

Adult Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

The characteristics of adult abuse can take a number of forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s). Victims may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach with their worries.

There may be some situations where victims are unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this information to others.

Aim of Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all staff members are clear about their responsibilities.

Responsibilities

All members of staff have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions that they might have concerning adult abuse.

Definition

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This **may** include a person who:

- is elderly and frail
- has a mental illness including dementia
- has a physical or sensory disability
- has a learning disability
- has a severe physical illness
- is a substance mis-user
- is homeless

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take a number of forms:

- Physical abuse e.g. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, female genital mutilation, neglect or abandonment
- Sexual abuse e.g. involvement in any sexual activity against his/her will, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism
- Emotional/psychological abuse e.g. intimidation or humiliation
- Financial abuse e.g. theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money from pensions or savings etc.
- Neglect or acts of omission e.g. being left in wet or soiled clothing, or malnutrition
- Discriminatory abuse e.g. racial, sexual or religious harassment
- Personal exploitation - involves denying an individual his/her rights or forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will
- Violation of rights e.g. preventing an individual speaking his/her thoughts and opinions
- Institutional abuse e.g. failure to provide a choice of meals or failure to ensure privacy or dignity

Rights of Vulnerable Adults

Vulnerable adults have the right to:

- be made aware of this policy
- to have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
- to receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
- to be involved in any process as appropriate
- to receive information about the outcome.

Reporting Procedures

All those making a complaint, allegation, or expression of concern, whether staff, service users, carers or members of the public should be reassured that:

- they will be taken seriously
- their comments will usually be treated confidentially but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
- if service users, they will be given immediate protection from the risk of reprisals or intimidation
- if staff, they will be given support and afforded protection.

If an allegation is made to a member of staff or there is a suspicion of abuse then the member of staff should inform the Practice Owner (or Practice Manager if owner is unavailable) as soon as possible.

The Practice Owner or Manager will make a written record of the allegation or suspicion of abuse and immediately contact the **Norfolk Adults Safeguarding Board (NASB)** on **0344 800 8020** or the **Police Adult Abuse Investigation Unit** on **01603 276332**.

If the person is injured or in immediate physical danger, then the Police and other appropriate emergency services should be contacted on **999**. The non-urgent contact telephone number for the Police is **101**.

If a staff member has been told about the allegation of abuse in confidence, they should attempt to gain the consent of the person to make a referral to another agency. However, the gaining of the consent is not essential in order for information to be passed on. Consideration needs to be given to:

- The scale of the abuse
- The risk of harm to others
- The capacity of the victim to understand the issues of abuse and consent

If there is any doubt about whether or not to report an issue to the Adult Safeguarding Team, then it should be reported.

Recruitment and Training

The organisation will ensure that all staff whose roles include working with vulnerable adults are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

Disclosure Checks

As part of the recruitment procedure, all newly appointed staff that have contact with vulnerable adults will be eDBS checked.