

Vulnerable Adult Policy

Why have a vulnerable Adults Policy?

The overarching principle of these practice guidelines and procedures is that the first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults.

For whom is the policy?

This policy is designed for anyone working with, or concerned about, the care or wellbeing of vulnerable adults.

All staff and volunteers working with vulnerable adults have a duty to protect them and should make themselves fully aware of this policy and the guidelines within it. All allegations of abuse of a vulnerable adult must be treated seriously. All action taken under these guidelines must be carried out sensitively, taking account of the vulnerable adult's individual needs including race, culture and ethnicity, age, gender, religion, disability and sexuality.

Definition

A 'vulnerable adult' refers to any 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 may be unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect himself or herself against harm or serious exploitation.'

(*'Who Decides'* - Lord Chancellor's Department, 1997)

Vulnerable adults may:

- Be physically or mentally frail
- Suffer from a mental illness, including dementia
- Have a physical or sensory disability
- Have learning difficulties
- Have a severe physical illness
- Have acquired a brain injury

The term 'adult abuse' is subject to wide interpretation and definition. 'No Secrets' provides the following definition:

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

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Common recognises that a vulnerable adult:

- Can be at risk of mistreatment and abuse and that such mistreatment and abuse constitutes a clear infringement of rights
- Has the right to request that no further action be taken

Categories of abuse

Abuse can take many different forms and can occur in many places and in any situation. Types of abuse can be:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Neglect
- Discriminatory abuse

These are not mutually exclusive and many situations will combine a combination of different types of abuse.

Who abuses?

The abuser is usually well known to the person being abused. This may be:

- A partner, child or relative
- A friend or neighbour
- A paid or volunteer care worker
- A health or social worker or other professional
- A carer
- Another vulnerable adult

Responding and reporting

All staff and volunteers have a duty to report any allegations or suspicions of abuse or potential abuse of a vulnerable adult to the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator or delegated representative.

If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or in need of urgent medical attention, action must be taken to ensure their immediate safety and wellbeing. This may include calling the appropriate emergency service.

In all cases the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator (or her representative) must contact Adult Services at West Sussex County Council on 01444 446100.

The following checklist provides guidance for staff and volunteers relating to responding, reporting and recording:

Responding

It is important for the worker to:

- Remain calm and try not to show shock or disbelief
- Listen carefully
- Reassure the person
- Explain that you will need to share the information and with whom

Do not:

- Press the person for further details
- Promise to keep secrets
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Be judgemental
- Ask leading questions

Reporting

All allegations and/or suspicions need to be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator at the earliest possible opportunity. It is then the responsibility of this person to contact Social and Caring Services to discuss concerns.

Remember **do not:**

Attempt to contact the alleged 'abuser' or alleged 'victim'

Talk to other staff, volunteers or service users about the information shared with you.

Recording

Accurate and detailed recording is essential. It should include:

- Name and position (e.g. job title, volunteer)
- Date, time and setting in which the allegation was made or event witnessed
- Names of other people present
- Record of what was said using individual's own words
- Date and signature

A copy should be kept by the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Once the information is passed to Adult Services they will make a decision on whether or not the Police need to be informed and if there is a need for a full investigation. The investigation team should keep you updated with the progress of the investigation on a need-to-know basis.

Confidentiality

Personal information may need to be disclosed in the best interests of the vulnerable adult. The following safeguards therefore need to be observed:

- Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis when it is in the best interests of the vulnerable adult
- Informed consent should be obtained wherever possible

- It is inappropriate for staff, volunteers or agencies to give assurances of absolute confidentiality in cases where there are concerns about abuse
- Vulnerable adults and their carers should be advised why, and with whom information will be shared.

The Nominated Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator is: Mrs Helen Arnold who has received appropriate training. mrshelenarnold@gmail.com 07540 816170
Albertine, Horsham Road, Handcross, W. Sussex RH17 6DE



Signed.....Date.....

This policy was agreed inand will be review as advised by WSCC and/or The Diocese of Chichester.