



Protection of Vulnerable Adults

When an allegation has been made against you

Protection of Vulnerable Adults

What is the protection of vulnerable adults all about?

All Protection of Vulnerable Adults Teams (POVA) work to ensure that all vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and neglect and when a referral is received it may be necessary to take action to keep individuals safe from further actual harm or risk of harm. Social Services have a duty to respond to all the concerns that it receives if a vulnerable adult may be at risk.

Concerns may have been raised that you may have hurt or placed a vulnerable adult at risk and this could be for a number of reasons, including acts of omission, deliberate acts, or non-intentional acts.

Social Services have a duty to look into all concerns it receives of this nature. This is done through a process called the Protection of Vulnerable Adults - it is sometimes referred to as 'POVA'.

If something happens in the local community, social services will respond and if something happens in a hospital or primary care setting e.g. doctor's surgery or health clinic the Gwent NHS Trust will respond. Sometimes we will need to ask others to look into the situation such as the police.

When an allegation of abuse or neglect is received a Designated Senior Officer (DSO) will coordinate the processes set out in the South East Wales Procedures for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults.

Who may be a vulnerable adult?

The Wales Policy defines a vulnerable adult as:

"A person who is 18 years of age or over, and who 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 themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation."

Vulnerable adults may include people with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people and disabled people. Their situation may be complicated by additional factors such as physical frailty, chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, lack of mental capacity, social and emotional problems, poverty homelessness or substance misuse.

Confidentiality

When an allegation is made, there will be information that we may need to share with others such as the police or people who monitor the quality of registered services. We take care to ensure that this information is only shared with those people involved in the process.

What happens when a concern is raised?

When an allegation is made, a decision will be made if immediate action is necessary to safeguard the vulnerable adult. As much information as possible will be gathered and this information may need to be shared with other agencies such as the police or organisations who monitor the quality of registered services. This information will only be shared with those people involved in the POVA process.

A Designated Lead Manager will co-ordinate the processes set out in the Wales Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults. This may include a strategy meeting for all parties involved with the vulnerable adult to discuss the allegation and decide if any investigations or actions are required. You would not be invited to attend this meeting.

An adult protection plan may be written to explain to those involved what the concerns are and to take steps to keep the vulnerable adult safe from further abuse or neglect.

If an investigation is required the meeting will discuss the issues to be explored. The investigation may be carried out by the police, health worker or social care worker. If it is decided that this is a criminal matter, a police investigation would take precedence and this may result in a delay.

All efforts will be made to include the vulnerable adult in the process and to respect their decisions and wishes if possible. Where a vulnerable adult has been assessed as not having the capacity to make such decisions, then decisions that are in their best interests will be taken on their behalf.

How will I be involved?

You may be asked to give your view of the situation under investigation. This could be an interview organised by the police, or other professionals who have been trained in conducting investigations in line with POVA procedures.

You may be able to discuss the situation further with the vulnerable adult's social care manager, health care manager, advocate or solicitor.

If you are a relative, friend or neighbour with caring responsibilities you may be offered a carer's assessment to determine whether any additional services are needed to support you.

Where can I get support?

You can discuss the process further with the vulnerable adult's care manager, named nurse or advocate, solicitor or carer organisation, for example Age Concern.

If you are a relative, friend or neighbour with caring responsibilities you may be offered a carers' assessment to determine whether additional services are needed to support you.

What happens after the investigation?

Once the investigation has been concluded, another meeting will be called so that the relevant people involved in protecting the vulnerable adult can review the case and decide whether the allegation is proved or disproved. A further adult protection plan may be made to ensure the continued safety and wellbeing of the vulnerable adult.

There may be further action taken or changes made to the way in which care is delivered and this may be monitored through the adult protection plan. The plan may involve notifying other organisations such as the Public Guardianship Office/ Court of Protection or other legal services.

Contact details

If you would like more information please contact:

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If it is an emergency and you need to contact us outside of office hours please call our **Emergency Duty Team** on: **0800 328 4432**