

THE VULNERABLE ADULTS ACT

Strengthening Our Ability To Protect

WHAT IS THE VULNERABLE ADULTS ACT?

The Act complements existing care networks and laws that protect vulnerable adults (VAs) such as the Women's Charter and Mental Capacity Act. It:

1. Ensures the VA's best interests, when protecting him or her from harm;
2. Recognises that a VA with mental capacity can generally decide how to live and seek help;
3. Recognises that if the VA lacks mental capacity, his or her views and beliefs should be considered; and
4. Recognises that help given to the VA must, as far as possible, not restrict his or her rights or freedom.

WHO IS A VA?

- a. A person aged 18 and older;
- b. Suffers from physical or mental infirmity, disability or incapacity; and
- c. Is incapable of protecting oneself from harm.



HOW THE COMMUNITY CAN PROTECT VAs

- Community and social service agencies can support families to care for and protect VAs



UNDER THE ACT

- VAs can be placed in appointed care facilities to ensure safety and welfare
- Appointed professionals in the community may apply for protection orders for VAs with mental capacity upon consent
- Professionals working with VAs will be protected from liability when performing duties in good faith



HOW FAMILY CAN PROTECT VAs

- Family members should take the first step to protect and seek help for VAs



UNDER THE ACT, FAMILY MEMBERS:

- Can apply for protection orders with the VA's consent (e.g. restrict access or restrain abuse)
- Can provide for the VA who has been placed in their care
- May be directed by the Court to attend mandatory programmes to ensure the safety of the VA



HOW THE STATE CAN PROTECT VAs

- The State will intervene as a last resort where family and community interventions are ineffective



UNDER THE ACT, THE STATE:

- Can enter homes of suspected VAs to assess well-being; obtain information for intervention; and relocate VAs to safe environments;
- Can apply for Court orders for alternative placement, counselling, de-cluttering and protection
- Can investigate offences under the Act such as breach of Court orders, non-compliance with State's directions and unlawful removal of VAs from care facilities
- Can press for heavier penalties for those charged with offences committed under the Penal Code, Protection from Harassment Act, and Women's Charter



If you know of a VA who needs protection, contact the **ComCare Hotline** at **1800-222-0000**.

Your identity will be kept anonymous.

Find out more: www.msf.gov.sg/vulnerableadults