

Vulnerable Adults in Abusive Relationships

Guidance for staff

Recently I have discussed with workers situations where vulnerable people for various reasons decide to remain in abusive relationships. This document is intended to clarify the issues for staff and should be read in conjunction with the Multi Agency Policy & Procedures. It may be useful to assist staff in focusing on what to document when no further action is taken due to the fact that an individual refuses help. It may also help in the reduction of their own frustration as it will help them to see they are doing every thing possible.

Principles.

Three of the key principles in the new Mental Capacity Bill are;

- **A presumption of capacity** - every adult has the right to make his or her own decisions and must be assumed to have capacity to do so unless it is proved otherwise;
- **The right for individuals to be supported to make their own decisions** - people must be given all appropriate help before anyone concludes that they cannot make their own decisions;
- **That individuals must retain the right to make what might be seen as eccentric or unwise decisions;**

Moving forwards.

In the light of these principles I would suggest that the key questions to be asked include:

1. **Has the person capacity?**
specifically - has the individual the ability to make a decision for himself?
In law a person is deemed to be unable to make a decision for himself if he is unable to;
 - a) understand the information relevant to the decision
 - b) retain that information
 - c) to use or weigh that information as part of the process of making the decision; or
 - d) to communicate his decision (whether by talking, using sign language or any other means).

If it is determined that the individual does not have capacity an adult protection strategy meeting or case conference would need to be called as intervention may be required.

2. **Is theirs "Informed Consent"?**
3. **Are they aware of all the options available to them?**

- 4. Are others concerned? (Neighbours, family)**
- 5. Has a crime been committed or is one likely to be committed? If so call the police.**
- 6. Are the actions of the perpetrator affecting others?**
- 7. Is the impact significant? (Are we talking about a risk of serious injury, the loss of large sums of money, or ongoing deprivation of limited assets?)**

If the answers to 5,6 or 7 are yes then the police need to be informed.

If in doubt discuss the situation with a Police Vulnerable Victims Coordinator on 01924-221322

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August 2004**