



Keeping you Safe

Adults who are unable to protect themselves can be harmed anywhere - at home, in a public place, a care home, hospital or day centre.

As a Carer, you may look after a relative or friend who is older and frail, has mental health difficulties, long-term illness, a physical or learning disability, or someone who lacks the mental capacity to make decisions about their health, care or finances.

It is important to understand that:

- you or the person you look after could be vulnerable to harm; you may need support to ensure that you and the person you care for are kept safe;
- you may need support to avoid harming (either accidentally or deliberately) the person you care for, which will also help you to continue your caring role.

Who can cause harm?

Anyone can cause harm to a person who is unable to protect themselves. It is more likely that the harm will be caused by someone they know and trust, for example a main carer, family member, friend, paid carer or health worker.

Types of harm.

Harm can be unintentional or deliberate. Families all have their own ways of interacting. What may appear abusive to an outsider may be acceptable within a family or friendship. Examples of this include tone and level of voice or words used. However, behaviour such as constant swearing or shouting that undermines another person or makes that person feel undervalued is harmful. By harm we mean regular or consistent harm, not a single accidental incident. Some harmful situations could include one or more of the following:

- Physical harm
- Emotional or psychological
- Neglect
- Financial or theft
- Sexual
- Domestic violence
- Self-neglect
- Slavery or forced servitude

What to do if you, the carer, are being harmed.

Sometimes it is difficult to acknowledge that you are being harmed, especially if it is by the person you care for. You may:

- have got used to it;
- think they do not mean it or they don't know what they're doing; or
- worry that you may be separated from the person you care for.

A carer who is isolated and not getting any practical or emotional support from anyone can be at greater risk of harm. Carers can access advice services and may be entitled to support with their caring role. The first step to getting help is to contact Birmingham Carers Hub, sometimes all you need is someone to talk to. You may find it helpful to write down the information you are given by the person you talk to.



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What to do if you know or suspect someone is being harmed.

Some common signs of harm are:

- multiple bruising or unexplained finger marks
- worsening health or weight loss
- not having contact with friends, family or professionals on their own
- shortage of money for no apparent reason.

It is possible that the person you are worried about usually has a variety of these signs due to their condition. However, if they appear worse than normal or are acting differently, this could prompt your concerns. If someone confides in you that they are being harmed or even harming someone, take whatever they tell you seriously and listen carefully. Do not promise to keep it a secret. Take action and contact the Birmingham Carers Hub. You may be saving someone from harm or causing harm. Try to repeat the words used by the person who told you.

What to do if you are worried you might harm the person you care for

A carer may not realise that their actions or inaction is causing harm.

A carer may find caring for an adult with care and support needs too difficult and stressful. They may feel unable to give the person they care for the level of care they need, or they may not know how to lift or physically support them.

A carer may have their own problems which affects their ability to provide care.

If you are experiencing any of the situations below you may need help

- You feel emotionally or socially isolated, undervalued, unappreciated or exploited.
- You struggle to balance other responsibilities, such as family and work.
- You have no personal or private space outside your caring role.
- You need health or social care services.
- You do not fully understand the condition and needs of the person you are caring for.

If you are worried that you might cause harm to the person you care for, or suspect someone you know is being or could be harmed, report this to Birmingham City Council in the following ways:

Email: ACAP@birmingham.gov.uk

Telephone: 0121 303 1234

Text Relay: dial 18001 followed by the full national phone number

In an emergency, or if someone is in immediate danger, call 999.

Otherwise, report crimes to West Midlands Police by calling 101.