

Responding, Reporting and Recording Abuse

Responding

The way you respond to the vulnerable adult is important:

- Remain calm and try not to show any shock or disbelief.
- Listen very carefully to what you are being told.
- Demonstrate a sympathetic approach by acknowledging regret and concern that this has happened to them.
- Reassure the person by telling them that:
 - they have done the right thing by sharing the information with you;
 - you are treating the information seriously;
 - the abuse is not their fault (if the information is being shared by the 'victim').
- Be aware of the possibility of forensic evidence if the disclosure refers to a recent incident.
- Explain that you are required to share the information with your line manager, but not with other staff or service users.
- Reassure the person that any further investigation will be conducted sensitively and with their full involvement, wherever possible.
- Reassure the person that the service will take steps to support and, where appropriate, protect them in the future.
- Report the information to your line manager at the earliest opportunity.
- Make a written record of what the person has told you.
- Do not stop someone who is freely recalling significant events; allow them to share whatever is important to them.
- Do not ask questions or press the person for more details (this may be done during any subsequent investigation, so it is important to avoid unnecessary stress and repetition for the person concerned).
- Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Do not make promises you are unable to keep.
- Do not contact the alleged 'abuser' or alleged 'victim' (depending on who is sharing the information).
- Do not be judgmental (e.g. 'why didn't you try and stop them?').
- Do not break the confidentiality agreed between the person disclosing the information, yourself and your line manager. Do not talk to other

staff members or service users about the information shared with you (e.g. 'it's awful, you'll never guess what I've just been told').

Reporting

You have a duty to report if you see, hear about or suspect abuse.

- Take urgent action as appropriate to protect the vulnerable adult from any immediate danger.
- Pass on the information to a relevant manager.
- Avoid asking investigative questions or making comments about what has happened.
- Act in accordance with the vulnerable adult's wishes where possible.
- Support and reassure the vulnerable adult throughout.

Recording

Accurate and detailed recording is essential:

- Complete an appropriate referral form and/or an Adult Protection Report of Alert Form.
- Highlight if the person alleged responsible, is themselves a vulnerable adult.
- Forward the form to the appropriate Social Services team or Inspection Authority.
- Record in your establishment records that an adult protection alert has been raised.
- Consider the issues around confidentiality.
- Consider whether potentially violent situations could arise for staff involved at a later date.
- Make a note of the date, time and setting in which the allegation was made or the event was witnessed.
- Make a note of anyone else who was there at the time.
- Record what was said using the person's own words.
- Separate factual information from any opinions expressed.
- Date and sign your report.
- Use pen or ballpoint with black ink (this makes photocopying easier if necessary).
- Make sure your writing is legible.
- Remember that your report may be required as part of any legal action or disciplinary procedures.
- Keep a copy for future reference.