Reporting and Recording an Incident of Suspected Abuse:  
Do’s and Do Nots

## First, always assume they are telling the truth and stay calm.

## YOU MUST:

* Record the date, time, and location of any disclosure made.
* Record the exact words of the adult at risk and ask them what they would want to happen next.
* Separate facts from opinions. Fact includes dates, times, locations, and who was present. Exclude opinion. These are based on feelings, for example, “I think he was scared”.  Instead "He said..."
* Record any other parties that were present like staff, carers, visitors and the times they were present.
* sign any notes you have recorded, date them and keep them secure.
* Familiarise yourself with your own internal ‘Whistleblowing/Confidential Reporting’ policy.

## YOU MUST NOT:

* Make promises you cannot keep, for example, to keep abuse secret.
* Investigate the abuse yourself - you must report it. Do not interview witnesses other than to obtain the facts.
* Inform the family of the individual, unless this is their wish. Seek guidance if there are issues relating to mental capacity.
* Take photographs of the adult at risk. You can use body maps.
* Appropriate advice should always be sought if needed.  Do not engage or alert the person alleged to have caused the harm or abuse.
* Use leading questions. This could result in evidence being inadmissible in Court. Allow the individual to relay their own version of events and record the facts. Reassure them.

**The reason these are so important is that the outcome of a criminal investigation can be negatively affected if an individual has been led or evidence has been tampered with by anyone believing they are doing the right thing.**