**Protecting Vulnerable Adults**

**In Lincolnshire**

**What do we mean by a Vulnerable Adult?**

The definition is wide; however this may be regarded as someone over the age of 18, who may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, harm or exploitation, which may be due to illness, age, mental illness, disability or other types of physical or mental impairment.

Those at risk may live alone, be dependent on others (e.g. living in a care home) or socially isolated.

**What is abuse or mistreatment?**

Abuse or mistreatment can be many things:

* **Physical** including hitting, slapping, punching, kicking or the misuse of medication on someone.
* **Sexual** including rape or sexual assault acts which the person has not consented to. It may be non contact such as teasing or being photographed.
* **Psychological** including threats, humiliating someone, controlling or intimidating.
* **Financial** including stealing or tricking the person out of money or material possessions like their house or jewellery.
* **Discriminatory** including racist, sexist, that based on a person’s disability and other forms of harassment.
* **Neglect** is also a form of abuse – leaving someone without food or heating, refusing to take care of the personal needs and failing to provide access to appropriate health and social care may all be forms of neglect.

**Everyone has the right to feel safe and to live without fear of abuse, neglect or exploitation.**

**What should I do?**

The best ways to protect a vulnerable adult from abuse is to prevent them from being abused in the first place.

* Keep watchful eye out for family, friends and neighbours who may be vulnerable.
* Understand that abuse can happen to anyone.
* Speak up if you have concerns. Trust your instincts!
* Find ways to limit the person’s isolation, if that is an issue.
* If you’re caring for someone and feel that it is getting too much, get help early.

If you do have concerns:

* Do ask what you can do to help.
* Do report what’s happening.
* Don’t ignore what’s going on.
* Don’t put the vulnerable adult in anymore danger.
* Don’t tell the person who is the alleged abuser that you are reporting what’s happening.

**Getting help**

If you are being abused you don’t have to put up with it. Tell someone you trust or call the numbers below and report what is happening to you.

**Lincolnshire Police - 01522 805775**

**Lincolnshire Adult Social Services - 01522 782155**

If someone you know is being abuse or you think that they may be, you should first make sure that they are safe, if it is possible to do so. You should then report your concerns by calling Lincolnshire Adult Social Services. Remember if it’s an emergency, dial 999.

**Adult abuse happens…together we can stop it.**