

Safeguarding is
Respect for my Rights



Adult Safeguarding Day 2021

safeguardingday.ie



Safeguarding is Upholding Our Rights



Safeguarding is putting measures in place to uphold our rights, to support our health and wellbeing, to reduce our risk of harm – and to empower us to protect ourselves.

Safeguarding involves ourselves, our families, services and professionals all working together to prevent adult abuse, neglect or coercive control.

Safeguarding means empowerment – that if we face challenges with our capacity, ability or independence our voices are heard and choices included.

Safeguarding also plans ahead for if we need help from others, that there is clarity on our wishes – and that these will be respected.

Adult Abuse

Adult Abuse happens when a person's rights, independence or dignity are not respected. This can be deliberate, or it can be caused by a lack of knowledge, or omission of care. However, all circumstances of not respecting a person's rights are abusive.

More than 10,000 cases of alleged abuse are reported to the HSE Safeguarding and Protection Teams each year, although the actual figure (including what is not reported, or reported to other authorities) is much higher.

Abuse can affect any adult at any stage of life but is more likely to occur at times of difficulty such as living with frailty due to age, a physical or intellectual disability, an acquired brain injury, a mental health condition, or in situations of coercive control.



Types of Abuse

Emotional and Psychological Abuse includes:

Intimidation, threats, humiliation, isolation, verbal abuse or being prevented from receiving services.

Physical Abuse includes:

Hitting, kicking, pushing, shaking, rough handling, threat of physical force, medication mismanagement.

Financial Abuse includes:

Unauthorised or improper use of a person's funds, property, pension, or pressuring a person to transfer their assets.

Sexual Abuse includes:

Sexual activity to which the person has not consented, could not consent, or felt compelled to consent to.

Organisational Abuse includes:

Inadequate care, poor communication, or systematic poor practice by an organisation.

Online Abuse includes:

Internet, email, or social media based scamming, bullying, or coercion.

Neglect

Neglect is when essentials such as food, heating, medication, or hygiene are withheld – or a person's money is not used for their own benefit. It includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failing to provide access to appropriate health and social care, or educational services.



Coercive Control

Coercive Control is making a person dependent by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of independence and regulating their everyday behaviours. It often involves multiple forms of abuse.

Discrimination

Unequal treatment, harassment or abuse of a person based on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the traveller community.

Common signs of Abuse, Neglect or Coercive Control are:

Physical

- Unexplained bruises, marks, or injuries
- Unusual weight loss
- Dirty, or unsafe living conditions
- Anxiety.

Neglect

- Poor hygiene
- Development of bedsores
- Hunger.

Financial

- Inexplicable shortage of money
- Suspicious addition of names to financial accounts
- Unexpected changes to will, or power of attorney.



REPORT IT



If you suspect that you are experiencing abuse, neglect, or coercive control or witnessing this happening to someone else – report it.

- In an immediate danger, call An Garda at 999 / 112.
- If there is mistreatment but not immediate danger, report it to the local Garda station (directory of stations at www.garda.ie), or call the Garda confidential line at 1800 666 111.
- For an ongoing safeguarding concern that support is needed with, the HSE National Safeguarding Office is at safeguarding.socialcare@hse.ie / (061) 461 358. There are nine Safeguarding and Protection Teams covering all regions in the country.
- There are also many support services and telephone helplines for abuse, neglect and coercive control which can be found online.

What you can do – Plan Ahead



The best step we can take to prevent abuse is to plan ahead our own important life decisions – and make these known to those we trust the most.

1. Enduring Power of Attorney

Appoint legal and financial decision-making powers to a person you trust so that in the event of you not being able to make such decisions in the future, you know that your choices will be respected. All adults are encouraged to put in place an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA).



2. Healthcare

Put in place an Advance Healthcare Directive. You can talk with your Doctor about making one. In it you can record your preferences including treatment approaches, surgery, medicines and resuscitation.

3. Place of Care

In the event that you became unable to live independently – make known your preferences on place of care. Would you prefer to live at home with supports, in a nursing home, or live with a family member or friend?

4. Finances

Banks and An Post are available to meet with and advise customers on safeguarding their finances, including planning of future finances.

Many 'Plan Ahead' items can be addressed by completing the Think Ahead form at hospicefoundation.ie/thinkahead – which is an initiative of the Irish Hospice Foundation.

Our Planning ahead is also better for those most important to us. It reduces the potential for stress among loved ones, and also helps healthcare professionals.

Safeguarding is all of us working together

We each need to safeguard ourselves – together with a shared understanding among our families, communities, the services we receive and professionals who help us. Public awareness needs to be backed up with appropriate laws, policies and accountability.

This leaflet has been produced to promote Adult Safeguarding Day, an initiative of Safeguarding Ireland, and supported by organisations across the health, social, financial and justice sectors in Ireland.

Our Rights - Did You Know?



Capacity and Decision Making

Nobody has authority to make decisions on a person's behalf if, due to illness or frailty, their decision-making capacity reduces. Every person is presumed to have capacity to make decisions unless proven otherwise.

Money

It is against the law to use another person's money without their consent. If someone is unable to provide consent, approval to act on their behalf must be legally secured from the Bank, State, or Post Office.

Medication

It is against the law for a family member, or carer, to change a person's medication or dosage. Changes can only be made by a qualified medical professional.

Liberty

It is against the law to lock a person into a room, or to otherwise restrict their movements (such as in a bed, or chair). If a person with dementia needs supervision, professional advice and support should be sought.

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An initiative of Safeguarding Ireland: safeguardingireland.org

Registered Charity Number (RCN): 20204851
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Financial Planning: safeguardyourmoney.ie
Think Ahead: hospicefoundation.ie/thinkahead