

Policy	38. Safeguarding policy (Adults)
Approved by	CEO, SLT, Trustees. May-20
Next review	Apr-22

This policy is in line with the advice and guidance from the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board.

Living a life that is free from harm and abuse is a fundamental right of every person. When abuse does take place, it needs to be dealt with swiftly, effectively and in ways which are proportionate to the issues and where the adult in need of protection stays as much in control of the decision-making as is possible. The right of the individual to be heard throughout this process is a critical element in the drive towards more personalised care and support.

All staff have a key role in preventing harm or abuse occurring and in taking action where concerns arise. The policy and procedures set out here are designed to explain simply and clearly how we should work together to protect adults at risk.

The procedures outlined aim to make sure that:

- the needs and interests of adults at risk are always respected and upheld
- the human rights of adults at risk are respected and upheld
- a proportionate, timely, professional and ethical response is made to any adult at risk who may be experiencing abuse
- all decisions and actions are taken in line with the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 and the Care Act of 2014.

The procedures also aim to ensure that each adult at risk maintains:

- choice and control
- safety
- health
- quality of life
- dignity and respect.

As an organisation, we are committed to working together with partner agencies to:

- prevent and protect adults at risk from abuse
- empower and support people to make their own choices
- record and report suspected abuse or neglect
- support adults at risk who are experiencing abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Adults at risk, abuse of adults and significant harm

An adult at risk is defined as a person aged 18 or over who is in receipt of or who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Abuse is defined as a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons which may result in significant harm.

Abuse may be:

- a single act or repeated acts
- an act of neglect or a failure to act
- multiple acts (e.g. an adult at risk may be both neglected and financially abused).

Abuse is about the misuse of the power and control that one person has over another. Where there is dependency, there is a possibility of abuse or neglect unless adequate safeguards are put in place. Intent is not necessarily an issue at the point of deciding whether an act or a failure to act is abuse; it is the impact of the act on the person and the harm or risk of harm to that individual.

Abuse can take place anywhere: a person's own home, day or residential centres, supported housing, educational establishments, nursing homes, clinics and hospitals. A number of abusive acts are crimes and informing the police must be a key consideration.

Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the adult at risk. A wide range of people may harm adults. These include:

- a member of staff, owner or manager at a residential or nursing home
- a professional worker such as a nurse, social worker or general practitioner (GP)
- a volunteer or member of a 'community group' such as a social club or place of worship
- another service user
- a spouse, partner, relative or friend
- a carer
- a neighbour, member of the public or a stranger
- a person who deliberately targets adults at risk in order to exploit them.

Significant harm is defined as:

- ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical)
- the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health, and/or
- the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

The importance of this definition is that, in deciding what action to take, consideration must be given not only to the immediate impact on and risk to the person, but also to the risk of future, longer-term harm. Seriousness of harm, or the extent of the abuse, is not always clear at the point of the alert or referral.

The following factors should be taken into account when making an assessment of the seriousness of risk to the person:

- vulnerability of the person
- nature and extent of the abuse or neglect
- length of time the abuse or neglect has been occurring
- impact of the alleged abuse on the adult at risk
- risk of repeated or increasingly serious acts of abuse or neglect
- risk that serious harm could result if no action is taken
- illegality of the act or acts.

Abuse can be viewed in terms of the following categories (although this is not an exhaustive list):

- physical
- sexual
- psychological/emotional
- financial and material
- neglect and acts of omission
- discriminatory
- institutional.

Many abusive behaviours constitute a criminal offence. All suspected abuse must be investigated. Many situations may involve more than one type of abuse. Consider the definition of each category in turn, together with their indicators. Be aware that the lists are only an indication that abuse is happening and disclosure from an individual may also be offered. The presence of one or more of these signs does not confirm abuse. However, the presence of one or a number of these indicators may suggest the potential for abuse and a safeguarding alert must be made.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, being locked in a room, inappropriate sanctions or force-feeding, inappropriate methods of restraint, and unlawfully depriving a person of their liberty.

Possible indicators include:

- Unexplained or inappropriately explained injuries.
- Person exhibiting untypical self-harm.
- Unexplained cuts or scratches to mouth, lips, gums, eyes or external genitalia.
- Unexplained bruising to the face, torso, arms, back, buttocks, thighs, in various stages of healing. Collections of bruises that form regular patterns which correspond to the shape of an object or which appear on several areas of the body.
- Unexplained burns on unlikely areas of the body (e.g. soles of the feet, palms of the hands, back), immersion burns (from scalding in hot water/liquid), rope burns, burns from an electrical appliance.
- Unexplained or inappropriately explained fractures at various stages of healing to any part of the body.
- Medical problems that go unattended.
- Sudden and unexplained urinary and/or faecal incontinence.
- Evidence of over-/under-medication.
- Person flinches at physical contact.
- Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of particular people.
- Person asks not to be hurt.
- Person may repeat what the alleged abuser has said (e.g. 'Shut up or I'll hit you').
- Reluctance to undress or uncover parts of the body.
- Person wears clothes that cover all parts of their body or specific parts of their body.
- A person without capacity not being allowed to go out of a care home when they ask to.
- A person without capacity not being allowed to be discharged at the request of an unpaid carer/family member.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts that the adult at risk has not consented to, could not consent to or was pressured into. It includes penetration of any sort, incest and situations where the alleged abuser touches the abused person's body, exposes his or her genitals (possibly encouraging the abused person to touch them) or coerces the abused person into participating in or looking at pornographic videos or photographs. Denial of a sexual life to consenting adults is also considered abusive practice. Any sexual relationship that develops between adults where one is in a position of trust, power or authority in relation to the other (e.g. day centre worker/social worker/residential worker/health worker etc.) may also constitute sexual abuse.

Possible indicators include:

- Person has urinary tract infections, vaginal infections or sexually transmitted diseases that are not otherwise explained.
- Person appears unusually subdued, withdrawn or has poor concentration.
- Person exhibits significant changes in sexual behaviour or outlook.
- Person experiences pain, itching or bleeding in the genital/anal area.
- Person's underclothing is torn, stained or bloody.
- A woman who lacks the mental capacity to consent to sexual intercourse becomes pregnant.

Sexual exploitation

The sexual exploitation of adults at risk involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where adults at risk (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the person's immediate recognition - this can include being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/a mobile phone with no immediate payment or gain or being sent such an image by the person alleged to be causing harm. In all cases those exploiting the adult at risk have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.

Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse includes 'emotional abuse' and takes the form of threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, rejection, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, indifference, harassment, verbal abuse (including shouting or swearing), and isolation or withdrawal from services or support networks.

Psychological abuse is the denial of a person's human and civil rights including choice and opinion, privacy and dignity and being able to follow one's own spiritual and cultural beliefs or sexual orientation.

It includes preventing the adult from using services that would otherwise support them and enhance their lives. It also includes the intentional and/or unintentional withholding of information (e.g. information not being available in different formats/languages etc.)

Possible indicators include:

- Untypical ambivalence, deference, passivity, resignation.
- Person appears anxious or withdrawn, especially in the presence of the alleged abuser.
- Person exhibits low self-esteem.
- Untypical changes in behaviour (e.g. continence problems, sleep disturbance).
- Person is not allowed visitors/phone calls.
- Person is locked in a room/in their home.
- Person is denied access to aids or equipment, (e.g. glasses, dentures, hearing aid, crutches, etc.)
- Person's access to personal hygiene and toilet is restricted.
- Person's movement is restricted by use of furniture or other equipment.
- Bullying via social networking internet sites and persistent texting.

Financial or material abuse

This includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills or property and the misappropriation of property or benefits. It also includes the withholding of money or the unauthorised or improper use of a person's money or property, usually to the disadvantage of the person to whom it belongs. Staff borrowing money or objects from a service user is also considered financial abuse.

Possible indicators include:

- Lack of money, especially after benefit day.
- Inadequately explained withdrawals from accounts.
- Disparity between assets/income and living conditions.
- Power of attorney obtained when the person lacks the capacity to make this decision.
- Recent changes of deeds/title of house.
- Recent acquaintances expressing sudden or disproportionate interest in the person and their money.
- Service user not in control of their direct payment or individualised budget.
- Mis-selling/selling by door-to-door traders/cold calling.
- Illegal money-lending.

Neglect and acts of omission

These include ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, and the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. Neglect also includes a failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the person concerned or to others, particularly when the person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk for themselves.

Neglect and poor professional practice may take the form of isolated incidents or pervasive ill treatment and gross misconduct. Neglect of this type may happen within a person's own home or in an institution. Repeated instances of poor care may be an indication of more serious problems. Neglect can be intentional or unintentional.

Possible indicators include:

- Person has inadequate heating and/or lighting.
- Person's physical condition/appearance is poor (e.g. ulcers, pressure sores, soiled or wet clothing).
- Person is malnourished, has sudden or continuous weight loss and/or is dehydrated.

- Person cannot access appropriate medication or medical care.
- Person is not afforded appropriate privacy or dignity.
- Person and/or a carer has inconsistent or reluctant contact with health and social services.
- Callers/visitors are refused access to the person.
- Person is exposed to unacceptable risk.

Self-neglect

Self-neglect does not come under the scope of this policy – which relate to circumstances where there is a person or agent, other than the adult at risk, who is causing significant harm. However, some local authorities will apply their safeguarding procedures to protect individuals who self-neglect where there is not a person alleged to have caused harm. Staff and volunteers at Woking Mind should refer to local procedures relating to this issue.

Discriminatory abuse

This includes discrimination on the grounds of race, faith or religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation and political views, along with racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist comments or jokes, or comments and jokes based on a person's disability or any other form of harassment. It also includes not responding to dietary needs and not providing appropriate spiritual support. Excluding a person from activities on the basis they are 'not liked' is also discriminatory abuse

Possible indicators include:

- A person may reject their own cultural background and/or racial origin or other personal beliefs, sexual practices or lifestyle choices.
- A person making complaints about the service not meeting their needs.

Institutional abuse

Institutional abuse is the mistreatment, abuse or neglect of an adult at risk by a regime or individuals in a setting or service where the adult at risk lives or that they use. Such abuse violates the person's dignity and represents a lack of respect for their human rights.

Institutional abuse occurs when the routines, systems and regimes of an institution result in poor or inadequate standards of care and poor practice which affect the whole setting and deny, restrict or curtail the dignity, privacy, choice, independence or fulfilment of adults at risk.

Institutional abuse can occur in any setting providing health or social care. A number of inquiries into care in residential settings have highlighted that institutional abuse is most likely to occur when staff:

- receive little support from management
- are inadequately trained
- are poorly supervised and poorly supported in their work
- receive inadequate guidance

Such abuse is also more likely where there are inadequate quality assurance and monitoring systems in place.

Possible indicators include:

- Unnecessary or inappropriate rules and regulations.
- Lack of stimulation or the development of individual interests.
- Inappropriate staff behaviour, such as the development of factions, misuse of drugs or alcohol, failure to respond to leadership.
- Restriction of external contacts or opportunities to socialise.

Other areas of abuse

- Hate crime
- Domestic abuse
- Honour-based violence
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage
- Human trafficking
- Exploitation by radicalisers who promote violence
- Modern day slavery

More information is provided on the Surrey Safeguarding Board's website as follows:

<https://www.surreysab.org.uk/information-for-professionals/resources/>

Abuse by another adult at risk

Where the person causing the harm is also an adult at risk, the safety of the person who may have been abused is paramount. Organisations may also have responsibilities towards the person causing the harm, and certainly will have if they are both in a care setting or have contact because they attend the same place (e.g. a day centre). In this situation it is important that the needs of the adult at risk who is the alleged victim are addressed separately from the needs of the person allegedly causing harm.

It may be necessary to reassess the adult allegedly causing the harm. This will involve a meeting where the following could be addressed:

- the extent to which the person causing the harm is able to understand his or her actions
- the extent to which the abuse or neglect reflects the needs of the person causing the harm not being met (e.g. risk assessment recommendations not being met)
- the likelihood that the person causing the harm will further abuse the victim or others
- The principles and responsibilities of reporting a crime apply regardless of whether the person causing harm is deemed to be an adult at risk.

Responsibilities of staff and volunteers

The first priority of all staff and volunteers must always be to ensure the safety and protection of the adult at risk. All staff and volunteers should be aware of the multi-agency and local safeguarding policy and procedures and have a responsibility to be aware of issues of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

All staff and volunteers have a duty to act in a timely manner on any concern or suspicion that an adult who is at risk is being, or is at risk of being, abused, neglected or exploited and to ensure that the situation is assessed and investigated.

Concerns about suspected abuse

Any suspicion that a service user has been abused should be reported to a member of staff, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the service user in question and any other person/s who may be at risk.

The internal Woking Mind Safeguarding lead is the CEO.

Consultation is the best way to ensure that service users receive the appropriate support, details of the concern should be recorded, and the Manager will follow the Surrey County Council's guidelines on reporting the concern.

There is one single point of contact for reporting a safeguarding concern – the Surrey Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):

Tel: 0300 470 9100

Email: ascmash@surreycc.gov.uk

Out of hours: 01483 517898

Or if an emergency, call the police on 999

Calling external agencies without consultation should only ever happen in an emergency situation where there is significant risk of immediate harm. If a staff member is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to another member of staff or Woking Mind's Chair of the Trustee Board.

Disclosure guidance

If you suspect that a person is about to disclose information regarding abuse concerning either them or another person or if they have already disclosed information, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Keep calm
- Let them know that you will need to inform someone else about the situation; do not promise confidentiality
- Listen very carefully to what they tell you
- Make it clear that you believe what they are telling you
- Allow them to tell you as much as they want but do not force them
- Tell them they have done the right thing in telling you
- If it concerns them, tell them they are not to blame for the abuse
- Keep them informed about what you will do next and let them know what will happen
- Do not destroy potential evidence

Guidance for documenting the concern

The documentation of the concern should include:

- Whether or not the service user is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else

- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- Any indirect signs of abuse, such as behavioural changes

The responsibility of Woking Mind staff

The role and responsibility of the employee is:

- to ensure the alleged victim is made safe and to preserve any evidence relating to the abuse
- to ensure that any member of staff or volunteer who may have caused harm is not in contact with the alleged victim, other service users or others who may be at risk (e.g. 'whistleblowers')
- to ensure that safeguarding alerts are raised as appropriate
- to ensure that appropriate information is provided in accordance with local policy guidance and timeframes

All staff should ensure that they:

- make others aware of their duty to report any allegations or suspicions of abuse to their line manager, or if the line manager is implicated, to another responsible person or to the local authority, and the procedure for doing so
- meet their legal responsibilities and ensure compliance with registration, outcomes and guidance on compliance, quality, safeguarding and safety standards
- operate safe recruitment practices and routinely take up and check references
- adhere to and operate within their own organisation's 'whistleblowing' policy and support staff who raise concerns
- ensure all staff receive training in safeguarding adults consistent with their job roles and responsibilities.

Our legal obligations

We will fulfil our legal obligations under Vetting and Barring Scheme as administered by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

As an organisation, we will ensure that:

- Safeguarding adults is taken into account in all appropriate HR strategies, systems, policies and procedures
- national safe recruitment and employment practices are adhered to, including the guidelines issued by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)
- staff and volunteers in contact with adults at risk have regular supervision
- we provide appropriate training to help staff and volunteers identify and respond to possible abuse and neglect.