



Protection of Vulnerable Adults

When an allegation has been made against you
For staff and care workers

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When an Allegation Has Been Made Against You?

All Protection of Vulnerable Adults Teams (POVA) work to ensure that all vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and neglect and when a referral is received, it may be necessary to take action to keep individuals safe from further actual harm or risk of harm. Social Services have a duty to respond to all the concerns that it receives if a vulnerable adult may be at risk.

An allegation may have been raised that in your capacity as a paid worker, you may have hurt or placed a vulnerable adult at risk. This could be for a number of reasons, including acts of omission, deliberate acts, or non-intentional acts.

Who may be a vulnerable adult?

The Wales Policy defines a vulnerable adult as:

"A person who is 18 years of age or over, and who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation."

Vulnerable adults may include people with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people and disabled people. Their situation may be complicated by additional factors such as physical frailty, chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, lack of mental capacity, social and emotional problems, poverty homelessness or substance misuse.

Confidentiality

When an allegation is made, there will be information that we may need to share with others such as the police or people who monitor the quality of registered services. We take care to ensure that this information is only shared with those people involved in the process.

What happens when a concern is raised?

When an allegation is made, a decision will be made if immediate action is necessary to safeguard the vulnerable adult. As much information as possible will be gathered and this information may need to be shared with other agencies such as the police or organisations who monitor the quality of registered services. This information will only be shared with those people involved in the POVA process.

A Designated Lead Manager will co-ordinate the processes set out in the Wales Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults may include a strategy meeting for all parties involved with the vulnerable adult to discuss the allegation and decide if any investigations or actions are required. You would not be invited to attend this meeting.

An adult protection plan may be written to explain to those involved what the concerns are and to take steps to keep the vulnerable adult safe from further abuse or neglect.

If an investigation is required the meeting will discuss the issues to be explored. The investigation may be carried out by the police, health worker or social care worker. If it is decided that this is a criminal matter, a police investigation would take precedence and this may result in a delay.

All efforts will be made to include the vulnerable adult in the process and to respect their decisions and wishes if possible. Where a vulnerable adult has been assessed as not having the capacity to make such decisions, then decisions that are in their best interests will be taken on their behalf.

How will I be involved?

As an employee of a care service, you may be asked to work in a different place or not to come into work while the POVA process is followed and any investigation takes place. This is to protect the vulnerable adult but also offers you some protection from being placed in a difficult position while detailed questions are being asked about the allegation or issue of concern. This will also ensure the service carries out its duty of care to protect all vulnerable adults until the situation is resolved. This is called suspension and is without prejudice.

In some circumstances you may be asked to attend a different setting to work for the duration of the placement.

Your employer will use its own employment policies to ensure that you have the opportunity to be supported, to keep you informed of developments, and have enough notice to arrange for someone to support you when you are interviewed or attend any meetings.

You may be asked to give your view of the situation under investigation. This could be an interview organised by the police, or other professionals who have been trained in conducting investigations in line with POVA procedures.

Employees can get further support from their personnel or human resources department, trade union representative or professional organisation, Citizens Advice Bureau or solicitor.

What happens after the investigation?

Once the investigation has been concluded, another meeting will be called so that the relevant people involved in protecting the vulnerable adult can review the case and decide whether the allegation is proved or disproved. A further adult protection plan may be made to ensure the continued safety and wellbeing of the vulnerable adult.

There may be further action taken or changes made to the way in which care is delivered and this may be monitored through the adult protection plan. The plan may involve notifying other organisations such as the Public Guardianship Office/ Court of Protection or other legal services.

As a paid employee, depending on the outcome of the investigation, disciplinary procedures might be followed. If the allegations or concerns about you are proved you may be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service who will evaluate all the information raised during the investigation and will consider your suitability to continue working with vulnerable adults.

You will continue to be supported by your relevant HR/personnel department at this time and you will be informed of the outcome of the adult protection case conference.

Contact details

If you wish to discuss the content of this leaflet further, you could contact a manager within your own organisation or you can contact the Protection Of Vulnerable Adult (POVA) Team on:

Blaenau Gwent:

Tel: 01495 315700

Email: info@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Fax: 01495 315265

Minicom: 01495 355959

Caerphilly:

Tel: 0808 100 2500

Email: asdit@caerphilly.gov.uk

Fax: 01443 873627

Monmouthshire:

Tel: 01291 638928

Email: monpovaduty@monmouthshire.gcsx.gov.uk

Newport:

Tel: 01633 656656

Email: pova.team@newport.gov.uk

Torfaen:

Tel: 01495 762200

Email: socialcarecalltorfaen@torfaen.gov.uk

Fax: 01495 766686

If it is an emergency and you need to contact us outside of office hours please call our **Emergency Duty Team** on: **0800 328 4432**