

Examples of harm in relation to vulnerable adults

This list gives you some examples of harm. It isn't a definitive list of every possible example of harm but will help you to understand types of potential situations.

Type of harm to vulnerable adult	Meaning	Example
Emotional / Psychological	Action or inaction by others that causes mental anguish	Inflexible regimes and lack of choice. Mocking, coercing, denying privacy, threatening behaviour, bullying, intimidation, harassment, deliberate isolation, deprivation.
Financial	Usually associated with the misuse of money, valuables or property.	Unauthorised withdrawals from vulnerable adult's account, theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills or inheritance.
Physical	Any physical contact that results in discomfort, pain or injury	Hitting, slapping, pushing, shaking, bruising, failing to treat sores or wounds, under or overuse of medication, un-prescribed or inappropriate medication, use of restraint or inappropriate restraint, inappropriate sanctions.
Sexual	Coercion or force to take part in sexual acts	Inappropriate touching. Causing bruising or injury to the anal, genital or abdominal area, forcing an individual to watch sexual acts. Transmission of STD.
Neglect	Failure to identify and/or meet care needs	Untreated weight loss, failing to administer reasonable care resulting in pressure sores or uncharacteristic problems with continence. Poor hygiene, soiled clothes not changed, insufficient food or drink, ignoring resident's requests, unmet social or care needs.
Verbal	Any remark or comment by others that causes distress	DemEANing, disrespectful, humiliating, racist, sexist or sarcastic comments. Excessive or unwanted familiarity, shouting, swearing, name-calling.