

## FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

### Will I have to give my name when I make a report? If I do, will it be confidential?

Reports may be made anonymously. However, we recommend that you give your name so an investigator can contact you if more information is needed. All reports are confidential. An employer or agency is prohibited from taking any retaliatory action against a person who has made a good faith act of providing information to the hotline.

### Are calls to the hotline recorded?

Yes, all calls made to the hotline are recorded for quality assurance.

### Who is a mandated reporter and what are their responsibilities?

Employees, volunteers, directors, and operators of covered facilities and programs who have regular and substantial contact with people with special needs and certain human service professionals are designated as “mandated reporters” who have a legal duty to report suspected incidents of abuse, neglect or mistreatment to the Justice Center.

### What happens when the hotline receives a report?

A call center representative will record all details of the incident and classify reports of alleged abuse and neglect. All reported incidents are assigned a case number and are entered into an automated case management system. Reports are routed to the appropriate entity for investigation.

### What happens after I make a report?

The Justice Center has legal authority to investigate all reports of abuse and neglect and prosecute allegations that rise to the level of criminal offenses. Cases of less severity may be delegated to the appropriate state agency for investigation.

Each case is tracked to resolution, with state agencies required to report back their findings on delegated cases, which are reviewed by the Justice Center.

### Where can I get more information?

Visit [www.justicecenter.ny.gov](http://www.justicecenter.ny.gov) for more information about the Justice Center and additional resources and programs to support people with special needs.



For the Protection  
of People with  
Special Needs

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Justice Center’s Information and Referral staff at:

Toll-Free:  
1-800-624-4143 (Voice)

TTY:  
Dial 7-1-1 for the NYS Relay and give the operator  
1-800-624-4143

Or email: [infoassistance@justicecenter.ny.gov](mailto:infoassistance@justicecenter.ny.gov)



## Partnering to Protect People with Special Needs

A Guide for Reporting  
Abuse and Neglect



For the Protection  
of People with  
Special Needs

[www.justicecenter.ny.gov](http://www.justicecenter.ny.gov)



The NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs was created by Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Legislature to provide New York with the strongest standards and practices in the nation for protecting the safety and civil rights of people with disabilities and special needs.

The Justice Center is a law enforcement agency, which operates a toll-free hotline that receives reports of allegations of abuse, neglect, and significant incidents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It also serves as an advocate for people with special needs.



For the Protection of People with Special Needs

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor  
Jeff Wise, Executive Director

### Who should report allegations of abuse, neglect or significant incidents?

The Justice Center encourages anyone who has witnessed or has reasonable cause to suspect that a person with special needs has been abused or neglected or is in danger of abuse or neglect to make a report.

### How do I report abuse and neglect?

Reports should be made immediately—at any time of the day or night and on any day of the year—by telephone to the Vulnerable Persons Central Register (VPCR) Hotline. If a person is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1 and then dial the hotline to make a report.

### To report suspected abuse or neglect, call the (VPCR) Hotline:

Toll-Free Voice: 1-855-373-2122  
TTY: 1-855-373-2123

### Who is protected by the Justice Center?

The Justice Center is responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals, who due to physical or cognitive disabilities are receiving care from a facility or provider that is operated, licensed or certified by the following state agencies:

- Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS)
- Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)
- Office of Mental Health (OMH)
- Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)

Also covered are certain adult care facilities and summer camps overseen by the Department of Health (DOH) and residential schools and programs overseen by the State Education Department (SED).

### What types of incidents should be reported to the Justice Center?

Reports should be made regarding any situation in which a person with special needs who is receiving services or supports is experiencing abuse or neglect or may be at risk of harm.



### Types of abuse and neglect to be reported include:

**Physical abuse:** Intentional contact such as hitting, kicking, shoving, corporal punishment or an injury that cannot be explained and is suspicious due to extent or location;

**Sexual abuse:** Inappropriate touching, indecent exposure, sexual assault, taking or distributing sexually explicit photos, voyeurism or other sexual exploitation;

**Psychological or emotional abuse:** Taunting, name calling or using threatening words or gestures;

**Deliberate misuse of restraint or seclusion:** Use of these interventions with excessive force as a punishment or for the convenience of staff;

**Neglect:** Failure to provide supervision, or adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care or access to an educational entitlement;

**Aversive conditioning:** Unpleasant physical stimulus used to modify behavior without person-specific legal authorization; or

**Obstruction:** Interfering with the discovery, reporting or investigation of abuse/ neglect, falsifying records or intentionally making false statements.

### Types of significant incidents to be reported include:

- Use of restraint when it is avoidable, involves a banned technique or is used by inadequately trained staff;
- Unauthorized seclusion or time-out; or
- Administration of a medication contrary to a medical order resulting in an adverse impact.