

SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Document History:

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SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Policy Statement

Woking Mind values and encourages the involvement of people who may be vulnerable, both in its own work and in the work of other organisations. Through its Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy, Woking Mind is committed to their well being and safeguarding their health, safety and general welfare while in the company or care of its staff and volunteers.

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. Whether or not a person is vulnerable in these cases will depend upon surrounding circumstances, environment and each case must be judged on its own merits. (Surrey Protecting Vulnerable Adults Multi Agency Procedures).

It should be recognised that people with special needs are able to cope in many situations, so sensitivity and common sense should be exercised.

Purpose

Through the implementation of this policy Woking Mind aims to ensure that:

- All vulnerable people have a safe environment with people they can trust
- All risks that vulnerable people encounter are carefully assessed and all necessary steps are taken to minimise and manage them

This policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to the following areas:

- Responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against staff and volunteers
- Recruitment and vetting of staff and volunteers
- Supervision of organisational activities
- Code of Conduct
- Support and Training

This Policy applies to all employees, trustees and volunteers and other people representing Woking Mind who have contact with vulnerable people.

Principles

This policy is based on the following principles:

- All vulnerable adults have a right to be protected and their decisions respected even if that decision involves risk.
- The prime concern at all stages will be the interests and safety of the vulnerable adult.

- The aim will be to give a professional service to support and minimise distress to any vulnerable adult.
- Everyone will be treated sensitively at all stages of the investigation.
- The importance of professionals working in partnership with the vulnerable adult and others involved, will be recognised throughout the process.
- All services will be provided in a manner that respects the rights, dignity, privacy and beliefs of all the individuals concerned and does not discriminate on the basis of race, culture, religion, language, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation.
- Vulnerable adults who have been abused need the same care and sensitivity, whoever the alleged abuser.
- The responsibility to refer the vulnerable adult thought to be at risk rests with the person who has the concern.
- All agencies receiving confidential information in the context of a vulnerable adult investigation will make decisions about sharing this information in appropriate circumstances.
- Procedures provide a framework to ensure that agencies work together for the protection of vulnerable adults. They are not a substitute for professional judgement and sensitivity.
- Vulnerable adults have the right to have an independent advocate if they wish, at any stage in the process.
- The welfare of vulnerable people is paramount.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff (paid/unpaid) have a responsibility to report concerns to the Safeguarding Officer with responsibility for safeguarding vulnerable adults.
- Staff/volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

Definitions of abuse

Abuse may occur in domestic, institutional and public settings:

- Domestic settings: including their own home, or another person's home.
- Institutional settings: including day care, residential care, nursing homes and hospitals.
- Public settings: including in the street, any public area or social or work environment.

Abuse of vulnerable adults occurs in all cultures, all religions and all levels of society.

The abuser may be anyone, including a member of the family, friend, neighbour, partner, carer, stranger, care worker, manager, volunteer, another service user or any other person who comes into contact with the vulnerable adult.

Domestic violence

Actual or threatened physical, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse which takes place in the context of a close relationship between adults, usually partners or ex-partners. Domestic violence involves the use of power and exercise of control by one person over another.

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

Abuse can be broadly defined under the following categories:

Physical abuse

The non-accidental infliction of physical force that results (or could result) in bodily injury, pain or impairment.

Examples of behaviour: hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, physical restraint, harassment, enforced sedation, inappropriate use of medication, and catheterisation for management ease.

Sexual abuse

Direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without consent.

Examples of behaviour: Non-contact - looking, photography, indecent exposure, harassment, serious teasing or innuendo, pornography.

Contact - coercion to touch, e.g. of breast, genitals, anus, mouth, masturbation of either self or others, penetration or attempted penetration of vagina, anus, mouth, with or by penis, fingers, and/or other objects.

Neglect

Ignoring or withholding physical or medical care needs.

Examples of behaviour: failure to provide appropriate food, shelter, heating, clothing, medical care, hygiene, personal care; inappropriate use of medication or over-medication.

Psychological / emotional abuse

Psychological abuse is that which impinges on the emotional health and development of individuals. It also presents with other forms of abuse.

Examples of behaviour: shouting, swearing, insulting, ignoring, threats, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, depriving an individual of the right to choice and privacy.

Financial / material abuse

The unauthorised, fraudulent obtaining and improper use of funds, property or any resources of a vulnerable person.

Examples of behaviour: misappropriating money, valuables or property, forcing changes to will, denying the vulnerable adult the right to access personal funds.

Abuse of individual rights / discriminatory abuse / racial abuse

Abuse of individual rights is a violation of human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Discriminatory abuse consists of abusive or derisive attitudes or behaviour based on a person's sex, sexuality, ethnic origin, race, culture, age, disability or any other discriminatory abuse.

Professional abuse

Professional abuse is the misuse of therapeutic power and abuse of trust by professionals, the failure of professionals to act on suspected abuse/crimes, poor care practice or neglect in services, resource shortfalls or service pressures that lead to service failure and culpability as a result of poor management systems/structures.

Examples of behaviour: entering into a sexual relationship with a patient/client, failure to refer disclosure of abuse, poor, ill-informed or outmoded care practice, failure to support vulnerable adult to access health care/treatment, denying vulnerable adults access to professional support and services such as advocacy, service design where groups of users living together are incompatible, punitive responses to challenging behaviours, failure to whistle-blow on issues when internal procedures to highlight issues are exhausted.

Procedures

Recognising and Responding to Abuse

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

Physical signs of abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or games

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Neglect, under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example, wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour

Emotional signs of abuse

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- A failure to thrive
- Sudden speech disorders
- Persistent tiredness

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with others
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self-harm
- Fear of carer being approached regarding their behaviour

Sexual Abuse

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital/anal area

- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Eating problems such as over-eating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they can not tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money

Neglect

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from others
- Constantly dirty or smelly
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised

Reporting cases of suspected abuse

Concerns must be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Officer.

The Safeguarding Officer is The Services Co-ordinator Michael Andrews

The role of the Safeguarding Officer is to:

- Obtain information from staff, volunteers, vulnerable person and carers who have vulnerable adult safeguarding concerns and to record this information.
- Assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further information as appropriate.

- Consult with a statutory vulnerable adult protection agency such as the local social services department in order to clarify any doubts or worries.
- The Safeguarding Officer should make a referral to a statutory adult protection agency or the police without delay.
- Where appropriate a referral should also be made to the ISA.

The Safeguarding Officer has been nominated by Woking Mind to refer allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. In the absence of Michael Andrews the matter should be brought to the attention of David Rye

Suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the adult protection agencies. If for any reason it is believed that the nominated persons have not responded appropriately to the concerns, the adult protection agencies may be contacted directly.

Allegations of physical injury or neglect

If a vulnerable adult has a symptom of physical injury or neglect the Safeguarding Officer will:

- Contact Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury or concerns about the safety of the vulnerable adult. The carers should not be informed by the organisation in these circumstances.
- Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The designated person will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
- In other circumstances the carer should be contacted and it suggested that medical help/attention is sought for the vulnerable adult. The doctor will then initiate further action if necessary.
- If appropriate the carer will be encouraged to seek help from Social Services. If the carer fails to act the Safeguarding Officer should in case of real concern contact Social Services for advice.
- Where the Safeguarding Officer is unsure whether to refer a case to Social Services then advice from the Area Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Committee will be sought.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse the Safeguarding Officer will:

- Contact the Social Service duty social worker for vulnerable adults directly. The Safeguarding Officer will not speak to the carer (or anyone else).
- If the Safeguarding Officer is unsure whether or not to follow the above guidance then advice from the Area Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Committee will be sought.

- Under no circumstances should the Safeguarding Officer attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the Safeguarding Officer is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to Social Services whose task it is to investigate the matter.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse should normally be reported to the Safeguarding Officer, their absence should not delay referral to Social Services.

Responding to a vulnerable adult making an allegation of abuse

Where a vulnerable adult makes a disclosure, the person to whom it is being disclosed should:

- Stay calm and listen carefully to what is being said.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others. Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Allow the vulnerable adult to continue at his/her own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all time avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the vulnerable adult that they have done the right thing in telling them
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing what was said using the vulnerable adults own words, as soon as possible, note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.

Helpful statements to make:

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the vulnerable adult says)
- Thank you for telling me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you

Things not to say:

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure that this is true?
- Why? Who? When? Where?
- Never make false promises

Recording disclosures

Make notes as soon as possible (ideally within 1 hour of being told). Write down exactly what the vulnerable adult said and what was said in reply and what was happening immediately before

being told (i.e. the activity being delivered). Record the dates, times and when the record was made. All hand written notes should be kept securely.

Use the form "Reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse" This form is attached at the back of this policy. (Appendix 1)

Report the discussion to the Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. If this person is implicated, report to (second person). If both are implicated, report to Social Services.

Under no circumstances discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated above.

After a vulnerable adult has disclosed abuse the Safeguarding Officer should carefully consider whether or not it is safe for a vulnerable adult to return home to potentially abusive situation. On rare occasions it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social Services to discuss putting safety measures into effect.

Recruitment and appointment of workers and volunteers

In recruiting and appointing workers Woking Mind will be responsible for the following:

- Identifying the tasks and responsibilities involved and the type of person most suitable for the job.
- Drawing up the Selection criteria and putting together a list of essential and desirable qualifications, skills and experience.
- All applicants should apply in writing and their application will cover their personal details, previous and current work/volunteering experience.
- Always send a copy of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy with the application pack.
- Make sure that the application is measured against the selection criteria.
- All applicants need to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they should be considered unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) requires that people applying for positions which give them "substantial, unsupervised access on a sustained or regular basis" to vulnerable adults must declare all previous convictions which are then subject to CRB checks. They can then only be offered a job subject to a successful CRB disclosure/ ISA registration. This includes potential employees, volunteers and self-employed people such as sports coaches. They are also required to declare any pending case against them. It is important that applicants in this particular category understand that all information will be dealt with confidentially and will not be used against them unfairly.
- Photographic evidence to confirm the identity of the applicant e.g. their passport/driving licence. In addition to this evidence of their address which is dated within the last 3 months is required.
- Request to see documentation of any qualifications detailed by the applicant.
- Interview candidates, ask for two references and a CRB disclosure/ ISA Registration.

- Request two written references from people who are not family members or friends and who have knowledge of the applicant's experience of working with vulnerable adults. Referees will be asked to comment on their suitability for working with vulnerable adults. The same principles apply to people who have been involved with the organisation and have become volunteers.
- Ensure that successful applicant obtains an Enhanced Criminal Record Certificate (ECRC) from the Criminal Records Bureau/ ISA registration.

Allegations against a member of staff

Woking Mind assures all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a vulnerable adult. Where there is a complaint against a member of staff, there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation,
- A vulnerable adult protection investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and vulnerable adult protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action if there are concerns

Concerns about poor practice

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, this will be dealt with as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the Safeguarding Officer or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Chair who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not the organisation should initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Concerns about suspected abuse

Any suspicion that a vulnerable adult has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the vulnerable adult in question and any other vulnerable adult who may be at risk.

The Safeguarding Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.

The carers of the vulnerable adult will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Services department.

If the Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or Chair who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

The Safeguarding Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and Social Services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or police inquiries the organisation will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the organisation must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the vulnerable adult should remain of paramount importance throughout

Supervision for activities and services

Woking Mind will aim to protect vulnerable adults from abuse and our team members from false allegations by adopting the following guidelines:

- Keep a register of all vulnerable adults attending our activities.
- Keep a register of all team members (both paid staff members and volunteers)
- Registers will include arrival and departure times and the names of others in the building at the time.
- Keep a record of all sessions including monitoring and evaluation records.
- Team members will record any unusual events on the accident/incident form.
- Where possible, team members will not be alone with a vulnerable adult, although it is recognised that there may be times when this may be necessary or helpful
- Team members will escort vulnerable adults of the same sex to the toilet but are not expected to be involved with toileting, unless the vulnerable adult has a special need that has been brought to our attention by the carer.
- All team members will treat all vulnerable adults with dignity and respect in attitude, language and actions.

Code of Conduct

Staff/ volunteers should not:

- Be alone with vulnerable adults
- Unlock or lock up premises without another adult present
- Transport vulnerable adults in a car or minibus without another adult being present
- Take vulnerable adults to their home

- Make inappropriate contact with vulnerable adults ie develop relationships outside the club setting
- Leave vulnerable adults unattended
- Leave vulnerable adults in the presence of adults who are not suitably trained
- Leave vulnerable adults in the presence of adults not known to the member of staff/volunteer
- Leave vulnerable adults in the presence of adults who have not had the relevant CRB checks
- Show favouritism to vulnerable adults within the organisation

Anti- Bullying Policy

Woking Mind does not accept or condone any form of bullying. All forms of bullying will be addressed.

Bullying can include:

- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc
- Name – calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation and continuing ignoring of individuals
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual comments or suggestions
- Unwanted physical contact
- E-mails/ text messages, telephone calls

Any witnessed or reported incident of bullying will be thoroughly investigated and will involve listening to all those involved.

Support and Training

Woking Mind is committed to the provision of safeguarding training for all team members.

Opportunities for staff to attend safeguarding training will be provided to cover the following areas:

- What is abuse?
- Definitions of abuse
- Recognising abuse
- Responsibilities
- Responding to allegations of abuse
- Working to a Code of Conduct

All new staff will receive a copy of Safeguarding Vulnerable Adult Policy as part of their induction.

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints should be put in writing to the Chair, who will conduct a fair and thorough investigation.

The role of the Safeguarding Officer

The role of the Safeguarding Officer is to:

- Establish contact with the senior member of Social Services staff responsible for safeguarding vulnerable adults
- Provide information and advice on safeguarding vulnerable adults within the organisation
- Ensure safeguarding vulnerable adults policies and procedures are followed
- Liaise with statutory organisations as required
- Keep members of the organisation informed about any action taken and any further action required
- Ensure that case records are maintained and stored confidentially
- Advise the organisation of any safeguarding training needs

REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

If you have any concerns about a vulnerable adult being abused you should inform the Safeguarding Officer detailed below.

Organisation: Woking Mind

Name: Michael Andrews

Job/Role: Services Co-ordinator

Address: CornerHouse, 2 Courtenay Rd, Woking, Surrey GU21 5HQ

Tel no: 07905799581

Important contacts outside the organisation

Social Services office: Woking Locality Team

Adult Social Care

Quadrant Court

35 Guildford Road

Woking

GU22 7QQ

Tel no: Adult social care - 0300 200 1005

Vulnerable Adult Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE
Confidential Recording Sheet

Organisation:

Name of person reporting:

Name of Vulnerable adult:

Age and date of birth:

Ethnicity:

Religion:

First language:

Disability:

Carer's name(s):

Home address/Tel no:

Are you reporting your concerns or reporting someone else's. Please give details:

Brief description of what has prompted the concerns: include date, time, specific incidents:

Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?:

Have you spoken to the vulnerable adult? If so, what was said?:

Have you spoken to the carer(s)? if so, what was said?:

Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, please give details?:

Have you consulted anybody else? Please give details:

Person reported to and date of reporting:

Signature of person reporting:

Today's date:

Action taken:

Notes: