

# Physical Abuse

## **Examples of physical abuse can include:**

- Hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, spitting
- Unapproved use of physical restraint or restriction
- Use of force or the threat of force
- Harsh manual handling, including the inappropriate use of hoists
- Misuse of medication.

## **Signs and symptoms of physical abuse can include:**

- History of unexplained falls or minor injuries especially at different stages of healing
- Unexplained bruising in well-protected areas of the body such as inside of thighs or upper arms, and so on
- Unexplained bruising or injuries of any sort
- Burn marks of unusual type such as burns caused by cigarettes, carpet burns and rope burns
- History of frequent changing of General Practitioners or the General Practitioner not being able to see the vulnerable person
- Storing of medicine which has been prescribed for the person thought to be at risk but not given
- Malnutrition, ulcers, bed sores and being left in wet clothing
- Agencies encounter difficulties in engaging with or being able to see the vulnerable person due to the actions of a third person such as a relative or a carer

## Background

Dave, 53, was an active member of the gay scene and loved to go to the clubs that he had enjoyed for decades. After suffering a severe relapse with his bipolar disorder four years ago, Dave had only found the confidence to start going out again in the last year.

It was at a club that he met Paul six months ago. The friendship had gone well at first but as time went on, Paul had become physically abusive and had started to blackmail Dave with threats to 'out him' if he didn't give him money.

## What happened next?

One of Dave's friends, Adrian, suspected that something was wrong. He hadn't seen much of Dave since Paul had arrived on the scene. When he did briefly see Dave going into a shop, he noticed that he had a bruised face and a black eye. A month later, Adrian saw Dave arguing in the street with Paul and noticed that he had another black eye. Dave was physically cowering and seemed very afraid.

Adrian called 999 and the police arrested Paul and took him into custody.

## What was the outcome?

With Dave's agreement, Paul was charged with actual bodily harm and blackmail and given a one year suspended sentence. As Dave had stated that he would not give face-to-face evidence if he had to appear in court, a video link was arranged. Paul was also issued with a restraining order that prevented him from harassing, pestering or threatening Dave for one year. With Adrian's help and that of his other friends, Dave went on to rebuild his life.