



Adult Support and Protection Information for Carers



Why do I need to know about ASP?

All carers and the roles they perform are different. You could be a carer for a short time while someone recovers from an injury or illness or it could be a lifelong role. Carers support family, partners or friends in need of help because they are ill, frail or have a disability.



Carers are often in a prime position to identify the signs of harm or potential harm. Therefore, it is vital that carers understand what may be considered harm

to someone and seek support early if they are aware of any risk of harm, so that support can be provided to everyone involved. As part of this, all agencies have a responsibility to work in partnership with carers to ensure they know where to access appropriate supports when required.

What is harm?

Harm can happen anywhere. It can happen at home, in the community, in a residential or nursing home or in a hospital. There are different types of harm, which include:

- Physical harm - being hurt or harmed either deliberately or through rough, careless or thoughtless behaviour.



- Emotional harm or bullying - being humiliated or put down or made to feel anxious or frightened.

- Financial harm - someone taking another person's money or using it in a way they don't want.

- Neglect - someone not being given the things they need to feel safe and comfortable or not getting the care or treatment they need.

Sexual harm - Someone being made to have sexual contact that they don't want.

Anyone can be vulnerable to harm at some time in their life. The person who is responsible for the harm is often well known to the person harmed. They could be:

- A paid carer or volunteer
- A health worker, social care or other worker
- A relative, friend or neighbour
- Another resident of service user
- An occasional visitor or someone who is providing a service
- Someone who deliberately exploits vulnerable people

What can I do if I suspect someone is harming the person I care for?

Sometimes, we may think that when things happen outside our own family situations, this is none of our business. However, we all have a responsibility to keep each other safe. This in turn, can help to keep our wider communities stay safe. You may have witnessed someone treating another adult badly, such as hitting them or shouting at them. Or you may be worried that someone who is managing another adult's money is not using it to benefit the adult.



If you think someone is being harmed, whether this is being caused by the actions of someone else, or whether an adult is perhaps not looking after themselves properly, it is important to tell someone. Please get in touch with the social work office who will listen

to you and take you seriously.

Remember, the adult at risk may be relying on you to help them and you **do not** need their permission or consent to make that call.

What should I do if I feel that I may harm the person I care for?

Harm does not have to be deliberate, malicious or planned. Sometimes events and actions may be clouded by stress and isolation brought on by caring. Often, carers will be trying their best with very little information and support. Carers may



not know what is or is not the right way to do things e.g. moving and handling. They may feel what they are doing is alright if it keeps the person safe e.g. restraining them or not letting them do something they want to do.

These risks of carer harm tend to be greater where the carer:

- has unmet or unrecognised needs of their own
- are themselves vulnerable
- has little insight or understanding into the condition or needs of the person they care for
- has unwillingly had to change his or her lifestyle

- are not receiving practical and/or emotional support from other family members
- are feeling emotionally and socially isolated, undervalued or stigmatised
- has other responsibilities such as family or work
- has no personal or private space or life outside the caring environment
- has frequently requested help but problems have not been solved
- are being abused by the person they care for
- feels unappreciated by the person they care for or exploited by relatives or services



If you have caused harm or feel that you may cause harm then contact your local social work office. They are there to help not only the person you care for but you too. They will work with you and the person you care for to find the best possible solution for everyone involved.

What will happen next?

When a council receives information that suggests an adult may be at risk of harm, staff from the social work office **must** make inquiries to see if this is the case. This simply means that staff will gather more information from those who know and work with the person to help them decide how best to help.

If social work staff believe that the person you care for is at risk of harm they will visit them and talk to both them and you about the situation. They will want to know about any risks they are facing and what they would like to happen next.



They may suggest the person you care for talks to an advocate. If you are a carer who is finding your situation difficult and stressful, they will suggest that they refer you to your local Carers Service for support for yourself.

What matters is that everyone in such a situation is supported together so that any risk of harm is removed or minimised .

For any other information or support you can contact your local Carers Service directly:

Helensburgh and Lomond

www.helensburgh-carer-support.org

01436 673 444

Cowal and Bute

www.crossroadscowalandbute.co.uk

01369 70 7700

Mid Argyll

www.dochasfund.org.uk

01546 600 022

Oban

www.northargyllcarers.org.uk

01631 564 422

For more information about adult protection visit:
www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-protection

To report concerns please call the social work phone number: 01546 605517 (during office hours)

Outside office hours call 01631 566491 or 01631 569712