



Safeguarding Policy

June 2025

St Mary's College Oscott CIO

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1. Safeguarding Statement

Safeguarding is the responsibility of the whole seminary community at St Mary's College Oscott (Oscott College).

"The Catholic Church of England and Wales, the Bishops and Religious Congregational Leaders are committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church and affirm a 'One Church' approach¹ to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk through the promotion of a sustained culture of constant vigilance."²

The seminary must be a safe environment for all those who live, work and visit the college and we recognise the moral, social and legal responsibilities we all have as a community. Special care must be taken to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults whilst remembering that everyone can be vulnerable to abuse and the misuse of power. The term 'abuse' describes a range of ways people harm someone either knowingly, or by failing to act to prevent harm,³ and this harm could be institutional, sexual, physical, emotional, material, discriminatory or through neglect.

This safeguarding policy and accompanying policies such as whistleblowing, employment policies and health and safety policies, set out how we will manage our shared safeguarding responsibilities. We provide training and regular reviews to ensure everyone is aware of how to achieve a safe living and working community that is based within our organisational values and that our policies remain legally compliant and offer best practice.

2. Responsibilities

The **Rector** is the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** and, in conjunction with the board of trustees, has overall responsibility for ensuring that Oscott College is a safe, supportive, and positive living, learning and working environment. He is responsible for the day-to-day management of the safeguarding provision, supported by the members of the senior leadership team. The College Safeguarding Noticeboard has information about how to report a safeguarding concern and who to contact.

The **Safeguarding Representative (SR)** is available for those who wish to seek advice on how this policy works in practice, or to register a safeguarding concern for them to then pass on to the Rector,

The **Safeguarding Trustee** is available for those who wish to raise a concern about the Rector.

The **Human Formation Coordinator** is responsible for the provision of safeguarding training for coordinating emotional support.

The **Whole Community**, all those who live and work at the college have responsibility to understand and adhere to the college's safeguarding policies and procedures and to promote a culture of vigilance and safeguarding.

The **Diocesan Safeguarding Department** (Archdiocese of Birmingham) will advise the SR or DSL on the appropriate next steps, and be responsible for conducting any investigation that would arise out of the reporting of a concern.

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3. What is abuse?

There are many different ways in which a person can be abused. Assumptions must not be made, but it is enough to suspect abuse to report it – please refer to appendix one 'raising concerns flowchart'.

Please find below a list of different types of abuse (Please refer to appendix four for a full description of each type of abuse).

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Emotional/Psychological abuse
- Neglect (and acts of omission)
- Self-neglect Organisational/institutional abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Modern slavery

4. What constitutes an allegation?

The term 'allegation' refers specifically to an allegation that someone has acted in such a way that fits one of the following criteria:

- Has behaved in a way that has caused harm to a child or adult at risk/person who is vulnerable.
- Has possibly committed a criminal offence against a child or adult at risk/person who is vulnerable.
- Has behaved or behaves towards a child or adult at risk/person who is vulnerable in a way that indicates they could pose a risk of harm to children or adults at risk/people who are vulnerable.

5. Reporting Concerns

The seminary wants everyone to feel able to appropriately raise concerns about any potential safeguarding issue. If you have any safeguarding concerns, please contact either our Safeguarding Representative or in their absence the College Rector. Concerns should be raised as soon as practicable, and without delay or without trying to assess that harm or risk may exist.

Safeguarding Representative (SR): safeguarding@oscott.org

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): The College Rector, Canon Michael Dolman
michael.dolman@oscott.org 0121 321 5035

Safeguarding Trustee: safeguardingtrustee@oscott.org

Diocesan Safeguarding Team: safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk 0121 230 6240

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If a seminarian raises a safeguarding concern whilst on their placement – the seminarian should firstly follow the placement's safeguarding policy and reporting procedures. He should also inform the Rector.

Anyone wishing to raise a safeguarding concern at the college should first contact the **Safeguarding Representative** (or the DSL if the SR is not available). When a safeguarding concern is raised which relates to any resident or teaching priest, staff member, external lecturer, seminarian or contractor, and is brought to the attention of the College by any internal or external body, organisation or individual, it is the responsibility of the **Safeguarding Representative** to conduct an initial assessment of the risk, and then record the concern on the register, and notify the **DSL**. If necessary, the **DSL** will notify the **Diocesan Safeguarding Team**, and refer to statutory agencies as appropriate. The **Diocesan Safeguarding Team** will be responsible for undertaking any internal investigation required.

If the concern is referred to a statutory agency the internal investigation is put on hold and it is the responsibility of that agency to conduct the investigation and report recommendations, in line with their protocols and working practices. The concern will be logged by the **Safeguarding Representative**. The **DSL** will inform the **Diocesan safeguarding team** within 24hrs to ensure transparency and openness. Where the concern is either reported to a statutory agency and that agency takes no further action, or where reporting to a statutory agency is not required, it will be the responsibility of the **Diocesan safeguarding team** to schedule and conduct the initial internal investigations, taking statements and reporting all outcomes to the College Rector, or if appropriate, report outcomes to the **Safeguarding trustee**, if the concern relates to the College Rector. All initial internal investigations must be completed within 14 days of the safeguarding concern being received.

If the safeguarding concern is brought against an employed staff member, then the College's Human Resources procedures and policies, outlined within the employee handbook, will be followed. If the safeguarding concern is brought against a Formation staff member or resident or teaching priest, then appropriate action will be managed by the Rector. If the safeguarding concern is brought against a Seminarian, then appropriate action will be managed by the Rector. If the safeguarding concern is brought against an external lecturing staff member, then appropriate action will be managed by the College Rector in line with their code of conduct.

Safeguarding concerns raised against the Rector are to be reported to the Chair of Trustees or to the Trustee responsible for safeguarding. The Chair of Trustees and/or the Trustee responsible for safeguarding can request support from the Diocesan Safeguarding team, completing all investigations within the timelines noted above.

6. Safeguarding Training

The safeguarding learning programme, utilized at Oscott College is designed to include the eight standards within the CSSA (Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency) safeguarding standards. Details of this are given in the Academic Programme Handbook. The programme aims to assist

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participants to develop a culture of safeguarding and to see safeguarding as an integral part of their everyday ministry. It has been designed to help raise awareness of the issues surrounding the protection of children and vulnerable adults and help future priests and therefore Church leaders to develop leadership skills to create safer environments within the Church.

Safeguarding training for the men in formation for the permanent diaconate is provided by the Human Formation and details are set within the diaconate course descriptors.

All employees at St Mary's College will attend at least one annual safeguarding briefing. This includes an introduction to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults as well as safeguarding reporting procedures.

7. Record Keeping

The safeguarding training record for seminarians and men in formation for the diaconate is kept on SMILE (St Mary's Interactive Learning Environment, the College Moodle site). A hard copy of the training record is also kept in each of the seminarian's personal file, along with any safeguarding concerns. When a seminarian leaves the seminary, a copy of the training records, certificates, and any safeguarding concerns are held within the Rectors archive and kept in accordance with the seminarian privacy notice. When a staff member leaves the seminary's employment their safeguarding training record will be stored within their personal file and managed in line with the employee's privacy notice.

The Rector's office maintains up to date copies of DBS (Disclosure and Barring Services) checks for all seminarians and resident clergy (valid for 3 years). The Rector's Office provides each seminarian with an identity card at the beginning of each academic year which states that the seminarian is in good standing with the seminary, that he has completed his safeguarding training and that he has a current DBS certificate.

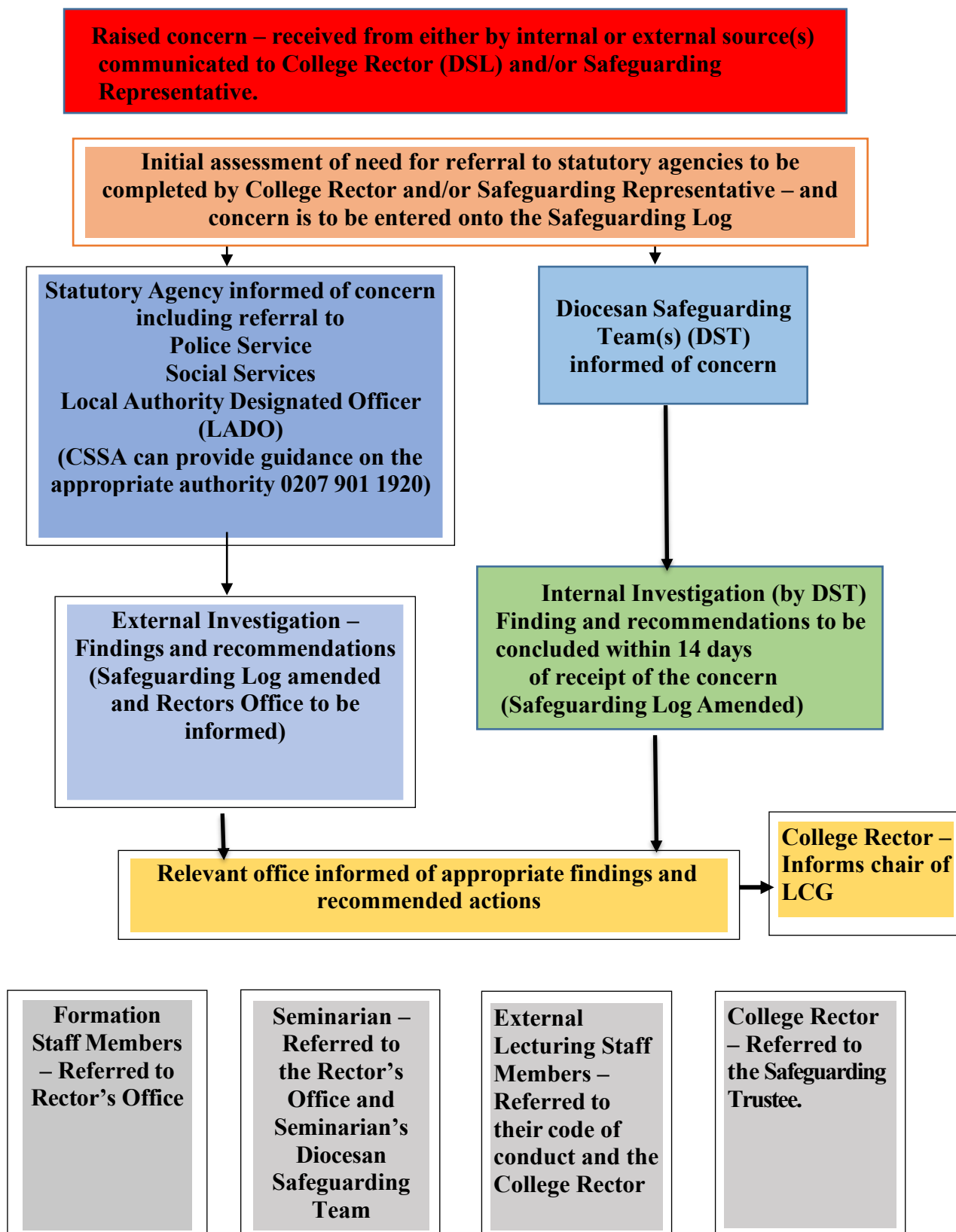
The Rector's office is also responsible for obtaining and retaining copies of all Celebrets, for visiting priests and permanent deacons, from outside the Archdiocese of Birmingham, in whatever capacity. These celebrets confirm that the clergyman concerned is in good standing with their Bishop, and is up to date with safeguarding training.

8. Communication of this Policy

The policy is accessible on the College website, SMILE (St Mary's Interactive Learning Environment, the College VLE site) and VWV(St Mary's policy platform).

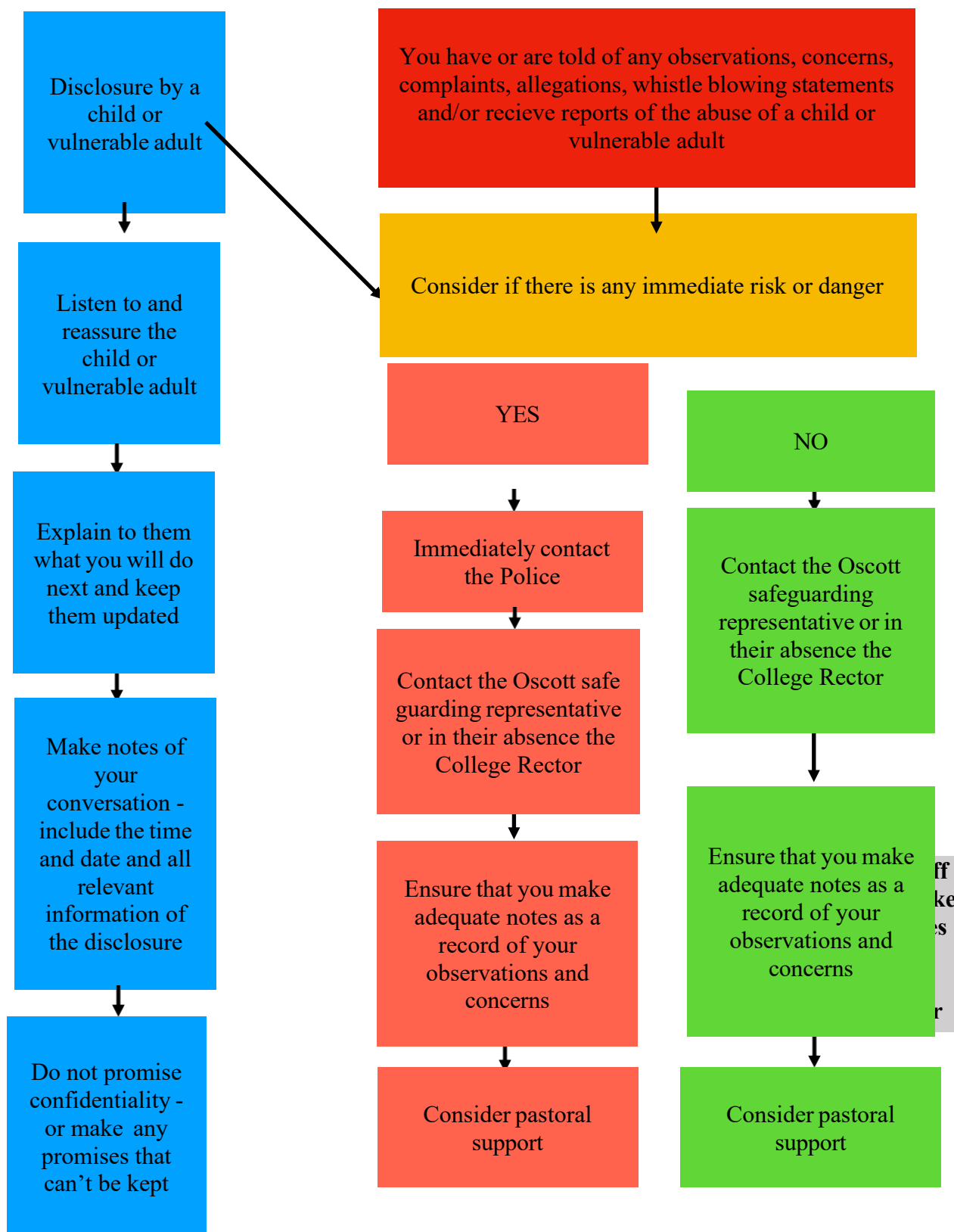
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Appendix One: Raising Safeguarding Concerns – Flowchart



Please note that ongoing emotional support will be offer to all those involved with any safeguarding concern.

Appendix Two: Guide to responding to allegations or concerns about children and vulnerable adults



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Appendix Three - (B) – Safeguarding Log – Seminary

Date of raised concern	Name of the person raising concern	Type of Abuse or Harm (see key below)	Name of person being investigated	Interview/ Statement Completed – with file number	Escalated to: Date of Escalation:	Support Offered	Review Date	Comments
1/1/19	Diocesan Safeguarding Team	AP	Harry Adams	Interview and Statement completed on the 2/1/19 File Nos 001	WMP – Safeguarding Team 2/1/19 Via Phone call Diocesan Safeguarding Team 2/1/19 Via Egress Email	121 Counselling - Human Formation Team Arranged for 4/1/19	1/2/19	WMP – Name of contact DC Smith – 1789 Rector informed 1/1/19 File notes send to seminarian file 3/9/19

Key:

SA: Sex Abuse

HSA: Historic Sex Abuse

CP: Child Protection

IA: Institutional Abuse

SH: Self Harm

DA: Domestic Abuse

FA: Financial Abuse

NE: Neglect

A/C E: Adult/ Child Exploitation

OL: Online Abuse

AP: Abuse of Power

PA: Physical Abuse

BH: Bullying and/or harassment

DA: Discriminatory Abuse

G/EA: Gas lighting/Emotional Abuse

RA: Racial Abuse

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Appendix Four: What is abuse – types and definitions (Safeguarding Adults and Executive Board 2023)

Physical abuse

This includes hitting, slapping, pinching, pushing, misuse of medication and inappropriate holding or restraint. It may also include inappropriate sanctions or punishment and rough handling.

Possible indicators:

History of unexplained falls

Unexplained bruising in well protected or soft parts of the body e.g. ears or buttocks

Multiple bruising in different stages of healing

Unexplained burns – unusual location or type

Unexplained fractures

Unexplained lacerations or abrasions

Slap, kick punch or finger marks

Injury shape similar to an object

Untreated medical problems

Weight loss due to malnutrition or dehydration

Sexual abuse

Examples: rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, sexual acts or indecent exposure to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into.

Possible indicators:

Sudden change in behaviour

Sudden onset of confusion

Incontinence

Withdrawal

Overt sexual behaviour/language by the adult

Self-inflicted injury

Disturbed sleep pattern/poor concentration

Difficulty in walking

Torn, stained underwear

'Love bites'

Pain/itching/bleeding or bruising in genital area

Sexually transmitted disease/urinary tract/vaginal infection

Bruising to upper arms and thighs

Frequent vaginal and urinary tract infection

Severe upset or agitation when bathing

Pregnancy in a person who is unable to consent

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People find sexual abuse particularly difficult to speak about. Patience and empathy is essential.

Financial abuse

Examples: fraud, theft, taking property without permission, assuming ownership of money or items, scamming (which can be in person, by letter, phone and internet), coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs including the writing of or changing a Will, and misuse of benefits. Financial abuse can involve small and large amounts of money or value of property.

Possible indicators:

Sudden inability to pay bills

Sudden debt

Unexplained or unusual patterns of cash withdrawal from an account

Lack of belongings that the adult can clearly afford

Resistance by family to give explanation for unusual financial activity

Extraordinary interest by family in an adult's assets

Purchase of items that the adult would not usually buy or need

Personal items going missing

The main interest shown by a family member is financial and not the in relation to the care of the adult

Find out ways in which financial abuse can be prevented from occurring by using the SSASPB Financial Abuse (1018 KB) guidance.

Discriminatory abuse

Examples: discriminatory abuse is often on the grounds of age, race, gender or gender identity, culture, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

Other examples of abuse include:

Hate crime (acts of violence or hostility directed at people because of who they are or who someone thinks they are)

'Mate crime' (sometimes used to describe a crime committed against an adult by someone who has befriended them)

Derogatory comments

Harassment

Being made to move to a different resource/service based upon an adult's age

Being denied medical treatment on grounds of age or mental health

Emotional/Psychological abuse

Examples: threats of harm or abandonment, blackmail, deprivation of contact, humiliation and ridicule, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, isolation, cyber bullying, shouting and swearing, unreasonable support of services or support networks, denial of cultural or religious needs, denial of access to the development of social skills.

Possible indicators:

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Change in appetite, weight loss or gain
Low self esteem
Upset and tearfulness
Confusion and agitation
Insomnia
Avoiding eye contact, withdrawal
Isolation, unable to make contact
Distress
Poor hygiene, resulting from restricted access to facilities
Uncharacteristic behaviour

Neglect (and acts of omission)

Examples: ignoring medical, emotional or physical needs; failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services; withholding the necessities of life including medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Possible indicators:

Poor environmental conditions
Inadequate heating and lighting
Poor physical condition of the adult
Malnutrition
Clothing is ill-fitting, unclean or in poor condition
Isolation of the adult
Withdrawal, unhappiness or change in demeanour
Carer's reluctance to engage with professionals
Carers not allowing contact by professionals with the adult

Self-neglect

Examples: self-neglect can sometimes be as a result of a person's choice of lifestyle and covers a wide range of behaviour including neglect to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and can include hoarding when it becomes extreme (including animal hoarding). In these circumstances there is no abuser.

Possible indicators:

Living in grossly unsanitary conditions
Suffering from untreated illness or disease/condition
Suffering from over or under eating to the extent that if untreated the adult's physical or mental health could be impaired
Creating a hazardous situation that would likely cause serious physical harm to the adult or cause substantial loss of assets

Organisational/Institutional abuse

Examples: Neglect, poor practice within an institution such as a care home or hospital and also poor practice in relation to care provided in the adult's own home. This can be only one

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incident or a series of incidents which are neglect or poor practice as a result in organisations poor policies, procedures and practice.

It is important not to jump to the wrong conclusions too quickly but the following list may be possible indicators of institutional abuse:

No flexibility in bedtime routine and/or deliberate waking
People left on a commode or toilet for long periods of time
Inappropriate care of possessions, clothing and living area
Lack of personal clothes and belongings
Un-homely or stark living environments
Deprived environmental conditions and lack of stimulation
Inappropriate use of medical procedures such as enemas, catheterisation
Batch care - lack of individual care programmes
Illegal confinement or restrictions
Inappropriate use of power or control
People referred to, or spoken to with disrespect.
Inflexible services based on convenience of the provider rather than the person receiving services
Inappropriate physical intervention
Service user removed from the home or establishment, without discussion with other appropriate people or agencies because staff are unable to manage the behaviour

Domestic abuse

The Home Office definition of domestic abuse (2013):

Incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality
Includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence; Female Genital Mutilation; forced marriage
Includes anyone aged 16 or over
Many people think that domestic abuse is about intimate partners, but it is clear that other family members are included and that much safeguarding work that occurs at home is, in fact is concerned with domestic abuse.

Modern slavery

Modern slavery includes slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.

Traffickers are those who arrange for the people to move from place to place. It includes moving within the UK and doesn't have to be from abroad. You may often hear the words 'harvesters' or gardeners' used in relation to the victims of modern slavery being made to grow and look after cannabis farms. Very often the traffickers trick victims into believing that they are arranging for them to have a better life and genuine employment.
If you think that someone is the victim of Modern Slavery ring the Modern Slavery National Helpline on 08000 121 700.