

Recommended Additions to Your Reporting Policy

Adults with Vulnerabilities

There are multiple offices within the [Department of Human Services \(DHS\)](#) that exist to protect adults against abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Adult Protective Services (APS): <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/doas/services/a-k/aps/>

Adult Protective Services provides investigations of adults living in the community who have reported experiencing abuse, neglect and/or exploitation. If someone you know is 18 years of age or older, **contact your county APS office to file a referral.**

Toll-Free Number: (855) TELL APS | (855) 835-5277

A vulnerable adult is:

- Age 18 years or older,
- Residing in the community (in a private residence or unlicensed, non-institutional setting),
- Due to physical or mental illness, disability or deficiency, lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to make, communicate, or carry out decisions concerning his or her well-being, and
- the subject of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Abuse comes in physical, mental, or sexual forms and can have physical or emotional signs.

Neglect is when a primary caregiver fails to provide adequate assistance that the individual depends on— such as food, clothing, shelter, or necessary medical care.

Self-Neglect is a nonpurposeful act where an individual fails to meet their own essential physical, psychological, or social needs, which threatens the individual's health, safety, and well-being.

Exploitation is when someone takes advantage of the individual for personal benefit in either financial or legal means.

WHO ARE Mandated Reporters? In most states there are “mandatory reporter” statutes applying to persons providing services to seniors or adults with disabilities. Mandatory reporters in New Jersey are: 9 Health care professionals 9 Law enforcement officers 9 Firefighters 9 Paramedics 9 Emergency medical technicians

APS investigation

An APS investigation is a thorough assessment of a vulnerable adult who is experiencing maltreatment. Within 72 business hours of receipt of a report, a face-to-face meeting with the adult by a trained APS social worker is required. During this meeting the vulnerable adult is interviewed in private. Every effort is made to determine the decision-making ability of the adult. Other individuals or agencies that have knowledge of the situation may also be interviewed. When the investigation is complete a report is submitted to the APS Supervisor who will then consult with the social worker and determine if the adult is

the subject of abuse, neglect or exploitation. All information generated by the investigation is confidential

Make sure to provide the following information, but please note that you can make this report anonymously if you so choose:

- The individual's name, address, age/DOB, or other identifying info
- The nature and extent of the suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation
- Description of the situation, any important identifiers of the alleged abuser, or other dangers in their home environment

WHY Should you report? Most seniors and adults with disabilities live independently without assistance. However, some face abuse or neglect by others and need trained professionals to advocate on their behalf. Others may simply be struggling with routine activities and benefit from in-home support services to maintain their health and independence. APS helps by assessing each individual's unique needs, then developing a service plan to maintain his/her safety, health and independence.

WHAT HAPPENS After I make a report? APS will investigate the suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation, and connect the individual with support services if the individual wishes to receive them. We understand that every adult individual has the right to self-determination; APS cannot force anyone to accept help (except in a limited set of circumstances) if they do not wish to receive it. APS does not have jurisdiction in facilities. We also cannot control whether or not law enforcement opens an investigation. Due to strict confidentiality rules, APS may not be able to provide details of an investigation.

CONFIDENTIALITY All records and communications related reports, evaluations, or services provided are confidential. APS may only share information when directed by court order.

Adults retain all their civil and constitutional rights unless some of those rights have been restricted by court action

WHAT IF I'm not sure? Do you just have a "feeling" about a situation but can't verify the details? APS professionals are trained to help in these situations. Based on your report, the agency will assess the situation and determine how best to respond. Your local APS agency can determine the best course of action in such situations.