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# Sibs safeguarding adults at risk policy

## Definitions of adults at risk

Sibs recognises that there are different definitions of the term ‘adult at risk’ in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Please see Appendix 1 for these definitions.

## What is abuse?

‘Abuse’ in this context refers to the mistreatment of a person. Abuse can happen in many different forms.

## Who might abuse?

Some known to the person – a family member, spouse, friend, paid carer or staff, volunteer, religious leader, teacher, professional.

Someone not known to the person – a member of the public, visitor, bank staff.

## Where might abuse happen?

In the person’s own home, in the home of a friend or family member, place of work or volunteering, day service, care home, hospital, college, university, or in any public place.

## Types of abuse and possible signs

Remember:

* This list is not exhaustive – you may come across other types of mistreatment
* Several types of abuse may happen at once
* Possible signs are not necessarily hard evidence that abuse is happening, but they are an indication that further investigation needs to take place

**Physical abuse** – for example, hitting, kicking, smacking, slapping, hair-pulling, pushing, rough handling, scalding or burning, inappropriate use of restraint, misuse of medication (e.g. over-sedation), genital mutilation, forced feeding or deliberate withholding of food, forced confinement or isolation, making someone deliberately physically uncomfortable (e.g. removing jumper and opening a window).  
  
Possible signs of physical abuse: unexplained injuries; injuries that are inconsistent with an account of what happened; injuries that are inconsistent with the person’s lifestyle; injuries not followed up/ignored; frequent changes of GP; changes in weight or appearance; insomnia; changes in behaviour such as becoming withdrawn, anxious or angry; changes in behaviour around a particular person or in particular situations.

**Sexual abuse** – for example, rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, indecent exposure, sexual photography, inappropriate looking or touching, forcing someone to look at pornography or witness sexual acts, sexual teasing, harassment or innuendo, pressuring someone to consent to sexual acts, or carrying out sexual acts when someone cannot consent

Possible signs of sexual abuse: bruising; signs of sexually transmitted infections such as pain, itching, bleeding or discharge; unusual difficulty walking or sitting; new incontinence not related to any medical diagnosis; reluctance or fear of receiving help with personal care; unusual changes in sexual behaviour or attitude; unusual changes in sexually explicit language; insomnia; changes in behaviour such as becoming withdrawn, anxious or angry; changes in behaviour around a particular person or in particular situations.

**Psychological/emotional abuse** – for example, removing walking stick or frame, removing communication aids, intentionally leaving someone unattended when they need assistance, control, threats, belittling, intimidation, humiliation, over-protection, coercion, harassment, cyber bullying, restricting personal choice or opinion, refusing to respect privacy, deprivation of contact/refusing visitors, verbal abuse, or the use of infantilising language

Possible signs of emotional abuse: low self-esteem and self-depreciating language; tearfulness; changes in weight or appearance; insomnia; changes in behaviour such as becoming withdrawn, anxious or angry; changes in behaviour around a particular person or in particular situations.

**Financial and material abuse** – for example, not allowing someone access to their own money or possessions, using their money or possessions for the wrong purposes (e.g. unauthorised use of a car; moving into someone’s home without agreement), pressuring someone into spending their money in a certain way (e.g. take out a loan, sign a will, hand over inheritance), fraud, scamming (e.g. telephone, online, on the doorstep), rogue traders.

Possible signs of financial and material abuse: signs of unpaid bills, credit card debt, insufficient food in the house, repeated and unnecessary repairs on a house; personal possessions missing; unexplained lack of money; unexplained withdrawals from bank account; person managing the affairs fails to provide receipts or evidence of spending and/or is evasive when discussing finances.

**Neglect** – not providing or allowing access to food, heating, clothing, appropriate housing, personal care, medical care, social life and stimulating activity. Not appropriately maintaining any of these needs.

Possible signs of neglect: changes in weight; untreated injuries or health conditions; inadequate clothing (for example, no coat in winter); pressure sores; poorly maintained environment; poor personal hygiene.

**Self-neglect** – this is a lack of self-care so extreme that it affects personal health and safety. Examples of self-neglect include hoarding, not maintaining living space, ignoring health needs such as having appropriate food and heating, not attending to personal hygiene, not accessing appropriate medical care when needed.

Possible signs of self-neglect: living in dirty conditions, neglecting house hold maintenance, very poor personal hygiene, lack of appropriate food, heating and clothing, hoarding.

**Modern slavery –** exploitation, human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage - being coerced into debt then ‘working’ to repay that when they will never realistically be able to, forced domestic servitude.

Possible signs of modern slavery: living in overcrowded and unkempt conditions; isolation and lack of contact with community; appearing malnourished or withdrawn; unkempt clothing and poor personal hygiene; always accompanied by another person they seem fearful of; lack of personal documents or identification; fear of authorities and unwillingness to disclose information.

**Domestic abuse** – this is any type of abuse which happens within an intimate personal relationship or family setting. Domestic abuse often includes control, coercion and threatening behaviour. **Forced marriage** is a type of domestic abuse wherea person is pressured, coerced or forced to marry, or they don’t have the capacity to consent to marry. Forced marriage is a crime in the UK.

**Discriminatory abuse** – this is any type of abuse that is carried out on the basis or perceived basis of a particular characteristic, such as age, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation, race.

**Institutional abuse** – this is any type of abuse and repeated poor practice that happens within an organisation.

It is also important to be aware of **radicalisation**. This is the process of an individual adopting extreme views, whether religious, political or social. This can result in a person carrying out acts of terrorism. Individuals may be targeted by extremist groups, and groomed and recruited over a period of time. The government has released guidance (‘[Prevent Duty’](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance)) for authorities in England, Wales and Scotland on preventing radicalisation and countering terrorism. There is no equivalent guidance in Norther Ireland.

Abuse, harm and neglect of adults at risk may be defined differently in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Some types of abuse are also criminal offences. Please see Appendix 2 for further resources.

## Policy statement

* Sibs is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of adults at risk.
* Sibs believes that safeguarding adults at risk is everyone’s responsibility. It is a responsibility present in every aspect of our work with adults.
* Sibs believes that adults at risk should be valued as individuals, be treated with dignity and respect, be cared for and be safe.
* Sibs is fully committed to promoting the welfare and safety of all who come into contact with its staff and volunteers, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religious belief, sex or sexual orientation – their protection from harm is a key priority for Sibs.

### Sibs will ensure that it’s staff and volunteers:

* Have a full understanding of adults at risk and how to recognise abuse
* Follow the adults at risk safeguarding procedure
* Ensure that adult siblings and others who are concerned about abuse of adults at risk know what safeguarding action to take and that they are sent the information on our safeguarding adults page <https://www.sibs.org.uk/support-for-adult-siblings/safeguarding-concerns/>

### In working with other agencies Sibs will:

* Work in partnership in order to protect adults at risk
* Work towards a professional culture of openness and co-operation. All staff and volunteers are made aware of the responsibilities appropriate to their roles and those of others.

## Where this policy applies in Sibs

* At Sibs workshops, conferences and other events
* On the Sibs telephone and email helpline
* In Sibs work with SibsNetworkUK group facilitators
* In any other Sibs work

## People to whom this policy applies

* All Sibs paid staff (salaried and freelance)
* Sibs trustees
* Sibs volunteers

## Roles

A named Trustee should take responsibility for leading on safeguarding issues

* The Trustee board will ensure that the roles outlined in this section are being undertaken in accordance with these procedures.
* The Trustee board will ensure that an appropriate safeguarding induction, support and training programme is in place and implemented.
* The Trustee board will ensure that recruitment procedures safeguard the welfare of any adults at risk and are implemented.

Clare Kassa\*, CEO of Sibs is the designated safeguarding lead. She will ensure that:

* The safeguarding policy is implemented and adhered to at all times.
* Sibs is up to date with all relevant legislation.
* Liaison is carried out with local authorities as and when necessary.
* Appropriate training and support is arranged for all staff in contact with adults.
* Support is provided to workers during and after incidents involving safeguarding and referrals to social care or the police.
* Sibs chair of trustees, Jackie Howes (Vice-Chair), is the safeguarding lead on the board of trustees.

All Sibs workers are responsible for:

* Adhering to the policies in this document
* Reporting any incidents or concerns to the CEO
* Reporting concerns in other settings e.g. local authorities to the person responsible for safeguarding
* Following the Sibs procedure for acting on concerns
* Discussing safeguarding issues and best practice in one to one sessions with their manager
* Attending induction and ongoing training in safeguarding.

*\*Contact Clare:* [*clare@sibs.org.uk*](mailto:clare@sibs.org.uk)

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# Appendix 1

Definitions of ‘adult at risk’:

## England

*“(a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),*

*(b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and*

*(c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.”*

As defined in the [Care Act 2014](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/part/1/crossheading/safeguarding-adults-at-risk-of-abuse-or-neglect), England.

## Wales

*“(a) is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect,*

*(b) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and*

*(c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.”*

As defined in the [Social Services and Well-being Act 2014](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/part/7), Wales

## Scotland

*“(1) “Adults at risk” are adults who—*

*(a) are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests,*

*(b) are at risk of harm, and*

*(c) because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.*

*(2)An adult is at risk of harm for the purposes of subsection (1) if—*

*(a) another person's conduct is causing (or is likely to cause) the adult to be harmed, or*

*(b) the adult is engaging (or is likely to engage) in conduct which causes (or is likely to cause) self-harm.”*

As defined in the [Adult Support and Protection Act 2007](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2007/10/contents), Scotland.

Please note: In Scotland, a child legally becomes an adult when they are 16 years old. Statutory guidance which supports the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, includes all children and young people up to the age of 18 years old. Where a concern is raised about a 16 or 17 year-old, the relevant agencies involved will need to consider which legislation to follow given the age and the circumstances of the person at risk.

## Northern Ireland

*“An ‘Adult at risk of harm’ is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:*

1. *personal characteristics*

*AND/OR*

*b) life circumstances*

*Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain. Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.”*

In Northern Ireland, there is no specific legislation that underpins adult safeguarding. The above definition is taken from [*Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership*](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/adult-safeguarding-policy.pdf)*,* a policy published in 2015 jointly produced byThe Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ).

# Appendix 2

Definitions of ‘abuse’:

## England

Refer to [*Ann Craft Trust*](https://www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/types-of-harm/)for descriptions of abuse and neglect that relate to the Care Act 2014, and other types of harm that are not covered by the act but that relate to safeguarding.

## Wales

Refer to pages 7 – 9 of [*Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Working Together to Safeguard People Volume I – Introduction and Overview*](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/working-together-to-safeguard-people-volume-i-introduction-and-overview.pdf) for definitions and examples of abuse and neglect.

## Scotland

Refer to [*Act Against Harm*](http://www.actagainstharm.org/what-is-harm) for descriptions of financial, physical, psychological and sexual harm, and neglect (including self-neglect) that relate to the Adult Support and Protection Act 2007.

## Northern Ireland

Refer to pages 11-15 of [*Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership*](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/adult-safeguarding-policy.pdf)*,* for definitions of harm, abuse, and related terminology.

Note that the policy does not include self-harm or self-neglect within the definition of an ‘adult in need of protection’, and these cases would be considered on an individual basis by the Health and Social Care Board.

In Northern Ireland, there is no specific legislation that underpins adult safeguarding. [*Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership*](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/adult-safeguarding-policy.pdf)*,* isa policy published in 2015 jointly produced byThe Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ).