Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse

...taking care to make a difference
Large Print or other format/medium are available on request please telephone
01545 574000
or Minicom
01545 574001
or Email
contact-socservs@ceredigion.gov.uk

Contact Centre Office Hours:
Monday – Thursday: 8.45 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.
Friday: 8.45 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.

You can find information about services provided by Ceredigion County Council on our website at:
www.ceredigion.gov.uk

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Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse

All adults have a right to feel safe from abuse by other people. However some people are more vulnerable than others.

How do you define Vulnerable Adults?

A Vulnerable Adult is a person over 18 years of age who “is or maybe 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 himself or herself or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation”.

What is Vulnerable Adult Abuse?

“Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse may take many forms, abuse can be actual or threatened abuse, it can be physical, sexual, psychological, financial or neglect”.
What do I do if I think a vulnerable adult is being abused?

The first step is to ring the Social Services Contact Centre on:

- 01545 574000  or
- Outside Office Hours on 08456 015392

or the Police on:

- 08453 302000  or
- Police Emergency Number ring: 999

What happens next?

You will be asked for details of the person that you suspect is being abused and then we will ask you for details of the alleged abuser and the type of abuse which is taking place.

What happens then?

- First of all we will check to see if the person alleged as being abused and the abuser is known to the Social Services Department or to the Police. The Social Services Team Manager and the Police will discuss the allegation.
Stranger abuse will warrant a different kind of response to the response to abuse within an ongoing relationship or care setting. This discussion is called a Strategy discussion and the main focus will be on the safety of the person alleged to be abused.

Dependent on the type of abuse and urgency of the situation both the Police Authority and Social Services will take emergency decisions and emergency actions to ensure the safety of the vulnerable person if this is required.

If the person alleged to be abused is not in danger of immediate significant harm it is likely that the Social Services Manager and Police Officer will arrange a Strategy Meeting with the relevant individuals to discuss a plan of action to investigate the alleged abuse.

At this meeting it is common practice to appoint a Social Worker and Police Officer and occasionally a Care Standards Inspector as Investigating Officers.

What is an investigation?

The investigation may be undertaken jointly by the Social Services Department and the Police or by the Social Services Department or Police singly depending on the circumstances and the nature of the allegation.

Arrangements will be made to visit the person alleged to have been abused and the person who reported the abuse to investigate the matter further and take statements. The matter will be treated sensitively and we will seek to provide help on issues that affect the person’s ability to be independent. Our discussions will also have other areas that we will investigate.
to ensure that the person can be made as safe as possible and we will form what is called a Protection Care Plan. We will ask the person alleged to have been abused for details to enable us to ascertain the extent of the problem in order to determine the way forward in the future.

**What can you do to help?**

- **Financial Abuse**

  In the case of financial abuse if the allegation is proved we can discuss with the person ways of helping them to manage their finances and if required advise them about Lasting Powers of Attorney and arrangements that can be put in place to help them to manage their finances in a safe manner.

- **Physical or Psychological Abuse**

  If the abuse is physical or psychological we will discuss ways of ensuring their safety and give them choices where possible to ensure the outcome is always focused on the service users safety from abuse and significant harm.

- **Support available**

  In some cases additional support can be provided to help when a family member may be suffering from ill health himself or herself and find difficulty coping, which may have led to the alleged abuse.

  There is never any excuse for abuse but occasionally both the abuser and abused may both be suffering from ill health and the Social Services Department has a duty to assess what support is required.
The outcome we seek is the safety of vulnerable people to enable them to have autonomy, choice and control over their own lives but protecting their safety at all times and respecting their right to independence.

Where it is necessary to take legal action to ensure a persons safety we will not hesitate to undertake this action singly or jointly with the Police.

Remember if you are being abused or you suspect that someone else is being abused you have a duty to report this, nobody deserves to be abused and no one has the right to abuse a vulnerable adult.

Ceredigion County Council wholeheartedly supports the principle of equality and recognises the importance of fair access and actively promotes equality of opportunity for all service users and Carers.

**Advocacy Service**

We are in the process of developing Advocacy Services for Adult Services. Where possible, we will arrange for someone to help you put your point across in your dealings with us if you are not able to do this yourself and don’t have family or friends to help you.
In relation to Adult Services, ‘Eich Dewis Chi’ offers an Advocacy service for:

- People who have Mental Health problems
- People who have a Learning Disability
- Older People with Mental Health problems and
- Vulnerable Adults

**Information Sharing and Confidentiality**

Any information that you give us will be kept safe and confidential. We will not disclose your information to anyone not involved in your care without your consent (unless we are obliged to do so by law or there are exceptional circumstances, such as your safety and/or the safety of others).

**Representations/Complaints/Comments**

If you are unhappy about any of our services, or about the way you have been treated, you should initially discuss this with the Team Manager of the Team you have had contact with. We hope that the problem can be resolved at this stage.

If however you are still unhappy, you can take the matter further by making a formal complaint. Ceredigion Social Services Department have a complaints procedure.

If you think we have done something well, you can also tell us.

For **Social Services Department** ask for ‘Are we getting it right? Do you have any Comments, Complaints or Compliments?’ leaflet.
Emergencies

If you need urgent help outside the opening times of the Contact Centre (as stated on the inside cover of this leaflet), please contact our Out of Hours Emergency Team on:

08456 015392

Other leaflets detailing the different services offered by Ceredigion Social Services are available on request from the Contact Centre. For further information please telephone:

01545 574000
We would welcome any comments you have with regard to the content and layout of this leaflet and/or the service you have received. Your views are important so that we can monitor and improve the quality as required. Please could you take time to complete the following:

Name:  ........................................................................................................
Address:  ........................................................................................................

Tel. No:  ........................................ Date:  .................

Leaflet received from:  .................................................................................

My compliment or complaint:
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(Please continue on a separate page if you need to)

Send this page to:
Social Services Department HQ, Minaeron, Vicarage Hill, Aberaeron, SA46 0DY.

Thank you for your comments