**

A Vulnerable Adult is:

A person aged 18 or over, who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

Law Commission-Who Decides? 1997

Definitions

Vulnerable Adults may include:

People with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people and disabled people; particularly when their situation is complicated by additional factors such as physical frailty, chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, social and emotional problems, poverty, homelessness, substance misuse.

Definitions

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights

Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts.

It may be physical, verbal, psychological, financial or sexual.

Abuse can be an act of neglect or omission to act, or be the unintended result of a person's actions.

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, mis-use of medication, undue restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

Psychological Abuse

Also known as 'emotional' abuse includes threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, demeaning and denigrating remarks, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Sexual Abuse

Includes rape and sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not or could not consent and/or was pressured into.

Types of Abuse

Financial Abuse

Includes theft, fraud, pressure around wills, property or inheritance, misuse or misappropriation of benefits.

Neglect or Acts of Omission

Includes failure to access medical care or services.

Negligence in the form of risk taking, includes failure to give prescribed medication, poor nutrition or lack of heating.

Physical Abuse

Possible Indicators

- Multiple bruising not consistent with the given explanation e.g. a fall
- Cowering and flinching
- Black eyes, marks resulting from a slap and/or kick, other unexplained bruises
- Abrasions, especially around the neck, wrists and/or ankles
- Unexplained burns, especially on the back of the hand
- Scalds, especially with a well defined edge – immersion in water
- Hair loss in one area – scalp sore to touch
- Frequent minor accidents without help
- Unexplained fractures
- Unusually sleepy or docile
- Malnutrition, ulcers, bedsores and sores due to lack of care for incontinence
- Frequent ‘hopping’ from one GP to another or one care agency to another

Psychological Abuse

Possible Indicators

- Disturbed sleep, tendency to withdraw to a room or bed
- Loss of appetite or overeating, especially at inappropriate times
- Anxiety, confusion or general resignation
- Extreme submissiveness or dependency in contrast with known capacity
- Noticeable changes in behaviour in the presence of certain persons
- Excessive or inappropriate craving for attention
- Extreme self abuse behaviour especially self mutilation, head banging, hand biting
- Loss of weight without apparent loss of appetite
- Loss of confidence

Sexual Abuse

Possible Indicators

- Language
- Unexplained and uncharacteristic changes in behaviour
- New tendency to withdraw and spend time in isolation
- A recent development of openly sexual behaviour/language
- Inappropriate dressing and masturbation
- Deliberate self harm
- Incontinence and bedwetting
- Irregular or disturbed sleep patterns
- Difficulty in walking
- Unexplained soreness around genital or rectal area
- Excessive washing
- 'Love bites'
- Stained or torn underclothing especially with blood or semen
- Sexually transmitted disease or pregnancy

Financial Abuse

Possible Indicators

- Unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills
- Unexplained or sudden withdrawal of money from accounts
- Contrast between known income or capital and unnecessarily poor living conditions, especially where this has developed recently
- Personal possessions go missing from home without satisfactory explanation
- Someone has taken responsibility for paying rent, bills, buying food etc. but is clearly not doing so
- Unusual interest by relative, friend, neighbour or other in financial assets especially if no real concern is shown in other matters
- Next of kin refuse to follow advice regarding control of property via court of protection, or through securing enduring power of attorney, but insists upon informal arrangements
- Where care services including residential care are refused under pressure from family or other potential inheritors
- Unusual purchases unrelated to the known interests of the vulnerable adult e.g. purchases of fashionable clothes, holidays etc.

Neglect or Acts of Omission

Possible Indicators

- Poor hygiene and cleanliness of a person who needs assistance with personal care
- Unkempt or unsuitable clothing for the weather conditions
- Untreated physical illness
- Dehydration, weight loss, malnutrition
- Repeated or unexplained falls/trips
- Pressure sores
- Inadequate heating or lighting
- Furnishings, noticeable shabbier or of poor quality compared to the rest of the house
- Incontinence not addressed eg. odour on clothing and/or furnishings
- Failure to ensure medication is taken appropriately
- Inconsistent or reluctant contact with health or social care agencies
- Failure to ensure appropriate privacy and dignity on personal living conditions
- Refusal of the right to use external facilities or access other care services e.g. day centres especially if there is a cost involved
- Lack of safety equipment being used following recommendation

Indicators of Abuse by Carers

Can include:

- A carer's inability or unwillingness to provide the level of care needed
- The mental or physical health of a carer or cared for adult
- A history of drug or alcohol misuse, outside pressures such as debt or poor housing
- Poor quality relationships both in the past and the present
- Increasing dependency of the vulnerable adult or sometimes of the carer of the person they are caring for

(McCreadie 1996)

Indicators of Abuse by all Employees, including Management

Can include:

- Inadequately trained staff
- Poorly supervised staff
- Little or no support from management
- Rigid work routines
- Isolated from professional discussions and ideas
- Poorly paid
- Feel powerless to influence practice
- Are part of a closed system

(Wardhaugh and Wilding 1993)

Institutional Abuse

This is not seen as a separate category of abuse, as several forms can occur within a care setting and affect several vulnerable adults. May result from rigid and sensitive routines, unskilled or intrusive interventions or an inadequate care environment.

Possible Indicators

- Lack of care plans
- Rigid inflexible visiting hours/visitors restricted to certain areas
- Atmosphere oppressively quiet or particularly noisy and fractious
- Poor staff morale, high turnover/sickness, excessive hours are worked and frequent use of agency staff
- Staff have rigid attitudes, are cynical or burnt out
- Ex staff and/or ex-residents make complaints over a period of time about member(s) of staff
- Lack of flexibility and choice, e.g. time of getting up from bed
- Lack of consultation, involvement, preparation, discussion when medical or personal care tasks are being carried out

Institutional Abuse (continued)

Possible Indicators

- Shared bedrooms contrary to the wish of the person, lack of personal possessions in room
- Residents dressed in other peoples clothes, dirty or unkempt
- Strong smell of urine: resident's clothing /bedding soiled
- Inappropriate use of tip-back chairs, excessive use of cotsides
- Inappropriate use of enemas, catheterisation or medication

Roles and Responsibilities

Social Services Departments' have a lead role in co-ordinating the development of local policies, and have a lead role in co-ordinating an inter-agency Adult Protection plan to safeguard the vulnerable adult from risk of abuse.

Designated Lead Manager

This person has designated responsibility for co-ordinating and liaising with outside agencies on adult protection issues. Depending on the organisational structure and size of the agency, one or more designated lead managers may be appointed to carry out this function.

Glossary SWAP Forum Policy & Procedure

Referral and Decision Making

If in doubt **SEEK ADVICE.**

If uncertain – referral of the concerns **is always preferable to taking no action.**

There is both a moral and legal duty for any staff member employed by any agency/organisation that subscribes to the SWAP Procedures, to take positive and decisive action when witnessing incidents, experiencing concerns or receiving information alleging abuse or inappropriate care of a vulnerable adult,

9.3 SWAP Forum Policy & Procedure

These procedures seek to enable all staff to act decisively and with confidence, **and there is an absolute expectation that they will do so.** The safety and welfare of vulnerable people is paramount at all time.

9.5 SWAP Forum Policy & Procedure

We are all accountable for the decisions we make and will be expected to provide explanations for the decisions and actions we take – **therefore all should record information received and decisions made on the basis of that information.**

What To Do If You Have Concerns

All – members of the public and staff

If you witness abuse, just suspect, or even have a ‘gut feeling’ that abuse is taking place, you must act without delay.

- You may need to take immediate action to protect the vulnerable adult.
- This could involve contacting the police and/or arranging emergency medical care.
- If no immediate action is required to protect the vulnerable adult, you can refer direct to one of the statutory agencies, Social Services, Health Trusts or the Police*
- As soon as one of these agencies is made aware, consideration can be given to finding a temporary place of safety - if appropriate.
- *You will find the relevant contact details on page 21

Staff

You **MUST** inform your line manager or any other manager in your service area immediately. They will then contact the Designated Lead Manager (DLM) in the Social Services or Health to discuss your concerns further. If you are unable to contact your line manager, please telephone DLM direct

Statutory Agency Managers

On receiving the information you must

- Note your concerns and gather as much information as possible.
- Contact the Designated Lead Manager (DLM) with your concerns.
- Assist the care worker in completing pages 1-4 of the VA1 (referral form).
- Complete pages 5-7 yourself.
- Fax the completed VA1 to the (DLM).

Please note the entire process from the point of the first concerns through to the manager speaking to the DLM needs to be completed within the same working day. In the absence of the DLM for that team, contact any DLM or the Adult Protection Co-ordinator – See contacts page 21

Vale of Glamorgan Social Services

VA Referrals can be made via:

The Contact & Information Centre **01446 731100**

Monday – Thursday 8.30am – 5.00pm

Friday 8.30 am – 4.30pm

A full list of current DLM is available from the Contact and Information Centre.

You can contact the Emergency Duty Team evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays **029 20448360**

Adult Protection Co-ordinator 01446 704740

Vale of Glamorgan Website

<http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/adultprotection>

Some other useful numbers

South Wales Police 'E' Division Public Protection Unit Barry	01446 731604
Vale of Glamorgan Health Board	02920 350600
Bridgend Local Health Board	01656 754400
Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust	01656 752919
Cardiff & Vale NHS Trust	02920 743681
Velindre NHS Trust	02920 316917
National Public Health Service	02920 402512
Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales (Vale & Valleys Regional Office)	01443 848527/29
Victim Support	01446 746049

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