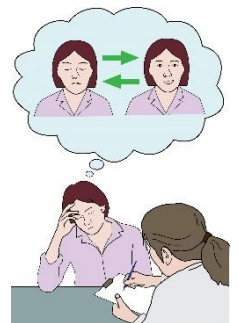


# What can you do if you have been a victim of abuse or hate crime?

**Abuse:** this means being violent or causing pain to somebody else. This can be physical actions such as hitting somebody. It can also be something that a person says to you or the way that a person treats you.

**Hate crime:** this means when somebody commits a crime against a person because of their disability or for another reason that makes them seem different such as their sex or race.

This document is written for people who use mental health services. It is for anyone who suffers or has suffered from **mental distress** or has a **psychiatric diagnosis**.



**Mental distress:** this can be used to talk about lots of different mental health support needs such as anxiety or depression.

**Psychiatric diagnosis:** this means that you have mental health support needs that have been recognised by a mental health doctor.

**This document is for anyone who has faced any of these things because of their mental health needs:**

- Abuse
- **Victimisation**
- Hate crime



**Victimisation:** in this document, this means you have been singled out and treated unkindly because of your mental health needs.

The document has been written using research which was done at Middlesex University.



We want to share some the information we found. We want to give ideas and suggestions about what you can do if you have faced abuse.



# What is abuse?

Abuse can be used to talk about lots of different types of behaviour such as:

- Physical assault, this means any type of physical violence such as hitting or punching.



**Assault:** this is another word for being attacked.

- Sexual abuse, this means any type of violent behaviour that is linked to sex. For example, making sexual comments that make you feel uncomfortable or making you do sexual things that you don't want to do.



- Emotional abuse, this means behaviour that makes you feel upset. For example, calling you names.



- Psychological abuse, this means doing things that harm your mental health. For example, doing or saying things that make you feel crazy or worried.



- Abuse based on **discrimination**. For example, if somebody abuses you because you have mental health needs.



**Discrimination:** this means being treated unfairly. This could be because of a person's race, age, sex or because of another part of who a person is.

- Being abused by an organisation or an institution. This means when a person is treated badly by systems of power. For example, at work, at a care home or in a hospital.



- Neglect, this is when a person who is meant to be caring for somebody doesn't look after them properly. For example, if a parent doesn't care for their child, this is neglect.



- Financial abuse, this means any kind of abuse that is to do with money. For example, controlling or stealing your money.



# What is Hate Crime?

Hate Crime is when somebody commits a crime against a person because of their:

- Disability, this can be a physical impairment or a mental health condition
- Gender identity, this means whether you feel like you are a man or woman
- Race
- Age
- Sexual orientation, this means whether you feel like you would like to be with a man, a woman or both
- Religion
- Any other kind of difference



You can read examples of hate crimes on the Amnesty International website:

[www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/ether/hate-crimes-uk-victims-stories](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/ether/hate-crimes-uk-victims-stories)



## 1. What did people tell us?

**It is important to know that you are not alone. The people we talked to told us about some very bad things that have happened to them. These might be upsetting to read about. If you don't want to read about these bad experiences please go to section 2. Here is what people told us:**



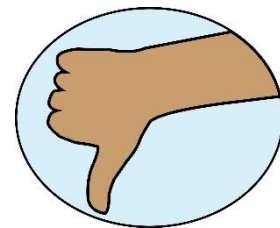
- People had faced lots of abuse throughout their lives. This was not just because of their mental health needs but also because of other differences such as race, gender and sexual orientation.



- For some people, this abuse happened in or near their home. Having a bad standard of housing meant that people were in more danger of becoming a victim of abuse.



**Housing associations** didn't deal well with cases of hate crime and abuse. A lot of the time they did nothing to deal with the crime.



**Housing associations:** these are organisations that rent houses and flats to people with support needs.

- People often don't get help from health and social care. They also often don't get help from systems to do with crime and the law.



All of these organisations have responsibilities for dealing with things like: **risk management, adult safeguarding** and **disability hate crime**.



**Risk management:** this means taking steps to make sure that services are safe to use.

**Adult safeguarding:** this means making sure that adults who have care and support needs are safe from abuse or neglect.

**Disability hate crime:** this is when somebody commits a crime against a person because of their disability.

- Some people had faced abuse in mental health and care services. People talked about physical and sexual assault. People also talked about abuse and neglect. They also said that abuse is actually a part of the way that services and systems run. This is true especially for hospitals.



- Most people said that nobody believed them when they told them about this abuse. They weren't believed because of their mental health needs or psychiatric diagnosis.



- Lots of people had not heard of Adult Safeguarding or didn't think it was for them. It was hard to tell if something they had faced was a hate crime or if it went against adult safeguarding.



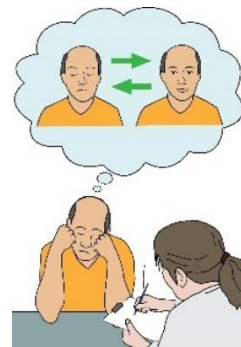
- Some people felt like they had no control over the abuse that had happened to them. There was not very much help out there for them.





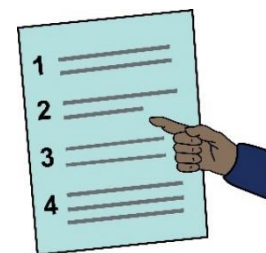
# What is Adult Safeguarding?

- Adult safeguarding means making sure that adults who have care and support needs are safe from abuse or neglect.
- Safeguarding is for people who have care and support needs that might put them at risk of abuse or neglect. For example, a person's mental health status or having learning difficulties might put them at risk.
- Local authorities, the police and the NHS are responsible for adult safeguarding. If a local authority thinks that someone is at risk of abuse or neglect, it has to look into the situation.
- Every local authority has somebody who you can get in touch with about safeguarding. Every local authority also has a **Safeguarding Adults Board**.



**Safeguarding Adults Board:** This is a group that is responsible for keeping adults with care and support needs safe.

- For more information about adult safeguarding, see our list of resources at the end.



## 2. What did people find helpful?

Lots of the people told us about different types of support that helped them to deal with their experiences of abuse. Here are some helpful ways to deal with abuse:



- **Talking to someone**

It is important to find people who believe what you say and give you support. This could be family and friends. For a lot of people this was local **service user groups**, **peer support** or **community groups**.



**Service user groups:** this means groups or organisations of people that use services and support other people who also use services.

**Peer support:** this is when people use their own experiences to help each other.

**Community groups:** this means a group or organisation that is set up to help members of the community.

- **Finding support before you report abuse or hate crime**

It was important to get support before you report a crime. This could be friends and family. It could also be local mental health or disability organisations.



These organisations have services for **advocacy**. These services help you stand up against hate crime. One person said 'my charities have been my life savers'.



**Advocacy or advocating for:** in this document, advocacy or advocating for means standing up for people with who have faced abuse and making sure they can use their rights.

- **Taking part in supporting other people who have been through the same thing:**

Lots of people said that supporting others who have faced abuse really helped them. This could be taking part in things like:



- Campaigning to make services better



- Training health and social workers by using your experience of abuse



- Carrying out research



- Supporting others

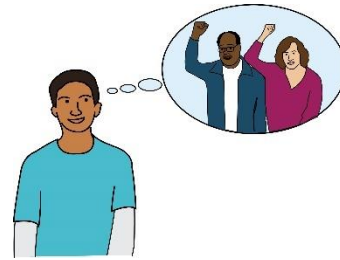


Being active and making a difference for others helped people feel that they were more in control of their lives. They were doing something useful.



- **Finding out your rights:**

People talked to volunteer organisations and user groups to find out about their rights. They talked to these groups both in person and online.



**The British Institute of Human Rights** has written some accessible guides on knowing your human rights. Click here to read about them:

[What Rights do I Have](#)



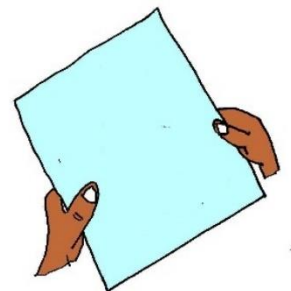
**The British Institute of Human Rights:** this is a charity which stands up for human rights across the UK.

- **Make sure you keep a written note about the abuse that has happened to you:**

It helps to write down what happened and when. If you want to report abuse at some point in the future, it will help you remember.



Having some evidence to show people helps as well. For example, you might have photographs or somebody who has seen the crime might be able to talk about it when you report it.



- **Using the right language:**

Some people found it useful to know the right words to use when talking to authorities.



For example saying these words might be useful and might make authorities act faster:

- Hate crime
- At risk of abuse or neglect
- Safeguarding



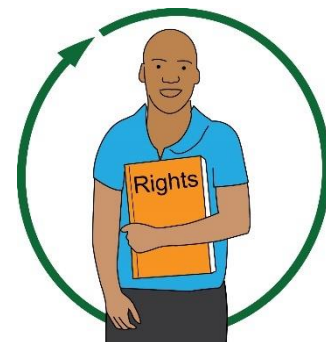
### **3. What can you do if you are facing abuse, victimisation or hate crime?**

- **Talk to someone**

If you can, talk to someone you trust about what has happened or what is happening. This is for your own support but it is also important to make sure that someone else knows what is going on. They might be able to help or they might be able to see the abuse that is happening.



- **Find out your rights.** Local community organisations can help you to find out about your rights. You can also find help online.



Click here to find out about your rights:

<https://knowyourhumanrights.co.uk/human-rights/what-rights-do-i-have/>

- **Reporting the abuse or hate crime:** Try getting in touch with an organisation to find out how to report abuse. You can get in touch with these organisations online:



- Social Care Institute for Excellence.

Their website is: [www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk). Their phone number is: 020 7766 7400



- Stop Hate UK

Read section 4 of this document to find out about more organisations you can get in touch with online.



You can also get in touch with a local charity, a disabled people's organisation, or **Citizen's Advice Bureau**.



**Citizen's Advice Bureau:** this is an organisation that gives members of the public free advice and information about things to do with the law and rights.

These organisations might be able to help you to work out if you are facing Hate Crime or if you need adult safeguarding. They can help you to think about what to do. You might also talk to your local councillor or MP.



You can report hate crime in different ways. For example, you can go and talk to the police in person or you can call them on 101. You can also get in touch with them online.



Local police stations usually have officers who deal with hate crime. You can also report it through organisations such as:

- Local charities
- Schools
- Victim support organisations
- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Disabled people's organisations





Your local police station will have a list of these centres and will have them on their website too. These centres will support you if you don't want to talk to the police on your own. They will keep your details private and support you to report the crime if that is what you want to do.

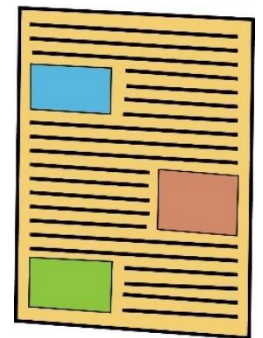


- **Making a complaint about abuse in services:**

It is not easy to make a complaint about services. It always helps to have support to do this. There might be an advocacy service in your area which can support you.



All services should have a way to make complaints about them. You might want to ask for a document from them which tells you how to make a complaint against them. You are allowed to make a complaint about any service you use. The service must look into your complaint.



You can complain to:

- The organisation whose service you are using
- The commissioner, this is a person who is in charge of buying services in a local area.
- Your local authority
- Care Quality Commission (CQC), this is an organisation in England. CQC checks that health and social care services meet the government standards.



You can only complain to the CQC if you have been **detained** under the **Mental Health Act**.

**Detained:** this means when you're made to stay in hospital for treatment.

**Mental Health Act:** this is a law that looks at the rights of people with mental health support needs.



- Health Inspectorate Wales, this is an organisation that checks that health and social care services meet the government standards in Wales.



- The police, if you think a crime has committed.



Who you complain to depends on what the complaint is about. Make sure you are ready for meetings and take someone with you if you can. Meetings can be stressful and it can be hard to remember what has been said if you feel worried.



- **If you don't want to report it:**

There might be other things that you can do. Finding out ways to get help in your local area can be helpful. You can read the list of resources in section 4.

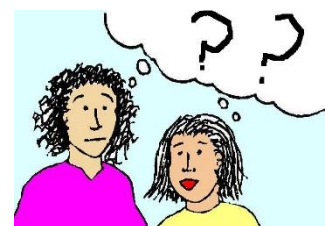


- **Use the right language:**

If you say certain words there is more chance that authorities will listen to what you are saying. They have to act if someone is facing abuse.



When you talk to them you can tell them that you are worried about 'safeguarding'. You could also say that you are 'at risk' or have been a victim of a 'hate crime'.



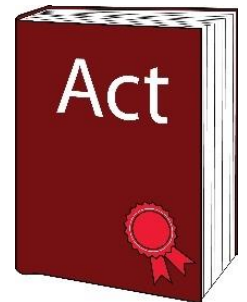
**Get in touch with your local authority so that they can look at Adult Safeguarding:**

If you are facing abuse or neglect, this may be the right thing to do. All local authorities have staff who are responsible for Adult Safeguarding.



# What do local authorities have to do about safeguarding?

The Care Act 2014 looks at how local authorities and other organisations should look after adults who are at risk of facing abuse or neglect. By law, local authorities must:



- Run a local adult safeguarding system. This system must look for abuse and neglect and stop it quickly when it happens.
- Ask questions when they think an adult with care and support needs might be at risk of abuse or neglect. Local authorities need to find out what action needs to happen.
- Set up a Safeguarding Adults Boards. This board should have members from the local authority, NHS and police. The board should write a plan for safeguarding and put it into place.



- Carry out Safeguarding Adults Reviews. This means looking into cases when someone with care and support needs dies because of neglect or abuse. If it seems like the local authority could have done more to look after them, there should be a review about this.



- Set up an independent advocate. This is a person who is not from the local authority. They can speak for or support a person with care and support needs. They can also support a person who wants to ask questions about safeguarding.



For more information about this, go to this website:

[www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/safeguarding-adults/](http://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/safeguarding-adults/).



## 4. Resources and ways to get help

This document is being sent out in the Autumn of 2020. This is a time when making a complaint is going to be harder because of the impact of **COVID-19** on all services.



**Coronavirus or Covid-19:** this is the virus that has spread all over the world in 2020. It has changed the way that people live and work. It has affected people's mental health very badly.

Because of this, it is even more important to get extra support to help you with your complaint.



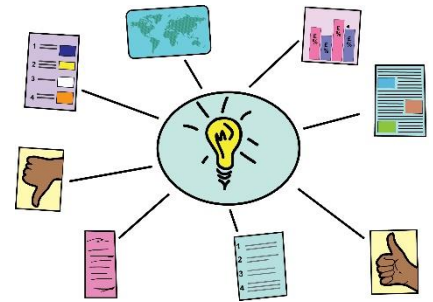
### Ways to find general support and advocacy support:

- **Advocacy:**

In some areas, you will find a local advocacy service. An advocate can give you support to help you understand and use your rights. You can look for advocacy in your area in different ways.



You can look online or get in touch with your local authority to find out about local advocacy services. You can also find information about this at libraries, GP surgeries and community notice boards.



- **Victim support:**

This service gives support to people affected by crime. It is free to use and your information is kept private. You can use this service if you live in England and Wales. It doesn't matter whether or not the crime has been reported or how long ago it happened.



You can call their phone number for free:



08 08 16 89 111.

You can also read about local Victim Support services on their website and their online support form. Their website is:

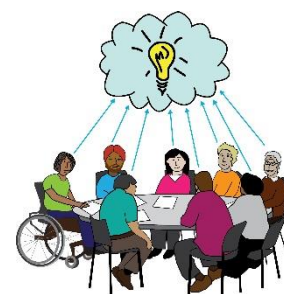
[www.victimsupport.org.uk/](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/)





- **You could try getting in touch with your local service user group:**

The **National Survivor User Network** keeps a list of local member groups. You can find it by clicking on this link: [Group directory](#).



**Shaping Our Lives** also has a list of its member groups. You can find the list by going to this website:



[www.shapingourlives.org.uk/list-of-members](http://www.shapingourlives.org.uk/list-of-members)

**National Survivor User Network:** this is an organisation that brings together people and groups from across the country. They aim to make people's lives and mental health better.

**Shaping our Lives:** this is a national organisation of user-led groups, service users and disabled people.

- **Your local Healthwatch can help you understand the system and find an advocate.**

**Healthwatch:** this is a charity which pushes for rights in health and social care.

They can also help you deal with your experiences themselves.



Find your local Healthwatch online here:  
[www.healthwatch.co.uk/your-local-healthwatch/list](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/your-local-healthwatch/list).



You can also phone them on this number: 03000 683 000.



Or you can email them at this address:  
[enquiries@healthwatch.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatch.co.uk)



- **Citizen's Advice Bureau:**

Citizens Advice Bureaus give advice and information about lots of different topics. This can be advice about:



- Your rights



- What to do about abuse



- How to make complaints about health and social care services.



You can find your local Citizen's Advice Bureau by going to this website:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>.



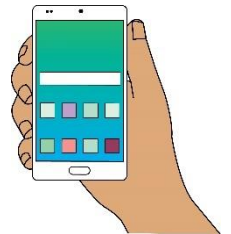
You can also phone them. If you live in England you should call this number: **03444 111 444**.

If you live in Wales you should call this number: **03444 77 20 20**



For textphone you can use the following number:

**18001 03444 111 445**



- **The Patients Association**

**The Patients Association:** this charity looks at patients' worries and needs. It gives advice to people about how to make the most of their health care. It tells you where you can get more information and advice.

You can phone the Patients Association's National Helpline on this number: **0800 345 7115**.



You can also look at their website here:

[www.patients-association.org.uk](http://www.patients-association.org.uk)



## Ways to find support if you have faced Hate Crime:

- **Stop Hate UK**

This organisation has lots of different resources to support you if you want to report a hate crime. You can go to their website:

[www.stophateuk.org/resources/](http://www.stophateuk.org/resources/) .



You can also phone them on this number: **08001381625**. You can phone them any time, day or night.



- **Government Hate Crime website:**

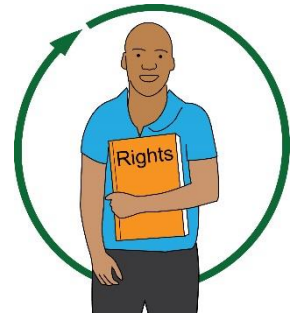
This website gives you help and advice on how to report a hate crime.

<https://hatecrime.campaign.gov.uk/>



# Ways to find support to understand and use your rights

- **The British Institute of Human Rights**  
The British Institute of Human Rights has written accessible guides about knowing your human rights. You can read them on this website:



<https://knowyourhumanrights.co.uk/human-rights/what-rights-do-i-have/>

You can go to the British Institute of Human Rights' website here: [www.bihr.org.uk](http://www.bihr.org.uk)



## Ways to find support for communities who are facing abuse and hate crime:

- Galop - [www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)

Galop is an organisation that gives support to the **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender + community**. It gives them support if they are facing Hate Crime, **Domestic Abuse** and Sexual Violence.



**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender + community:** this is a group of people who have different sex and gender identities. People in this community often face abuse because of their gender or because of who they love.

**Domestic Abuse:** this means when abuse happens between people in a relationship. It can be any type of bullying, controlling or violent behaviour.

You can get support through the phone, email, text and WhatsApp. You can get in touch with them using the [online form](#), email or telephone.



Their phone number is: **0800 999 5428**. You can phone them Monday to Friday between 10am and 5pm. You can phone them Wednesday to Thursday between 10am and 8pm.



You can email them at this address:

[advice@galop.org.uk](mailto:advice@galop.org.uk)



- **The Monitoring Group**

This is a charity that stands up against **racism**. It pushes for rights and has a support helpline run by volunteers. It gives support to people who have faced violence because of their race.



**Racism:** this means treating somebody badly or unfairly because of their race.

You can report racism online at this website:

[www.tmg-uk.org/do-you-need-help/do-you-need-help/](http://www.tmg-uk.org/do-you-need-help/do-you-need-help/).



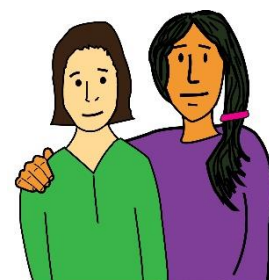
You can also get in touch with the organisation at this address: [office@tmg-uk.org](mailto:office@tmg-uk.org).

You can phone them on this number: **020 7582 7438**. You can phone them Monday to Thursday between 11am and 6pm.



- **Respond**

This is a national charity which gives therapy and support services to people with learning disabilities, autism or both. It gives support to people who have faced abuse, violence or **trauma**.



**Trauma:** this means something that has happened in a person's life which affects their mental health.

Respond gives therapy and advice and information. Its helpline is for people with learning disabilities and their family, carers and support workers.



You can phone them on this number: 0808 808 0700



You can also E-mail them at this address:

[admin@respond.org.uk](mailto:admin@respond.org.uk).

You can find out more at this website:

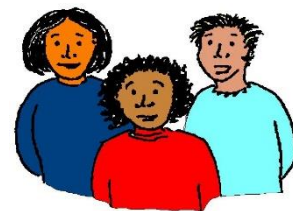
[www.respond.org.uk](http://www.respond.org.uk).





- **National Centre for Domestic Violence**

The centre has a free, fast emergency service for people who have faced domestic violence. It doesn't matter how much money you have. It doesn't matter about your race, gender or sexual identity.



You can phone the centre on this number: 0800 970 2070.



Deaf people can use their minicom service. They can dial this number: 0800 970 2070.



You can visit the centre's website at this address: [www.ncdv.org.uk](http://www.ncdv.org.uk)



- **Action on Elder Abuse**

This is a charity which gives help and information about the abuse of older people.



You can phone them on this number: 0808 808 8141.



Their website address is: <http://elderabuse.org.uk/>



- **National Association for People Abused in Childhood**

This organisation gives support to adults who faced any type of abuse when they were children. This could be physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect.



You can phone them on this number: **0808 801 0331**. You can phone them between 10am and 4pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. You can phone them between 2pm and 9pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays.



This is their website: <http://napac.org.uk>



## Ways to find support for Mental Health and advice about the law:

- **Mind**

Mind is a national mental health charity. It runs a service which gives you advice about the law. This is called their legal helpline.



You can phone them on this number: [0300 466 6463](tel:03004666463)



You can email them at this address: [legal@mind.org.uk](mailto:legal@mind.org.uk).



You can send them a letter to this address:

**Mind Legal line, PO Box 75225, London,  
E15 9FS**



- **Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)**

The Social Care Institute for Excellence gives information and guidance about safeguarding adults.



You can look at their website here:

[www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/safeguarding-adults/](http://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/safeguarding-adults/)



You can phone them on this number: 020 7766 7400.



- **Local Authorities**

You can get in touch with your local authority's social services department. All local authorities must take action if they have any worries about safeguarding. They will have somebody who is in charge of dealing with adult safeguarding.



- **Your local MP or councillors.**

You can find out who your MP is by going on this website: [www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-an-mp-or-lord/contact-your-mp/](http://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-an-mp-or-lord/contact-your-mp/)



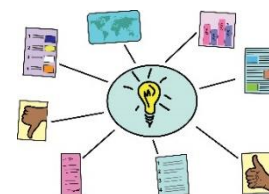
You can also find out on this website: [www.mysociety.org/wehelpyou/contact-your-mp/](http://www.mysociety.org/wehelpyou/contact-your-mp/)



You can also phone their office at the House of Commons on this number: **020 7219 3000**. You can ask to be put through to their office by giving your MP's name.



If you want to phone your MP at their local office, you will find their details at your local town hall or library. You might also find their details in the [Directory of MPs](#).



To find your local councillors go to this website: [www.gov.uk/find-your-local-councillors](http://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-councillors)

