

Information sheet S4 – If you think someone is being mistreated

Ill or disabled people can be vulnerable to mistreatment (sometimes called 'abuse') by others, for instance: people in the local community; staff who work with them; or even people in their immediate family or social network. This sheet gives advice about what to do if you feel you are being mistreated or if you think someone else is. Unpaid carers can also be vulnerable to mistreatment and may need this advice.

■ What kind of mistreatment are we talking about?

People can be mistreated in a number of different ways which include:

- **Physical abuse:** such as hitting, pushing, shaking, not being given the right medication, and bodily neglect.
- **Emotional or psychological abuse:** such as humiliation, harassment, social isolation, threats, verbal abuse, intimidation.
- **Exploitation:** including theft, fraud, or using a vulnerable adult's property without their permission.
- **Neglect:** where a person suffers because their health or physical needs are being neglected by a care giver, or they seriously neglect themselves.
- **Sexual abuse:** sexual activity where a vulnerable adult cannot or does not give their consent, or sexual harassment.

■ What can you do?

If you think that you, or someone you know of, is being mistreated contact your local social services office or, in the case of immediate physical danger, the police.

The Care Trust is committed to responding quickly to allegations of ill treatment. This would normally involve an investigation which may include the police if a crime is suspected. Confidentiality will be respected but in rare circumstances it cannot be guaranteed.

Ill treatment can happen in a number of different ways, and can be done by a variety of people and can take place anywhere. When you contact us we will take your concerns seriously and discuss with you what may happen next.

■ Who can you contact for help and advice during office hours?

In the first instance please discuss this with your Care Manager or contact your local Social Services office (number listed on your Information Folder).

You could also contact:

The Safeguarding Adults Officer on 01670 394 400

Or visit the Northumberland County Council's web site at:

www.northumberland.gov.uk/safeguarding

■ Independent advice

You may prefer to seek independent advice you can do so from the following:

- If you feel you are being mistreated, or if you are worried that someone you know is being treated poorly you can receive independent advice by calling the Action on Elder Abuse helpline on 0808 808 8141.
- The Ann Craft Trust is a charity which acts against the abuse of people with learning disabilities. If you, or someone you know of, has a learning disability and have been hurt or need someone to talk to please ring their helpline on 0808 808 0700.
- Voice UK is a charity which supports people with learning disabilities and other vulnerable people who have experienced crime or abuse. It also supports families and carers. Their helpline number is 0845 122 8695.

■ Who can you contact for help and advice after office hours?

After hours contact: 0845 600 5252