What do we mean by safeguarding?
Safeguarding Adults is the term used when agencies (such as the police, social services and health services), as well as the general public, work together to keep vulnerable adults safe from the risk of harm or abuse.

A vulnerable adult is someone who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who may be unable to take care of themselves or to protect themselves against harm or exploitation.

Everyone has a responsibility to ensure abuse does not take place. If you know or suspect that someone you know is being abused you should tell Social Services so that something can be done about it.

What do we mean by abuse?
Abuse means being treated badly. It can be the result of an action or the failure to act in an appropriate manner. It includes physical abuse, financial or material abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse and neglect. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts.

Who might abuse someone?
Abuse can occur in any relationship – personal, professional or institutional.

An abuser might be a family member, friend or neighbour.

It could be someone who is paid to deliver care or other professional services, a health worker or someone working as a volunteer.

There are also people who befriend vulnerable adults and gain their trust in order to exploit or abuse them.

In an institutional setting, such as a care home or day service, the abuse could be by someone working there or someone else living in or using the service.

What should I do if I am concerned about someone?
Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. If you suspect that abuse or neglect is taking place, you should report your concerns (see page 2 for how to do this). You should not ignore your concerns or assume that someone else will report the abuse.

Possible indications of abuse or neglect include:

- Unexplained injury
- Signs of fear or distress
- Withdrawal
- Signs of neglect
- Personal belongings missing
- Unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills

If the person is in immediate danger you should first ensure that they are safe, and contact the emergency services if necessary.

What do I do if I am concerned for myself?
If you feel able to report your concerns yourself, information about how to do this is on page 2.

Otherwise talk to someone you trust - a family member, friend or, if you wish, your social worker. Explain what you are worried about and what evidence you have so they can help you take appropriate action.
**How do I report suspected abuse?**

To report suspected abuse, contact Social Services.
Tel: 01792 636854
Email: adult.safeguarding@swansea.gov.uk

If you think that a criminal act has or may have taken place you can contact the police on 01792 456999 or 101. In serious emergency circumstances please call 999.

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**What will happen if I report someone to Social Services?**

When you contact us, we call this a ‘referral’. We will take as many details as we need to see whether the referral needs to go through the safeguarding process or whether another service might be better.

If the referral needs to go through the safeguarding process, Social Services will arrange an investigation in line with the *Wales Interim Policy and Procedures for the protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse*. The investigation may involve several agencies e.g. health services, police who will work together and talk to people involved to find out what has happened and what the person who has been abused would like to happen. If a crime has been committed (such as theft or assault) the police will talk to the person who has been abused about whether they want to press charges.

If the person who has been abused is not able to make decisions about what should happen, they might have an independent advocate, relative or care manager to speak on their behalf.

After the investigation, action will be taken to ensure the person is protected in the future. This action will depend on individual circumstances, but it might be the person getting a different kind of service or support, or a court taking legal action.

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**What if I am mistaken and there is no abuse taking place?**

If you are not sure, it is better to have discussed your concerns with somebody who has experience and responsibility to make an informed decision than to ignore a situation which may result in someone vulnerable being harmed.

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**Where can I get more information?**

There is more information on Swansea Council’s website including a link to the *Wales Interim Policy and Procedures for the protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse* [www.swansea.gov.uk/safeguardingadults](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/safeguardingadults).

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**Swansea Social Services and personal information**

Swansea Council is the data controller for the personal information you provide to us. Your information will be used in the exercise of our official authority and will not be used for any other purpose. We will not share your data with third parties unless we are required or permitted to do so by law. Data protection law describes the legal basis for our processing your data as necessary for the performance of a public task (Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014).

For further information about how Swansea Council uses your personal data, including your rights as a data subject, please see our corporate privacy notice on our website [www.swansea.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/privacy).

We can give you more information about how we handle personal information.
Phone 01792 636902 for a factsheet.

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**Comments and complaints**

We welcome any comments about our services – good or bad. We are interested to hear how we could do things better, and we like to know when we are doing well.

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Social Services
[www.swansea.gov.uk/socialcare](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/socialcare)

City and County of Swansea • Dinas a Sir Abertawe
Factsheet 054/ November 2018 / v.2
You can use the Council's complaints procedure, details of which are given in the factsheet 'Making a comment, complaint or compliment about Social Services.' For more information contact our Complaints Officers on 01792 637345.
Alternatively, you can use the Western Bay Safeguarding Adults Board complaints procedures available online at

www.swansea.gov.uk/safeguardingadultsswansea

This information is also available in alternative formats, such as large print, on audio CD, in Braille, or electronically. Please phone 01792 636902 for copies.