

Remember:

- abuse is always wrong;
- if you are concerned about someone let them know that help is available;
- try to include the person in the decision to seek help.

What if a vulnerable adult discloses abuse?

DO

- stay calm and listen. Reassure the person they did the right thing in telling you;
- if urgent help is needed call the emergency services;
- ensure the safety of the person and be aware that forensic evidence might be needed;
- let the person know that the information will be taken seriously and passed on to the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person;
- record in writing (date and sign your record) and report to the Designated Liaison Person for the Diocese without delay;
- let the person know that the DLP will keep them informed.

DO NOT

- stop someone disclosing to you;
- promise to keep secret what they tell you;
- press the person for more details or make them repeat the story;
- gossip about the disclosure or pass any information about this to anyone who does not have a legitimate need to know.

Who to contact with a Concern:

If you have a concern regarding a vulnerable adult, please contact:

Diocesan Director of Safeguarding and Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

Ms. Ailish Higgins Tel 085 802 1633
Email: dlp@kandle.ie

Deputy DLP's

Ms. Michele Hughes Tel 086 1710643 and
Fr. Micheál Murphy Tel: 086 8244629

Civil Authorities

HSE Safeguarding and Protection teams:

Carlow, Kilkenny: Tel: 056 778 4325
Email: safeguarding.cho5@hse.ie

Wicklow: Tel: 01 216 4511
Email: safeguarding.cho6@hse.ie

Kildare, Wicklow: Tel: 045 920410
Email: safeguarding.cho7@hse.ie

Laois, Offaly: Tel: 01 6914632
Email: safeguarding.cho8@hse.ie

Gardai

If you are experiencing abuse which is placing you or someone you know in immediate danger, you should contact the Gardai at 999 / 112.

If a person is being mistreated but is not in immediate danger you can report this to your local Garda station.

Anyone with information regarding a crime can ring the Garda Confidential Telephone No: 1800 666 111.

The Garda Confidential line allows the public to call with confidential information relating to matters of abuse, crime or other activities.

February 2024

Safeguarding is
Everyone's
Responsibility



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

*in the Diocese
of
Kildare & Leighlin*



Who is a vulnerable adult?

A vulnerable adult is a person over 18 who lacks or has seriously impaired capacity either to make informed decisions, or to defend him or herself from harm.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the term used to express measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals which allow people to live free from abuse, harm, and neglect.

Why do we safeguard?

As a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland we recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all vulnerable adults. We are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being and will work in partnership with vulnerable adults and those who support them to do this.

We recognise every individual as a gift from God and we value and encourage the participation of vulnerable adults in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

All priests, staff, and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that all vulnerable adult members of every parish are protected from harm and abuse when participating in Church activities and to ensure that any concerns or allegations of abuse are responded to promptly.



What is abuse?

Abuse may be defined as:

“Any act, or failure to act, which results in a breach of a vulnerable person’s human rights, civil liberties, physical and mental integrity, dignity or general well-being, whether intended or through negligence, including sexual relationships or financial transactions to which the person does not or cannot validly consent, or which are deliberately exploitative. Abuse may take a variety of forms.” (HIQA 2013).

Abuse can take many forms.

It might include:

Physical abuse

The use of physical force, the threat of physical force or mistreatment of one person by another which may or may not result in actual physical harm or injury. This can include being hit, kicked, pinched, being locked in a room or inappropriate restraint.

Sexual abuse

Any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/ online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted towards another person, such as being made to take part in a sexual activity when the adult has not given or is not able to give their consent.

Emotional/Psychological abuse (including bullying/harassment)

includes behaviour that is psychologically harmful to another person, and which inflicts anxiety or mental distress by threat, humiliation or other verbal/non-verbal conduct.

Financial or material abuse such as theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with financial matters or misuse of someone else’s finances.

Institutional abuse is the mistreatment of people brought about by poor or inadequate care or support or systemic poor practices that affect a whole care setting.

Neglect involves the failure to provide care or support that results in someone being harmed.

Discriminatory abuse involves unequal treatment, harassment or abuse based on age, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, race or religious belief, family status or ethnic group.

Online or digital abuse is an abusive or exploitative interaction occurring in a social media or online context.

Human Trafficking/ Modern Slavery is the acquisition and movement of people by improper means, such as force, threat, or deception, for the purposes of exploiting them. It can take the form of domestic servitude, forced criminality, forced labour, sexual exploitation and organ harvesting.

Domestic violence is when abuse occurs between partners or by a family member. It is often called domestic violence.

Self-neglect is when an adult declines essential support with their care and support needs, and this is having a substantial impact on their overall well being.

Coercive Control is a pattern of behaviour which is designed to exert control over another person.