



media release

June 9, 2011

**SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS,  
SAYS NEW REPORT**

North Somerset dealt with 266 referrals expressing concern about the possible abuse of people over the age of 65 between 2010-2011. Of these, 155 were substantiated or partly substantiated. Ninety referrals concerned possible physical abuse; 86, neglect; and 56 focused on financial abuse. The figures have been released to mark **World Elder Abuse Day (June 15.)**

NHS North Somerset is marking the day by working alongside other members of the North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Group to raise awareness of the issue and how professional agencies and the public can work in partnership to identify a and help prevent the abuse of older people, The Partnership is an inter agency group made up of voluntary and professional organisations across North Somerset, including NHS North Somerset, Avon and Somerset police, Avon Fire and Rescue service, North Somerset Council and carers' representatives.

Explained Claire-Louise Nicholls, NHS North Somerset Programme Manager for: Older People: "Safeguarding vulnerable adults and protecting them from abuse is everyone's business.

The issue of the abuse of vulnerable people has been in the media spotlight over the last two weeks and it has hopefully alerted many people to the issue and what they can do to help protect people who cannot protect themselves. It is deeply concerning that in North Somerset alone over a 12 month period, 266 referrals were received concerning possible abuse of people over 65 – that is more than one on each day of the working week.”

Elder Abuse is defined as ‘a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust,’ and the abuser is usually well known to the person being abused. They may be a paid or volunteer carer, a health or social worker or other professional. They may also be a (ex) partner, child or relative which would mean the abuse also falls in to the category of domestic abuse and can make it even more difficult for the person to recognise or accept what is happening to them.

Explained North Somerset Council’s Safeguarding Adults Manager Alan Mogg, “We know that most prevalent settings for abuse for a person over the age of 65 are a person's own home or a care home. Everyone can help in our work to identify and prevent abuse of elderly people. “

Some indicators of the most prevalent types of abuse could be: -

- **Physical**
- **Neglect**
- **Financial**

Added Alan Mogg: “If people have concerns regarding an older person, or any person who they believe to be vulnerable, they should contact Care Connect, the Council's central referral point on 888801. Their concerns will be taken seriously and action will be taken as necessary. “

He added: “We are also concerned that as more and more vulnerable elderly people received ‘personalised’ support for their social care needs and receive

funding with which to buy the social care they require, they will be more open to financial abuse and exploitation. It is therefore crucial that people are aware of what constitutes abuse and how to help if they are worried it is happening to them or someone they know. “

Claire-Louise Nicholls said that public awareness was likely to prove a powerful tool in the Partnership’s aim to safeguard the most vulnerable adults in the community. “We do not want to frighten or alarm vulnerable people. “However it is important that they and their families realise that they can report suspected abuse to agencies who can step in and provide help and support. No vulnerable person need consider themselves alone.”

Help and advice can be sought from Elder Abuse Response 080 8808 8141 or the domestic abuse help lines on the North Somerset Council and NHS North Somerset websites. If someone is in immediate danger please contact 999. If you are concerned that an older person or an adult who appears to be particularly vulnerable (for example due to illness, disability or addiction) is at risk of abuse then please contact the Adult Safeguarding Team in the local authority where they live (a list of council websites can be found via the Advice and Information on this website).

**-ENDS-**

Press Release issued by Karen Daniel at NHS North Somerset. For more information please contact her on 01275 546895 or at [karen.daniel@nsomerset-pct.nhs.uk](mailto:karen.daniel@nsomerset-pct.nhs.uk)