

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR THE PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS

## **Introduction**

This organisation recognises that vulnerable adults are at risk of abuse by staff and volunteers, other service users, carers and other people within the community including professionals.

## **Purpose of the Policy and Procedure**

- To set out the principles underpinning this organisation's approach to the protection of vulnerable adults.
- To define broadly the different types of abuse and identify associated signs, recognising that this will not include every potential area of abuse.
- To set out a clear procedure for employees and others who suspect possible abuse.
- ◆ To provide a framework to ensure that all staff and volunteers receive basic training in identifying and responding to evidence or suspicions of abuse. This training must be included in the core induction process and is regularly reinforced in formal training and individual supervision.

## **Principles**

The policy of this organisation is based on the belief that all people are entitled to live free from abuse. We recognise that vulnerable adults are at risk of abuse and exploitation that there is a wide potential for abuse in every type of care and accommodation situation.

We have an important shared responsibility to increase awareness around issues of abuse and to have clear procedures for employees and others to follow should they have any suspicion that abuse is occurring or has occurred.

We also recognise the fundamental human rights of the people we serve and that a society that promotes and upholds the rights of each individual to live as a valued and respected citizen, is one in which vulnerable people are most likely to live free from abuse.

We therefore do not support any procedures or practices that oppress service users by denying them basic freedoms in the guise of 'protecting' them.

If vulnerable people need support and assistance to enjoy the rights and freedoms the majority enjoys it is our duty as a society to provide that support. It is therefore our duty as an organisation that promotes the rights of vulnerable people to draw attention to the statutory authorities any examples of institutional policies and procedures that do not follow that principle.

All our policies and procedures recognise that adults are entitled to:

- ◆ Choice : the opportunity to select independently from a range of options based on clear accessible information;
- ◆ Rights : all entitlements and responsibilities associated with citizenship, including the rights to take the 'normal' risks associated with being an adult and member of a free society and to face the consequences for one's actions;

- ◆ Fulfilment: the realisation of personal preferences in all aspects of daily life, irrespective of the tastes and values of others;
- ◆ Privacy: the right to be alone or undisturbed and free from intrusion, this includes the right to confidential treatment and to have one's trust respected;
- ◆ Dignity : respect for all people regardless of circumstances, including protection from humiliating and degrading treatment;
- ◆ Partnership: no decisions should be made that affect the individual or the interests of any group to which s/he belongs without consultation, representation and the right to appeal. This includes the right to be central to the care and support planning processes and to be adequately informed about and involved or represented in decision making processes;
- ◆ Minimum intervention: there should be no intervention beyond the necessary level as agreed within the context of the care/support/ person centred plan. We also realise that unforeseen or emergency situations may arise when our 'duty of care' requires that we intervene to protect an individual from obvious harm or to secure access to life –saving treatment before referring on to the appropriate statutory agencies at the earliest safe opportunity.

### **Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of everyone concerned with WLDA who receive an allegation or disclosure of abuse from any source, or who suspect abuse to report their concerns to the Safeguarding Champion.

### **Defining Abuse**

- ◆ Abuse can take different forms: physical, emotional, sexual, financial and can occur through neglect, as an intended or unintended consequence of deliberate actions or through the existence of an 'abusive regime'.
- ◆ Abuse is a single or repeated act or omission, which causes harm or distress to a vulnerable person.
- ◆ The term abuse is normally associated within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust, but lack of awareness and consideration of the risks of abuse by those who support them can leave vulnerable adults at risk of abuse by strangers.

### **Procedures**

- ◆ A vulnerable adult, a colleague, relative or member of the public may disclose to a member of staff or volunteer information about an incident or incidents that could be construed as abuse. Alternatively s/he may make an allegation that he or she has been the victim of abuse or has witnessed abuse occurring to someone else. The staff member must listen to and record exactly what they say, encouraging them to speak without asking questions directly as far as possible about the incident itself, other than clarifying basic factual details she/he may ask if the person is injured in case immediate medical treatment is required. Every allegation must be recorded and reported, whether or not the staff member hearing the allegation believes it is well founded.
- ◆ If a member of staff or volunteer suspects abuse, it is their direct responsibility to report their concerns to the Safeguarding Champion. The staff member/volunteer should give as much detail as possible about the nature of their concerns and the time place and content and nature of any discussions with any one else involved.

- ◆ It is recognised that a person's view of whether or not abuse has occurred may seem subjective, wherever possible subjective opinions should be kept to a minimum and the report should focus on factual information.
- ◆ Grounds for suspecting that abuse is occurring may be based on personal knowledge of the vulnerable adult and observations of changes in their mood, behaviour or personal presentation, rather than evidence of injury or disclosure. These indicators should be reported and recorded in detail.
- ◆ The Safeguarding Champion will document the full details of the situation and make further enquiries if necessary to ensure that the vulnerable adult is protected from any further harm while the appropriate authorities are informed.
- ◆ Where risk of harm is suspected, the manager will take further steps to protect that person from further harm. For example if the suspected abuser is a member of staff or volunteer, that person must be suspended while the matter is investigated. If the suspected abuser is a family member, other service user or visitor, they must not be left alone with the vulnerable person until the local authority has been informed and given the opportunity to initiate their own procedures. If staff are concerned that the abuse has occurred in another service used by the vulnerable adult (for example a day centre, or work place) they should similarly be protected from further unaccompanied exposure to the source of abuse until the matter has been investigated
- ◆ If the Safeguarding Champion has evidence that supports an explanation for any injuries or distress that are inconsistent with abuse (for example independent witnesses to an accident) the incident must be fully documented. If there is not an immediate explanation the suspicion that abuse has occurred must be reported to the local authority adult protection committee according to the procedures set down in their 'No Secrets' guidelines.
- ◆ If staff believe that a vulnerable adult has injuries or requires medical attention they should be supported in gaining access to emergency treatment. The clinical staff should be informed of the nature of the suspicions about the source of the injury so that they can take steps to ensure that potential evidence is not destroyed or compromised.
- ◆ Where the allegation relates to the actions of another staff member, disciplinary proceedings may be triggered. The designated committee member must consult the Social Services Department and the police prior to this to ensure that the adult protection process and any criminal investigation are not compromised. This does not preclude the designated committee member from taking steps to protect the vulnerable adult from further harm or the risk of intimidation, for example by suspending the member of staff on full pay. If it is found that an incident has occurred where a vulnerable adult has been subject to abuse that has not resulted in criminal action, disciplinary procedures will still be triggered. For example a vulnerable adult may have suffered harm or distress because the member of staff did not follow procedures or instructions. Where procedures have been flouted and distress or harm to a vulnerable person has resulted or where a staff member or volunteer has engaged in practices that have not followed the principles set out above, this may be judged to be gross misconduct. Gross misconduct may result in dismissal without further warning, subject to appropriate disciplinary procedures being followed.

## INDICATORS OF ABUSE

<p><b>Physical Abuse</b></p>	<p><b><i>Physical abuse is the deliberate infliction of pain, physical harm or injury and includes withholding or misuse of medication.</i></b></p> <p><u>Indicators include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multiple bruising;</li> <li>▪ A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries;</li> <li>▪ Fractures or injuries not consistent with falls or explanations of the injury;</li> <li>▪ Unexplained loss of hair in clumps;</li> <li>▪ Cuts that are not likely to be explained by self-injury;</li> <li>▪ Finger-marks;</li> <li>▪ Burns or scalds not consistent with possible explanations;</li> <li>▪ Deterioration of health without obvious cause: for example increasing immobility, weight loss, dehydration, poor skin.</li> <li>▪ Signs of misuse of medication (for example excessive lethargy or sedation);</li> <li>▪ Withdrawal;</li> <li>▪ Flinching;</li> <li>▪ Evidence of pain/ discomfort during normal handling or activity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Psychological and emotional abuse</b></p>	<p><b><i>Psychological and emotional abuse is any pattern of behaviour by another that results in harm and may include insults, humiliation, ridicule, bullying, threats, enforced isolation, interference in relationships and contact between consenting adults, coercion, lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity.</i></b></p> <p><i>Indicators include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Signs of strain within a relationship and/ or tension when a particular person is present;</li> <li>▪ Indicators that an individual acts differently when a third person is present than at other times;</li> <li>▪ A general lack of respect or consideration for the needs and feelings of vulnerable adults or a particular person;</li> <li>▪ Refusal to allow a vulnerable adult a choice (for example to participate in or opt out of an activity, to eat or not eat more or less of particular foods, to dress according to preference and personal comfort, to go to bed at other than a set time);</li> <li>▪ Denial of privacy in respect to the care feelings or other aspect of the life of a vulnerable adult.</li> <li>▪ Denial of access to the vulnerable adult, especially where the person is in need of assistance which s/he consequently will not receive;</li> <li>▪ Denial or restriction of freedom of movement;</li> <li>▪ Signs of withdrawal or fear or other changes to the vulnerable person's emotional state;</li> <li>▪ Signs of unexplained sleep or weight loss.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual Abuse</b></p>	<p><b><i>Sexual Abuse is any sexual activity involving but carried out without the informed consent of a vulnerable adult. Sexual abuse may include</i></b></p>

	<p><i>sexual intercourse, inappropriate touching or fondling, offensive or suggestive language, 'voyeuristic' behaviour which is observing vulnerable adults in situations where they might reasonably expect privacy and exposing a vulnerable adult to the suggestive, offensive and sexually explicit activities of others, including films, photographs or other recordings.</i></p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unexplained bruising around or bleeding from the genital area;</li> <li>▪ Stained or bloody underclothing;</li> <li>▪ Unexplained difficulties in walking;</li> <li>▪ Reluctance of the person to be alone with an individual known to them;</li> <li>▪ Unexplained behaviour or mood change.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial abuse</b></p>	<p><i>Financial abuse is the misappropriation of the funds (savings or income) or property of a vulnerable adult. This may include misuse of finances, exploitation, theft or fraudulent use of money, embezzlement, misuse of property or possessions and incurring financial liabilities on behalf of a vulnerable person without their informed consent or consultation with an independent advocate or representative.</i></p> <p>Indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Situations where despite having a personal income the vulnerable adult is without money soon after its receipt, particularly where s/he is unable to spend money without support or assistance;</li> <li>▪ Unexplained shortage of money despite a seemingly adequate disposable income;</li> <li>▪ Unexplained withdrawals from savings accounts;</li> <li>▪ Unexplained disappearance of financial documents for example bank statements, receipts for non-routine expenditure;</li> <li>▪ Loss of personal possessions;</li> <li>▪ Indicators that carers or staff are using the vulnerable adult's personal property inappropriately.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Neglect</b></p>	<p><i>Neglect may be deliberate or by default where the abuser is not able to provide the care and support needed or may not recognise the need for the care and support to be given. It may include the failure to protect the vulnerable adult from obvious danger. the abuser may also be neglecting themselves.</i></p> <p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Persistent hunger;</li> <li>▪ Weight loss;</li> <li>▪ Poor hygiene;</li> <li>▪ Dress inappropriate to weather or activities;</li> <li>▪ Lack of supervision and companionship for prolonged periods particularly in activities and situations where there is danger;</li> <li>▪ Denial of religious or cultural needs;</li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Constant fatigue and listlessness;</li><li>▪ Physical problems and medical needs that are not attended to;</li><li>Signs of self neglect, illness , stress or depression in care giver;</li><li>Excessive consumption of alcohol by the care giver</li></ul> |
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## **Safeguarding adults**

Some adults aged eighteen and over due to age, disability, illness or lifestyle may not be able to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Every day, abuse of adults at risk goes unreported. Local authorities, police and NHS agencies involved with adults who might be at risk of abuse have a duty of care to make sure that procedures are in place to encourage reporting of suspected abuse, and take action to stop the abuse.

## **Identifying abuse**

Abuse occurs when someone's human and civil rights are violated by someone else. This can be:

- a single or series of actions of abuse
- deliberately or unknowingly causing harm
- failure to protect people from abuse

Anyone can abuse and often it can be the person you least expect. Abusers could include:

- spouse/partner
- carers and care workers
- family member/relative
- friend
- neighbour
- volunteer helper
- someone not known to the person

## **Things to look out for:**

- possible changes in the person's behaviour or mood/personality

- unexplained injury or a series of injuries
- signs of fear or distress
- signs of neglect
- theft, fraud or unexplained financial worries

## **Who to tell**

### **Reporting abuse on line**

You can use the safeguarding adults alert form to report any suspected abuse on line.

If you are a professional and suspect abuse use the safeguarding alert form for professionals. This can be done anonymously.

### **Adult Social Care Services**

Telephone **0300 123 6721**

### **Lancashire Police**

Telephone 0845 1 25 35 45

### **Health or social care staff**

For example, a social worker, nurse, doctor, occupational therapist

You can also tell someone you trust. Ask them to report the matter for you.

If you are in immediate danger or you think a criminal act is being committed contact the police by calling 999.

### **What you can expect to happen next**

If you tell health or social care staff, they will:

- take your concerns seriously
- make sure that the person is safe
- help the person to get medical treatment, if needed
- involve the police if a crime is suspected

- involve other staff to investigate and protect the person being abused

When you report a suspected abuse, you do not have to give your name, but if you do, it will not be given to the people involved.

**All suspected incidents of abuse will be investigated fully and appropriately.**

Signed E McCarthy 19 10 18.