



## Organisational Abuse - Fact Sheet for Professionals

### 1. What is Organisational Abuse and Neglect?

Organisational abuse (sometimes referred to as institutional abuse) is neglect and poor care practice within an institution or care setting such as a hospital or care home and can include care provided in a person's own home. This can range from a one-off incident to on-going ill-treatment, incidents between residents, and can occur as a result of neglect or poor professional practice because of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Click the link below to watch a video about Organisational Abuse:

<https://www.tsab.org.uk/key-information/safeguarding-explained-videos/>

Spotting the Signs of Organisational Abuse: <https://www.tsab.org.uk/key-information/general-public/organisational-abuse-2/>

### 2. Why it's Important

Everyone has a right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

The safeguarding duty under the Care Act 2014 applies to any adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect;
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

People who meet the criteria above are less likely to identify themselves as being abused. Safeguarding is everyone's business, and we all have a responsibility to recognise and report abuse and neglect.

### Does your organisation have a Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure in place and do all staff know how to report Safeguarding Concerns?

- Teeswide Inter-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy & Inter-Agency Safeguarding Adults Procedure - <https://www.tsab.org.uk/key-information/policies-strategies/>
- Report Abuse - <https://www.tsab.org.uk/report-abuse/>

### **3. Creating a Safer Organisational Culture**

Organisations should ensure that they apply the six key principles of safeguarding:

1. Empowerment
2. Prevention
3. Proportionality
4. Protection
5. Partnership
6. Accountability

The foundations for building a safer culture are to:

- Listen
- Learn
- Lead

If these basic foundations aren't in place this can lead to organisational abuse. To create a safe environment, organisations should reflect and learn from both good and bad practice to continually make improvements, prevent harm and create a learning culture.

### **4. Spotting the signs of Organisational Abuse**

Organisational abuse can range from a one-off incident to ongoing ill-treatment and can involve one or more perpetrators. The neglect can be intentional or unintentional.

Some signs of Organisational Abuse may include:

- Abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using services
- Tasks not being completed on time or correctly due to staffing pressures
- Poor moving and handling practices
- Inappropriate use of restraints
- Poor record-keeping and lack of procedures and care plans
- Discouraging/refusing visits or involvement of relatives, friends and carers
- Failure to respond to abuse appropriately

Organisational Abuse generally happens in institutions where staff are:

- Poorly trained
- Poorly supervised
- Unsupported by management
- Unaccountable
- Poor at communicating, record keeping and sharing information

In some instances, acts of neglect can seem quite minor, however if neglect continues and a person's needs are continually unmet, this can lead to organisational abuse. Experiencing prolonged neglect can impact on a person's physical, mental health and wellbeing.

Ignoring abuse or suspected abuse/neglect can be incredibly damaging. It creates an environment for abuse and neglect to continue, unchallenged and victims can feel unable to speak out.

## 5. Staff

Good, caring, positive and well-trained staff are essential if you are to create a safe environment.

Staff should feel valued, confident to complain, raise concerns, be honest if they have made a mistake, seek advice, and feel supported by their peers and managers. Poor staff attitudes should be addressed immediately and managed appropriately. There should be enough staff available to manage the level of need and to safely carry out the tasks they need to complete.

Organisations should have robust checks in place for new members of staff and agency staff, such as checking they have a clear DBS certificate, have a right to work in the UK and have seen evidence of appropriate and up to date qualifications and training.

## 6. Working with the Adults and their Families

A good organisation is open, honest and transparent and involves adults (and families/carers where appropriate) in care plans or protection plans to ensure that the adult's views and wishes are taken into account. Practitioners should try to have a good understanding of family circumstances and dynamics, to fully consider risks and protective factors.

Adults who may struggle to engage with services without support and who do not have an appropriate representative such as a family member acting in their best interests, should be offered an independent advocate.

Adults and families are well placed to spot the signs of organisational abuse as they can often see the whole picture in relation to the care provided by professionals, particularly if there are multiple perpetrators. If an adult or family member raises concerns, listen to them and make sure that concerns are addressed promptly and that you record what you have done to resolve the issues.

Organisations should have appropriate visiting policies in place, particularly for patients/service users who are vulnerable, distressed, have communication difficulties or may be unable to contact family themselves.

### Useful Resources and Information

- Training Courses and Events - <https://www.tsab.org.uk/events-key-dates/>
- Training Resources - <https://www.tsab.org.uk/training-resources/>
- NICE Guidance for Registered Managers of Care Homes (Creating a Safeguarding Culture) - <https://www.nice.org.uk/Media/Default/About/NICE-Communities/Social-care/quick-guides/Creating-a-safeguarding-culture.pdf>
- Safeguarding Leaflets and Posters - <https://www.tsab.org.uk/key-information/posters/> More information on Organisational Abuse - <https://www.tsab.org.uk/key-information/general-public/organisational-abuse-2/>
- Learning from Safeguarding Reviews - <https://www.tsab.org.uk/professionals/safeguarding-adult-review-sar-reports/>