

3. **The Categories of Abuse** (Also refer to "*No Secrets*" - Section 2.7)

3.1 **The following definitions are covered by this policy:**

Physical abuse, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication or inappropriate sanctions or restraint.

Sexual abuse, including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, could not consent or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological abuse, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation or blaming.

Financial or material abuse, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect and acts of omission, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care, or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Discriminatory abuse. This abuse is motivated by discriminatory and oppressive attitudes towards race, gender, cultural background, religion, physical and/or sensory impairment, sexual orientation and age. Discriminatory abuse manifests itself as physical abuse/assault, sexual abuse/assault, financial abuse/theft and the like, neglect and psychological abuse/harassment, including verbal abuse.

Institutional abuse, neglect and poor professional practice. This may take the form of isolated incidents of poor or unsatisfactory professional practice at one end of the spectrum, through to pervasive ill treatment or gross misconduct at the other. (See "*No Secrets*" - Sections 6.22 to 6.37.)

Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

3.2 Incidents of abuse may be multiple, either to one person in a continuing relationship or service context, or to more than one person at a time. This makes it important to look beyond the single incident or breach of standards to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Some instances of abuse will constitute a criminal offence. In this respect, vulnerable adults are entitled to the protection of the law in the same way as any other member of the public. When complaints about alleged abuse suggest that a criminal offence may have been committed, it is imperative that reference should be made to the Police as a matter of urgency. Criminal investigation by the Police takes priority over all other lines of enquiry.