Safeguarding & Whistleblowing Awareness Session

with Jo Hawkins

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Learning Outcomes

- Have an understanding of what Safeguarding is.
- Understand the 6 key principles within Safeguarding.
- Understand your responsibilities as a carer.
- Understand what Abuse is.
- Know about the different types and indicators of Abuse.
- Understand about the term Vulnerable adult.
- Understand what Whistleblowing is.
- Know how to raise a Concern / Make a complaint.
- Know how to respond to suspected or disclosed Abuse.
- Learn what external Sources of Advice and Information are available.

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What is Safeguarding?

- Protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
- People and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risk and experience of abuse or neglect.
- Supporting a person's wellbeing, making sure there basic needs such as security, nutrition and hydration are met.

Adult Safeguarding is about preventing & responding to concerns of abuse, harm or neglect of adults

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Who is an adult at risk?

A person aged 18 or older who:

- Has care and support needs
- Is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect
- Is unable to protect themselves from risk or experience of abuse or neglect.
- Does not recognise their own care needs or that what is happening is actually abuse.
- Is unable to access mainstream services.
- May have communication needs.
- Feels there is no one to tell their carer may be the abuser or they may physically be unable to raise the alarm.

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The Six Principles of Safeguarding

- **Empowerment**: People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions. Making them feel empowered.
- **Prevention**: It is better to act before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality**: The least intrusive actions appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection**: Support for those in the greatest need.
- **Partnership**: Local solutions through working with community services and other professionals.
- **Accountability**: Clear accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

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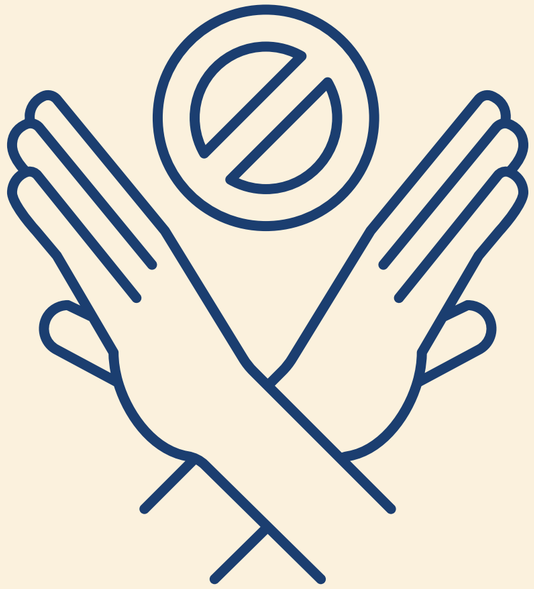
Barriers to recognising abuse?

- Lack of understanding around abuse.
- Belief in limited awareness.
- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse relate to the adult’s disability.
- Communication barriers.
- Inadequate training.
- Lack of knowledge of a person's medical conditions.
- Poor documentation / record keeping.



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Key pieces of Legislation

The Care Act 2024

Makes it the duty of local authorities to make enquiries if someone is being abused or neglected, or is at risk of abuse or neglect in their area.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005

Aim to protect and empower people who are unable to make choices for themselves.

The Human Right Act 1998

Gives specific rights to every person living in the UK, e.g. the right to live and freedom from torture and degrading treatment.

The Data Protection Act 1998 / GDPR

Regulates the way in which personal data needs to be handled and therefore protects people's data from being placed in wrong hands.

The Equality Act 2010

Protects people from discrimination and disadvantage including: race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, transgender, religion and race.

What is Abuse?

- Abuse is when someone causes you harm or distress.
- Abuse is often, but not always a crime.
- It can be perpetrated by anyone, at anytime.
- Often there is more than one type of abuse in any situation.
- It can happen anywhere and often the people who commit abuse are those taking advantage of a relationship / position of trust.
- Abuse isn't always intentional but doesn't make the impact any less.

Abuse can come in many forms, such as: physical or verbal maltreatment, injury, assault, violation, rape, unjust practices, crimes, or other types of aggression.

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Types of Abuse

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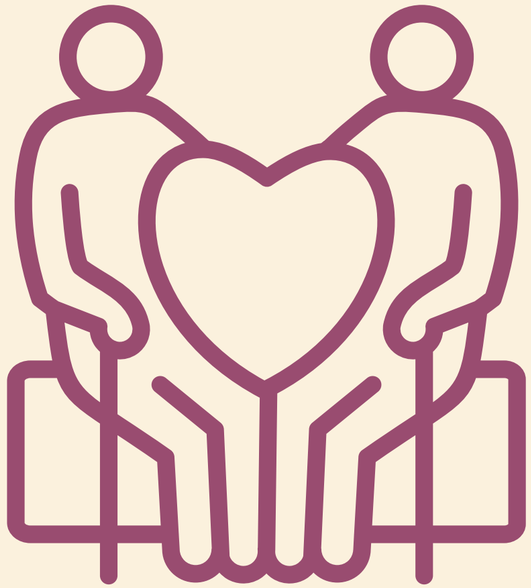
Types of Abuse and Symptoms

Types of Abuse	Signs/Indicators
PHYSICAL	Unexplained injuries, broken bones, bruises, loss of clumps of hair, bite, burn or scald marks
FINANCIAL	Bills not being paid, loss of assetts, high expenditure given living conditions, not enough food/clothes
SEXUAL	Pain, sores & bruising around inner thigh/genital areas, blood stained underwear, pain, STI's
NEGLECT	Malnutrition, Dehydration, Bedsores, Dirty clothes and bedding, incorrect administration of medication
EMOTIONAL	Anxiety, Lack of confidence, Low self-esteem, Not sleeping well
INSTITUTIONAL	Poor care standards, Rigid routines, Lack of staff learning, training, development and support
DISCRIMINATORY	Poor care which does not meet the person's needs, verbal abuse and disrespect, exclusion

How do we prevent Abuse?

- Whatever your role in the organisation, it is vital that you know the correct ways of working to safeguard adults in your care.
- You have a responsibility to promote good practice and create a safe environment where abuse is less likely to happen.
- Care, should be concentrated to the benefit of the client's individual needs not those of the staff/organisation.
- Promote independence & support people to make choices and live as independently as they can, keeping people as informed as possible. Involve them in decision making.
- Reduce hazards/risks as much as possible but support the premise that everyone has the right to make choices if they have been given sufficient information and they have the mental capacity to make that decision.
- Keep up to date with training.
- Access to QCS which has very clear and easy to understand policies and procedures on safeguarding and whistleblowing.
- The Code of Conduct states that everyone must always make sure that your actions or omissions do not harm an individual's health or wellbeing. You must never abuse, neglect, harm or exploit those who use health and care services, their carers or colleagues.



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Vulnerable Adults and The Risk of Harm

A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18+ who needs care or support and may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.
When one person holds more power, they can either support independence — or misuse that power to cause harm.
Abuse can happen anywhere, but some situations increase vulnerability.

Examples

- An individual being in their own home makes it easier for an abuser to hide their actions from others.
- Institutional Abuse is more likely to happen when standards are poor, and routines are planned to fit around a carer instead of a client. It can lead to ways of working that everyone begins to see as acceptable.
- Challenging behaviour that staff are not training or supported to deal with.
- Particular vulnerabilities in the individual such as sensory impairment, mental health issue, dementia or learning disability.

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What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of unsafe or illegal practises in the workplace. Everyone has a duty of care to raise concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour, unlawful conduct, poor practise, or behaviour to ensure outstanding standards of care are always met

Some examples of what this may include are:

- Abuse of any kind
- Unsafe Care
- Unsafe working conditions
- Inadequate training or induction for staff
- Lack of response to a reported client safety concern.
- Suspicions of fraud
- Bullying culture
- Incidents of falsification of client records
- Breaching of Data Protection.

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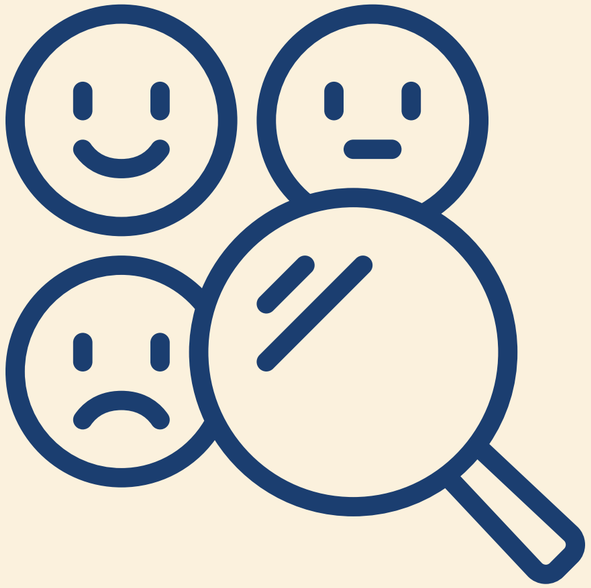
Five R's of Safeguarding

- Recognise- be aware of signs of vulnerability or abuse
- Respond- respond appropriately
- Report- Internally /engage safeguarding teams and follow procedures
- Record- note the information in a precise and accurate way
- Refer- when appropriate refer the case to statutory agencies for assessment and support



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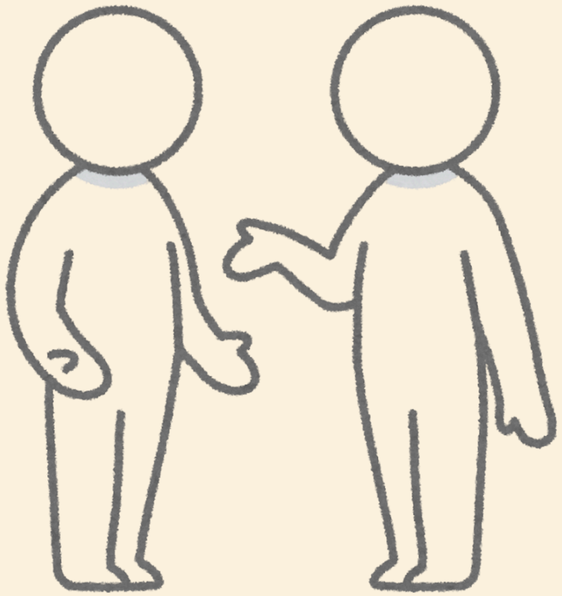
Responding to Suspected or Alleged Abuse

It is your responsibility and Duty of Care to respond to allegations or suspicions of abuse in line with All About Home Cares' Company policies and procedures:

If a client tells you they have been, or are being abused you must:

- **Reassure them that you will take what they are saying seriously.**
- **Support them to communicate in the best way for them.**
- **Tell them that you cannot keep what they are telling you a secret as you have a duty to protect them from harm.**
- **Listen carefully to what they are telling you, do not press for more details.**
- **Reassure them that they will be involved in decisions about what will happen.**
- **Remember confidentiality – Do not tell anyone who doesn't need to know.**
- **Do not be judgemental, ask leading questions or jump to conclusions.**
- **Never contact the alleged abuser directly.**



You should record what the person tells you, using their own words where possible to ensure that it is non-biased, and you do not forget any details. The report should be factual and not contain your views or emotions.

The report should be signed and dated, and your manager contacted immediately.

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Scenarios

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How to raise a concern / make a complaint

- **Stage 1:** If anyone has a concern about a risk, malpractice, or wrongdoing at work, this should always be raised first to your line manager.

- **Stage 2:** If you felt that you were unable to raise the concern to your line manager, or the concern relates to your manager, or you had raised the concern and no action had been taken, you can escalate your concern to the company Directors.

- **Stage 3:** If you felt that the manager has not handled your concerns appropriately you can report your concerns directly to **Adult Social Services on 03000 416161** or the **Care Quality Commission on 03000 616161**. They will not disclose your identity without your consent.

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Reporting procedure for carers

Once a concern has been raised, the registered manager will then decide the nature of the investigation into the concerns raised, including, where appropriate the involvement of other multi-disciplinary boards such as Adult Social Services and the Police.

Most concerns can be dealt with internally and ‘nipped in the bud’ before escalating.

Those that are more serious will require a Safeguarding Alert to be completed and sent to the Safeguarding Team at Adult Social Services, they will then start their own investigations of any allegations which may also include informing the Police and Police involvement.

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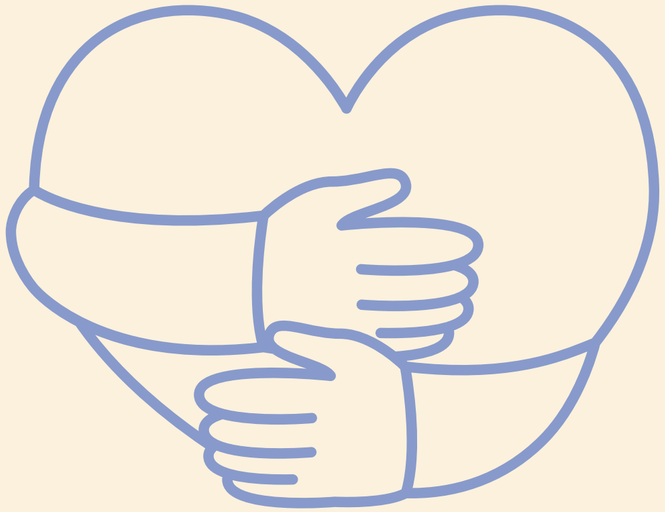
Capacity and Consent

- If a person lacks capacity to give consent or understand they are being abused, we have to apply the principles of the mental capacity act 2005.
- MCA assessments would be carried out for specific decisions needing to be made.
- Adults must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established, they lack capacity, anything done for that adult must be done in their best interest.
- Adults have the right to make their own decisions even if you feel the decision they have made is unwise.
- Any actions taken in the best interest of the person must be the least restrictive to their basic rights of freedom.



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External Sources of Advice and Information

There are some good external sources which offer further information and advice about safeguarding and Whistleblowing.

These include:

- Professional Bodies e.g., Royal College of Nursing
- Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)
- Adult Social Services / KCC
- Care Quality Commission
- Hourglass – provide confidential support around safeguarding and whistleblowing via phone, or text.
  Telephone: 0808 808 8141 Text: 07860 052906

Care Quality Commission

scie social care institute for excellence

Hourglass
Safer ageing · Stopping abuse

NHS
Kent and Medway
NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust

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How would you now rate your understanding of safeguarding & Whistleblowing on a scale of 1-10?

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