

Policy, Procedure and Guidance

Netherton Park Community Association

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

NETHERTON PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
POLICY AND PROCEDURE
SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS

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This document is the Vulnerable Adults Policy for The Netherton Park Community Association which must be followed by all user groups and the management committee and followed and promoted by those in the position of leadership within each user group.

Some groups using the Netherton Park Community Centre will have their own Vulnerable Adults Policy, however we recognise that other groups will not have a policy and we therefore expect those groups to read and accept this policy.

Introduction

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is a matter of priority for Netherton Park Community Association (NPCA). Vulnerable adults are part of our service user base. This policy and procedure set out the NPCA policy with regard to adult safeguarding and what is expected from staff. The abuse of vulnerable adults— physically, emotionally, financially and sexually – is a sad fact of life. Adults may be abused regardless of their age, gender, religious belief, racial origin, culture or disability. They are usually (but not always) abused by people they know and trust. Everybody has a responsibility for the safety of vulnerable adults and in accordance with relevant legislation, NPCA, as an organisation which has contact with vulnerable adults, has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure proper procedures are in place for their safeguarding. The purpose of this policy and procedures is to help protect the vulnerable adults we come into contact with and to ensure that staff are aware of issues that can cause them harm and how to respond to concerns relating to the possibility of a vulnerable adult suffering harm.

Aims

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of the Board of Trustees, staff, volunteers and all user groups at The Netherton Park Community Centre in relation to Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

All adults have the right to be safe from harm and must be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

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

Objectives

- To explain the responsibilities the Board of Trustees and all User Groups have in respect of vulnerable adult protection.

- To provide all user groups with an overview of vulnerable adult protection
- To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where vulnerable adult protection issues arise.

Context

For the purpose of this policy 'adult' means a person aged 18 years or over.

What do we mean by abuse?

- Abuse of a vulnerable adult may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may occur as a result of a failure to undertake action or appropriate care tasks. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur where a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not, or cannot, consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the individual.
- Concerns about abuse may be raised and reported to the Centre Manager as a result of a single incident or repeated incidents of abuse. However, for some clients the issues of abuse relate to neglect and poor standards of care. They are ongoing and if ignored may result in a severe deterioration in both physical and mental health and even death.
- Anyone who has concerns about poor care standards and neglect in a care setting may raise these within the service, with the regulatory body and/or with the social services agency.
- Where these concerns relate to a vulnerable adult living in their own home, with family or with informal carers they must be reported to the social services agency. These reports must be addressed through the adult protection process and a risk assessment must be undertaken to determine an appropriate response to reduce or remove the risk.

Who is included under the heading 'vulnerable adult?'

- An adult (a person aged 18 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 may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'. *(Definition from 'No Secrets' March 2000 Department of Health)*
- This could include people with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people and people with a physical disability or impairment. It is important to include people whose condition and subsequent vulnerability fluctuates. It may include an individual who may be vulnerable as a consequence of their role as a carer in relation to any of the above.
- *It may also include victims of domestic abuse, hate crime and anti social abuse behaviour.* The person's need for additional support to

protect themselves may be increased when complicated by additional factors, such as, physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, drug or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, poverty or homelessness.

- Many vulnerable adults may not realise that they are being abused. For instance, an elderly person, accepting that they are dependent on their family, may feel that they must tolerate losing control of their finances or their physical environment. They may be reluctant to assert themselves for fear of upsetting their carers or making the situation worse.
- It is important to consider the meaning of 'Significant Harm'. The Law Commission, in its consultation document 'Who Decides,' issued in Dec' 1997 suggested that; 'harm' must be taken to include not only ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical), but also 'the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development'.

The role of the Centre Manager, Trustee Board and all User Groups

The Centre Manager, Board of Trustees, user groups and volunteers involved with NPCA have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults.

This policy will enable user groups to make informed and confident responses to specific adult protection issues.

Types of abuse

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 it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets', 2000 report suggests the following as the main types of abuse:

- **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.
- **Discriminatory abuse** - including race, sex, culture, religion, politics, that is based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment, hate crime.
- **Institutional abuse** - Institutional abuse although not a separate category of abuse in itself, requires specific mention simply to highlight that adults placed in any kind of care home or day care establishment are potentially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. This can be especially so when care standards and practices fall below an acceptable level as detailed in the contract specification.
- **Multiple forms of abuse** - Multiple forms of abuse may occur in an ongoing relationship or an abusive service setting to one person, or to more than one person at a time, making it important to look beyond single incidents or breaches in standards, to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence or ignorance.

Children

It is essential that the needs of any children within an abusive or domestic violence situation where there is a vulnerable adult involved are considered and acted upon. Please contact the Lead for Safeguarding or Senior Manager and/or the local Children's Services Safeguarding team.

Procedure in the event of a disclosure

- It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.
- This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a vulnerable adult has been abused.
- Promises of confidentiality must not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.
- A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.
- This must include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the

alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

Responding to an allegation

- Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, who is Marie Savin: 0151 285 5211
- The nominated person shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local adult social services duty social worker. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 24 hours.

Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

DO

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to your manager for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support

DON'T

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional adult protection agencies, following a referral from the designated Vulnerable Safeguarding Officer.

Confidentiality

Vulnerable adult protection raises issues of confidentiality which must be clearly understood by all.

The Centre Manager, Board of Trustees and all user groups have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and adult social services.

Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

All personal information regarding a vulnerable adult will be kept confidential.

All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only record details required in the initial contact form.

If an adult confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the adult sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.

Within that context, the adult must, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent must be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority.

Where a disclosure has been made, staff must let the adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.

Staff must assure the adult that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The adults' involvement in the process of sharing information must be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

The role of the key individual agencies

Adult Social Services

The Department of Health's 'No secrets' guidance document requires that authorities develop a local framework within which all responsible agencies work together to ensure a coherent policy for the protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse.

All local authorities have a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Board, which oversees multi-agency work aimed at protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults. It is normal practice for the board to comprise of people from partner

organisations who have the ability to influence decision making and resource allocation within their organisation.

The Police

The Police play a vital role in Safeguarding Adults with cases involving alleged criminal acts. It becomes the responsibility of the police to investigate allegations of crime by preserving and gathering evidence. Where a crime is identified, the police will be the lead agency and they will direct investigations in line with legal and other procedural protocols.

Role of designated safeguarding officer

- The role of the designated safeguarding officer is to deal with all instances involving adult protection that arise within the organisation. They will respond to all vulnerable adult protection concerns and enquiries.
- The designated Trustee safeguarding officer for the Netherton Park Community Association is Sue Pett.

The Board of Trustees of Netherton Park Community Association hereby adopts these procedures.

Signed

Date

Signed

Date