

Protecting you from harm

What is in this fact sheet

- Tips and hints for people in any situation
- Tips and hints for the early stages
- Tips and hints for the later stages
- Tips and hints for families and friends

Key points from this fact sheet

- There are laws to protect people who are vulnerable, even when the person does not realise that they are at risk

One of the aspects of having HD that worries some people is becoming vulnerable and at risk of harm from other people.

There are laws in Scotland which are designed to protect people from harm. They are for people in any situation where they are at risk and also work for people with HD. If you live outside Scotland there may be similar laws to protect people in your area, and some of the tips here will still be useful – but you need to check.

Tips and hints for people in any situation

If you are frightened for yourself or are worried about someone else, you can go to the Police.

You can also go to the Social Work Department in the local authority. There are laws that let them check out what is happening and take steps to look after people when someone is vulnerable. Examples can include when someone is not looking after themselves or some situations where someone is being bothered by other people but the other people are not committing a crime.

There is a law that requires social work department and other agencies to act to protect adults in need of protection – the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act, 2007.

This is in addition to laws that protect the interests of anyone who is not able to look after their money, or make decisions for themselves about their own welfare.

More information when you want it

The Equality and Human Rights Commission can take action when someone's rights are not being respected and they come with the 7 'protected' grounds, which include disability.

You can make sure you want to keep in touch with friends and family members who will watch out for you. People who have other people around them are less likely to come to harm – and this applies to everyone, not just people who have HD. It's because there is less opportunity for someone to hurt us, and if anything does happen the harm gets noticed and stopped more quickly.

You can appoint someone to look after your interests (this includes your financial and welfare interests) if you become unable. There are a number of ways to do this, but the one that you can put in place ahead of time is Power of Attorney. This doesn't become active until you are unable to look after your own interests.

Tips and hints for the early stages

Don't worry about all the details. Just be reassured that these are protections if you ever need them.

Talk to some people you trust about what you would want them to do if they ever felt you were at risk.

Remember that this is just in case – many people will stay safe and well and not need any extra help for this.

Tips and hints for the later stages

Get information on the adult protection laws and places to contact if you need help. Keep this in a place in your house where it is easy to find – for example, to find the phone.

Give a copy to a few people you trust, so they can also get someone to help you if this ever needed.

Talk to some of your family and friends about any worries you have and what you want them to do if they ever do get worried about you.

Talk to a Solicitor about Power of Attorney.

Tips and hints for families and friends

You might also find it useful to know that there are arrangements to protect anyone who is vulnerable. Get the information if it will reassure you.

Talk to the person with HD if you are worried about them – and especially if there is a particular situation that you are concerned about.

One of the best ways to protect people from all sorts of possible harm is to have people around them who look out for them. Think about what you can do to encourage the person to have a mix of friends who will look out for them in the future.