

WELWYN HATFIELD WOMEN'S REFUGE & SUPPORT SERVICES

SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy covers safeguarding or concerns relating to a young person or adult of 18 years and over, even if still at school, are not covered by Local Safeguarding Children's Boards or their procedures.

Local guidance for staff and volunteers who are concerned about a vulnerable adult can be found on the [Hertfordshire Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board](#) webpages.

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Board of Trustees and safeguarding is on the agenda for every Board Meeting and at Refuge team meetings.

2. AIMS

This policy outlines the steps WHWR will make to safeguard an adult with care and support. This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of WHWR in working together with other professionals and agencies in promoting the adult's welfare and safeguarding them from abuse and neglect.

WHWR will ensure that decisions made will allow adults to make their own choices and include them in any decision making. WHWR will also ensure that safe and effective working practices are in place.

This policy is intended to support staff and volunteers within WHWR to understand their role and responsibilities in safeguarding adults. All staff and volunteers are expected to follow this policy.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Welwyn Hatfield Women's Refuge & Support Services (WHWR) is committed to working with other agencies to ensure that any vulnerable people that we come across in the course of our work are safeguarded. People who use our services have a right to live and work in environments free from abuse, neglect and discrimination.

WHWR is not an investigative agency. Any issues of concern in relation to adults at risk will be referred to HCC Adult Safeguarding or, in cases where the concerns are urgent, the police.

The key objectives of this policy are for all employees and volunteers of WHWR to:

- Have an overview of adult safeguarding
- Be clear about their responsibility to safeguard adults
- Ensure the necessary actions are taken where an adult with care and support needs is deemed to be at risk

What is safeguarding adults

Safeguarding adults describes a range of activities aimed at preventing or responding to harm and abuse. A focus is on those least able to protect themselves from harm or abuse.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/215717/dh_125065.pdf

4. DEFINITION OF ABUSE OF ADULTS

This policy is based on The Care Act (2014) which states that an enquiry will be carried out under the Safeguarding Adults from Abuse procedures when an adult:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself/herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it

Under the Human Rights Act 1988, everyone has the right to live free from abuse and neglect.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights/human-rights-act>

All adults should be able to live free from fear and harm. But some may find it hard to get the help and support they need to stop abuse.

WHWR adheres to following the six keys principles that underpin safeguarding work as outlined in the Care Act guidance

- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Proportionally
- Protection
- Partnership
- Accountability

WHWR will not tolerate the abuse of adults and staff and volunteers should ensure that their work reflects the principles above and ensure the adult with care and support needs is involved in their decisions and informed consent is obtained.

Different types of abuse of vulnerable adults:

- Abuse is where another person hurts, harms or causes distress to an adult at risk
- Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person(s)
- Abuse may be a single act or repeated actions – directly or indirectly

Physical abuse:

including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions

Sexual abuse:

including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting

Psychological abuse:

including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks

Financial or material abuse:

Including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

Neglect and acts of omission:

Including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating, self-neglect

Bullying of a vulnerable adult:

Whether emotional and/or physical, also constitutes abuse – see Appendix 1 for cyber bullying

Domestic abuse and forced marriage:

Can also involve the abuse of a vulnerable adult

Discriminatory abuse:

Including racism, sexism, because a person is disabled, other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment of a vulnerable adult.

Modern slavery:

Encompassing slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking of a vulnerable adult.

Organisational abuse:

Organisational or institutional abuse is the mistreatment of people brought about by poor or inadequate care or support, or systematic poor practice. It occurs when the individual's wishes and needs are sacrificed for the smooth running of a group, service or organisation.

FGM:

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but where there's no medical reason for this to be done.

Radicalisation:

Radicalisation is defined by the UK Government as “the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups”

Hate crime:

Any criminal offence can be a hate crime if it was carried out because of hostility or prejudice based on disability, race, religion, transgender identity or sexual orientation.

Mate crime:

The befriending of people, who are perceived by perpetrators to be vulnerable, for the purposes of taking advantage of, exploiting and/or abusing them.

Cyber abuse – see Appendix 1

Abuse and poor practice are the same from the Adult at Risk’s point of view

Abuse can happen anywhere. Most often abuse takes by others who are in power. It can take place whether an adult lives alone or with others. Anyone can carry out abuse or neglect, including:

- Partners
- Other family members
- Neighbours
- Friends
- Acquaintances
- Local residents
- People who deliberately exploit adults they perceive as vulnerable to abuse
- Paid staff or professionals
- Volunteers and
- Strangers.

5. PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS RELATING TO VULNERABLE ADULTS

RESPOND

If a member of staff has concerns that an adult is in need of services for herself, that her capacity to provide adequate care to a child is affected by her vulnerability, or that she may be suffering abuse or exploitation, then the staff member should:

- Stop and concentrate on what she is observing or being told
- Ensure the woman's immediate safety and that of any others
- Not ask leading questions
- Not promise confidentiality or agree to keep something secret
- Obtain consent to a safeguarding enquiry if necessary and ask what the outcome should be – but remember referral is not optional
- Not undertake any investigation
- Obtain the necessary information to make an informed referral
- Consider whether the adult may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other people's safety and wellbeing. (If you decide to act against their wishes or without their consent, you must record your decision and the reasons for this.

If there is danger to life, risk of injury or a crime is taking place, call the police on 999

If there is no immediate risk but a police response is required due to a serious incident and/or the potential loss of evidence then dial 101

REPORT and REFER

Make and keep a detailed record of the incident, conversation and actions taken on an Incident Report Form and promptly refer to the Operations Manager. If the Operations Manager is implicated in the incident/abuse, refer directly to the **CEO**. If the CEO is implicated, refer to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

RECORD

As far as possible, records should be written contemporaneously. Then dated and signed. Access should not be given to any unauthorised person nor passwords shared.

When completing the Incident report, the designated safeguarding lead (Operations Manager) should take into account:

1. The adult's wishes and preferred outcome
2. Whether the adult has mental capacity to make an informed decision about their own and others' safety
3. The safety or wellbeing of children or other adults with care and support needs
4. Whether there is a person in a position of trust involved
5. Whether a crime has been committed.

REFER

On receipt of a completed Incident Report form the Operations Manager will inform the CEO and if applicable the CEO informs the Board of Trustees and liaise with Adult Safeguarding (HCC Health and Community Services and Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust). Referrals to Adult Safeguarding must be made using the appropriate referral form (Appendix 2)

24 hour telephone contact numbers are 0300 123 4042 or, if the vulnerable adult is known to be receiving mental health services, 0300 777 0707

6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS

Communication

We will ensure that this policy is accessible and understood by everyone in WHWR including, but not limited to, staff trustees and volunteers.

Promoting this policy

The designated Safeguarding Leads must

- ensure that the staff and volunteers follow this policy and procedure, and understand our policies on how we deal with data (Privacy Standard Policy and Whistleblowing policies) to support our commitment to keep vulnerable adults safe.
- Be responsible too for ensuring that the contact details for the Chair of the Board of Trustees are available
- Provide guidance and supervision to staff and volunteers to promote their safe working practices and to support staff in dealing appropriately with any concerns on the welfare of other adults

SUPPORT

The designated safeguarding adults should be responsible for providing acknowledgement of the referral and brief feedback to the person raising the original concern. Feedback should be given in a way that will not make the situation worse or breach the Data Protection Act. If the police are involved, they should be consulted prior to giving feedback to the referrer to ensure any criminal investigation is not affected.

Training, awareness raising and supervision

All staff and volunteers including Trustees must attend a Level 1 awareness safeguarding course. They must also participate in appropriate refresher training identified by the Operations Manager (the Safeguarding Lead to ensure the practice remains safe.

The CEO, and Operations Manager who have specific responsibilities as the Designated Safeguarding Leads, must also participate in level 3 training.

The CEO and Operations Manager are expected to keep up with national developments relating to the welfare and protection of vulnerable adults.

The Operations Manager has particular responsibilities for:

- Ensuring this training strategy is implemented
- Maintaining complete records of training in safeguarding for staff and volunteers
- Reporting on progress and alerting the CEO to any difficulties in implementing this strategy

See also Professional Practice, Managing Boundaries Policy, Complaints policy, GDPR and Child safeguarding policy.

Policy reference	SGVA001/2020
Author	HR Sub
Approved by the Board	08/09/2020
Next Review date	August 2021

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults – Appendix 1

Cyber abuse and cyber bullying

Cyber abuse and cyber bullying are generally defined as the use of internet, interactive or digital technologies by one or more people to exploit, deceive, bully, harass, intimidate, threaten, sexually abuse or steal from another individual. The term cyber-abuse and cyber bullying most commonly refers to the abuse and bullying of children or teenagers, however, in principle could also be against adults at risk. Examples of abuse could include:

- tormenting, threatening, harassing, humiliating, embarrassing or targeting an individual
- stalking/harassment/spy on/tracking an individual
- 'trolling' which is the antisocial act of causing personal conflict or controversy on line
- stealing passwords or hacking into computers - may be to impersonate the adult at risk or commit crime or fraudulent acts to the adult at risk
- grooming or exploitation, including sexual
- sending or using pornographic images or photos, including 'sexting' use of mobile phones/devices to take and send indecent or provocative images, or setting people up to receive emails from porn sites
- sending malicious virus or spyware to PCs or devices
- impersonation of the adult at risk to provoke attack/abuse- posing as the adult at risk and posting messages which would deliberately invite attack against the adult at risk

In terms of safeguarding adults at risk, WHWR will work together with other agencies to raise awareness of the risks and how abuse may happen, how to stay safe when using the internet or interactive technologies, and how to report concerns and abuse.

Further useful information is available at:

Hertfordshire Constabulary website: www.herts.police.uk

UK National Crime Agency – Thinkuknow website: www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Bullying UK website: www.bullying.co.uk

NHS choices website: www.nhs.uk

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in UK law, criminal and civil laws can apply in terms of harassment or threatening behaviours and threatening and menacing communications. These include the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, Section 43 of the Telecommunications Act 1984, the Communications Act 2003 and Public Order Act 1986.

Hertfordshire safeguarding adult concern form **Strictly Confidential**

Personal details of adult at risk			
Name:	Mr/Mrs/Ms	Dob:	Gender:
Current Address:	Home address (if different):	GP:	
Postcode:	Postcode:	Surgery:	
Tel no:	Tel no:	Tel no:	
NHS no (if known):	Ethnic origin:		
Police URN:	Preferred language/communication needs?		
Other ref no:			
Allegation			
Date alleged abuse took place:	Time (if known):		
Where did the abuse happen:			
What type of abuse is suspected?		Please check all appropriate	
Neglect/acts of omission	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-neglect	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modern Slavery	<input type="checkbox"/>
Domestic Violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Discriminatory (including hate crime)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Psychological/emotional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial/Material	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organisational	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide a brief, factual summary of the concerns leading to the referral. This should include what harm/injury or potential harm was caused?			
Is anyone else at risk of harm?			

<i>Please state</i>			
Vulnerability of the adult at risk			
Physical disability		Dementia	
Learning disability		Sensory impairment	
Mental health		Older person, frailty, temp illness	
Substance misuse		Terminal illness	
Other			
Confidentiality and consent			
Has this referral been discussed with the service user?		Has the service user given permission to share the concerns with appropriate others Yes or No?	
Yes or No?			
If the answer either/both of the above questions is No , please state the reasons for proceeding without consent?			
What are the service user's views and what outcome do they expect?			
Does the service user have mental capacity to be involved in the enquiry and protection plan? Yes/no/unknown			
Or, has a diagnosis or presents in such a way that indicates that a capacity assessment is required? (<i>please state</i>)			
Has a capacity assessment been arranged or taken place? (<i>please state</i>)			
Details of the people involved in the incident			
Name:		DOB:	

Address:		Occupation:	
		Relationship to service user?	
Immediate actions			
(Including any emergency medical treatment provided, evidence preserved, actions taken to prevent further abuse)			
Protection plan			
Please indicate other agencies alerted			
Health & Community Services		HPFT	
Police		CLDT	
Acute hospital		Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust	
GP		Other	
Details of person completing the referral			
Name:		Organisation:	
Contact number:		Date referral form completed:	
Please return form to: Adult.Safeguarding@hertscc.gcsx.gov.uk .			