

Name of group/organisation....

Policy for the protection of vulnerable adults

[Group/Organisation] has a legal and moral responsibility to provide a duty of care to all vulnerable persons through implementing procedures to safeguard their well-being and protect them from harm.

Definitions

The Department of Health guidance 'No Secrets', issued in 2000, defines 'vulnerable adult' as a person aged 18 and above 'who is, or may be in need of Community Care Services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself from significant harm or exploitation.' This includes a person with a condition of the following type: i) a learning or physical disability; ii) a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or iii) a reduction in physical or mental capacity.

Aim

To define the practice and procedures for employees and volunteers, in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable people. It is aimed at protecting both the individual and the member of staff.

Objectives

- To ensure that all employees and volunteers working with vulnerable people are carefully selected, understand and accept responsibility for the safety of those individuals in their care.
- To ensure that the vulnerable person's welfare is of paramount importance when undertaking any activities.
- To respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and to ensure confidential information is restricted to the appropriate individuals within [Group/Organisation] and appropriate external agencies.

Recruitment

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable individuals are prevented from having any involvement with [Group/Organisation].

All prospective employees/volunteers should be 'interviewed'. For volunteers this need not be a formal interview.

Employee/volunteer recruitment procedures will include a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure (www.crb.org.uk), at the appropriate level, for all personnel with access to vulnerable adults and should always include self-declaration and the use of references. This will include all members of the management/executive committee.

Should any concerns arise following a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure then this will be passed onto the Committee. Dudley CVS and/or Dudley

Adult Protection/Direction of Adult, Community and Housing Services - Social Care Services will be contacted for information and guidance. Any Disclosure that causes concern will be assessed to establish the level of risk the subject poses to vulnerable adults, other service users, colleagues, the general public and/or our organisation. A number of questions will be asked:

- Does the offence relate directly to work with vulnerable adults?
- What is the seriousness of the offence[s] and the circumstances surrounding it?
- How long is it since the offence was committed?
- Does the subject have a pattern of offending?
- Has the subject's situation changed since the offence occurred?
- What is the subject's explanation of the offence?
- Did the subject declare the offence prior to the Disclosure?

If all these questions are not answered satisfactorily then the prospective employee/volunteer will not be allowed to join the organisation.

We will ensure that all employees have appropriate qualifications and training, and training will be provided to volunteers. All new employees/volunteers will go through a probation and induction process, including relevant training. Ongoing training and supervision will ensure all employees/volunteers are adequately supported.

Any concerns about an employee/volunteer should be passed on to the designated person, the deputy, or a member of the management committee.

Creating a Safe and Caring Environment:

- Risk Assessments should be undertaken prior to any offsite visits or new types of activities.
- Employees working with vulnerable adults should be appropriately trained and qualified to ensure the safe provision of services, use of equipment, activities undertaken, etc.
- Volunteers working with vulnerable adults should be appropriately trained to ensure the safe provision of services, use of equipment, activities undertaken, etc.
- Employees/volunteers working with vulnerable adults should carefully plan activity sessions with the care and safety of individuals as their main concern, including the use of activities at an appropriate age/ability level.
- Wherever possible, we will encourage an 'open environment' e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and discouraging the keeping of secrets. This especially includes employees/volunteers being alone with vulnerable adults at any time. When this is unavoidable, it should be done with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the organisation.
- Employees/volunteers must treat all with respect.
- Employees/volunteers must not make racist, sexist or any other remarks which upset or humiliate.

- Employees/volunteers must take care to avoid showing any favouritism.

Roles and Responsibilities of employees/volunteers:

- Safety of participants and employees/volunteers is of prime consideration at all times.
- All accidents involving anyone should be recorded in the organisation's accident book immediately or as soon as practicably possible.
- Employees/volunteers are responsible for familiarising themselves with building/facility safety issues, such as fire procedures, location of emergency exits, location of emergency telephones and first aid equipment.
- Employees/volunteers are responsible for reporting suspected cases of abuse to the appropriate individuals and/or agencies.
- Employees/volunteers will be expected to keep an attendance register for all organised sessions.
- Employees/volunteers should ensure that their activities start and end on time.
- Employees should ensure that they are adequately insured, to protect against claims of negligence, through their organisation or their own personal insurance if acting as a self employed agent.
- Employers should ensure that volunteers are appropriately insured, to protect against claims of negligence.

Admission Procedures:

A register of names, addresses, next of kin and contact addresses and telephone numbers for emergencies will be kept.

Carers where appropriate will be given a copy of a written statement which specifies the action which will be taken in the event of a vulnerable adult becoming ill or being injured and which indicates that any information which suggests that a vulnerable adult has been abused will be passed on to the Social Services Department and/or the police.

Designated Person:

There will be a designated person and if necessary a deputy-designated person for the protection of vulnerable adults. In the event of any concerns regarding a vulnerable adult, the designated person or deputy will be informed at the earliest available opportunity. If necessary, the designated person will inform the relevant Social Services Department and the management committee without delay. The designated person will also ensure that the vulnerable adult procedures are kept up to date and reviewed.

Named Person:

Carers/family members will have a 'named person' to whom they may report any worries or concerns. This person will normally be the designated person or deputy.

Responding to signs of abuse

It is not the responsibility of employees/volunteers to deal with suspected abuse but it is their responsibility to report concerns to the designated person. It is important that all employees/volunteers should be aware of their responsibilities if abuse is suspected.

If a vulnerable adult reveals they are being abused

- Remain calm and try not to show any shock or disbelief.
- Listen very carefully to what you are being told.
- Demonstrate a sympathetic approach by acknowledging regret and concern that this has happened to the person.
- Reassure the person, telling them they have done the right thing by sharing the information, that this information will be treated seriously and that the abuse is not their fault.
- Be aware of the possibility of forensic evidence if the disclosure refers to a recent incident.
- Explain that you are required to share the information on a 'need to know' basis with your line manager/volunteer co-ordinator, but not with other staff or service users.
- Reassure the person that any further investigation will be conducted sensitively, and with their full involvement wherever possible.
- Reassure the person that the service will take steps to support and, where appropriate, protect them in future.
- Report the information to your line manager/volunteer co-ordinator at the earliest opportunity.
- Make an accurate written record of what the person has told you.
- Do not stop someone who is freely recalling significant events but allow them to share whatever is important to them.
- Do not ask questions or press the person for more details. As this may be done during any subsequent investigation, it is important to avoid unnecessary stress and repetition for the person concerned.
- Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Do not make promises you are unable to keep.
- Do not contact the alleged abuser or alleged victim [depending on who is sharing the information with you at the time].
- Distinguish between opinion [yours and others] and fact.
- Inform the designated person or deputy. If this is not possible contact the chair or an appropriate member of the management committee. If the matter is urgent and none of the above can be contacted, then contact social services or the police.
- Complete the Incident Record Form as soon as possible after the event detailing what you and the child discussed.

Do not:

- Confront the alleged abuser.
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion.
- Be dismissive of the concern.
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence.
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation.
- Ask leading questions from the person making the disclosure.
- Assume information.
- Make promises.
- Ignore the allegation.
- Elaborate in your notes.
- Panic.

Do

- Make sure the individual is safe.
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them.
- Listen.
- Offer support and reassurance.
- Ask straightforward questions.
- Ascertain and establish the 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 the procedure to the individual making the allegation.
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

Types of abuse

Physical

To hit, slap, push, kick, misuse medication, use inappropriate restraint methods or sanctions.

Sexual

Rape, sexual assault or sexual attacks to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, could not consent, or has been put under pressure to consent.

Psychological

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

Theft, fraud, exploitation or pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance, or financial transactions. To misuse or misappropriate the property of a person, or their possessions or benefits.

Neglect and acts of omission

To ignore medical or physical care needs. A 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

Racist or sexist abuse based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment.

Institutional

The mistreatment or abuse of a person or persons by a regime, or individual staff within an institution. It occurs when the routines, systems and norms of an institution compel individuals to sacrifice their own preferred lifestyle and cultural diversity to the needs of the institution. For example Person Centred plans are disregarded and individual preferences may be disregarded.

Indicators of Abuse:

The signs summarised below do not necessarily mean that a vulnerable adult is being abused. Similarly there may not be any signs; you may just feel something is wrong. If you are worried report it to the designated person. It is not your responsibility to decide if it is abuse but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it by reporting.

General signs of possible abuse

- Increased dependency leading to a high degree of care being required.
- Multiple-dependency within the family. For example a young father or mother having to care for children and an older relative.
- A multigenerational family structure where there are conflicts of personal interests and personal loyalties. Role-reversal may also be present.
- History of abuse within the family such as marital violence or abuse of children.
- Overcrowding, poor housing conditions.
- Financial difficulties.
- Where the vulnerable person displays demanding or embarrassing behaviour, which causes high levels of stress for other people.
- Ill-health in the vulnerable adult's household, or drug or alcohol dependency.
- Where a carer is isolated and lacks the necessary practical and emotional support.
- Where a carer does not have the necessary understanding of the condition of the vulnerable adult that would enable them to offer appropriate and effective care.
- The carer may not feel valued for the care they give. Feelings of guilt, resentment and anger can be contributory factors to abusive situations.
- Family dependence on the cared for person's income and benefits can be a cause for concern, particularly when this is at a level beyond

what might reasonably be anticipated as a contribution to overall household expenditure.

Physical signs

Considerable caution should be exercised in diagnosing abusive behaviour in this category because some ageing processes can cause changes which are hard to distinguish from some aspects of physical assault. For example, skin bruising can occur easily, due to blood vessels becoming fragile.

- History of unexplained falls or minor injuries such as bruising in well protected areas, bilaterally on soft parts of the body, or clustered as from repeated striking.
- Finger marks or burns in unusual places or of an unusual nature.
- Slap marks or kick marks, cuts and lacerations or injuries especially to the head, face, and scalp.
- Injuries/fractures consistent with an object being used.
- Ulcers or bedsores.
- Weight loss due to malnutrition.
- Drowsiness due to too much medication or conversely a lack of medication causing recurring crises or forced hospital admissions.
- Evidence of self-harming, e.g. through the use of knives, scissors or other sharp objects; the misuse of prescribed or illegal drugs; physical acts of aggression that are self-directed.

Social and emotional signs

- Isolation
- Change in appetite
- Unkempt/unwashed appearance
- The smell of urine or faeces
- Moods of ambivalence, confusion, excessive resignation, fearfulness or agitation.
- Excessive sleep or insomnia

Signs of sexual abuse

- A change in the person's behaviour, such as withdrawal from social situations or wishing to spend excessive time alone.
- Overt sexual behaviour or language.
- Self-inflicted injury.
- Disturbed sleep patterns.
- Recent difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothes.
- Bruising or bleeding around the rectal or vaginal areas.
- Sexually transmitted infections.

Signs of financial abuse

- Unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills.
- Withdrawal of money from accounts without apparent consent or understanding.

- Disparity between a person's assets and their unsatisfactory living conditions.
- Sudden or over- involved behaviour by others in respect of the assets of the vulnerable adult.
- Bankbooks, credit cards and cheque books may be 'lost'.
- There may be a loss of jewellery or other items.
- Unpredicted transfer of money or property to another person may have occurred.

Review

- [Group/Organisation] understands that the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) will be launched in October 2009. It will also endeavour to keep abreast of new laws, policies and procedures relating to vulnerable persons with support from Dudley CVS and other agencies.
- [Group/Organisation] will endeavour to ensure that all those working with vulnerable people are aware of this policy and are able and willing to work to these guidelines.

Policy on the secure handling, storage and retention of disclosure information

- Disclosures will only be requested when necessary and relevant to a particular role and the information provided on a Disclosure certificate will only be used for recruitment purposes.
- [Group/Organisation] will ensure that an individual's consent is given before seeking a disclosure.
- Disclosure information will only be shared with those authorised by the committee to see it.
- Where additional information which may adversely affect the candidate's application is provided to [Group/Organisation] but not to the Disclosure applicant, [Group/Organisation] reserves the right not to disclose the information but will inform the applicant of its existence.
- All information pertaining to the staff member/volunteer including Disclosure information will be kept for the period of their employment/volunteering and then for a further 3-year period.
- No image or photocopy of the Disclosure will be made however the following details will be retained:
 - Disclosure's date of issue.
 - Name of subject.
 - Disclosure type.
 - Role for which Disclosure was requested.
 - Unique reference number of Disclosure.
 - Decision as to whether or not employee/volunteer was suitable for the role.
- Disclosure information will be destroyed by either incineration or shredding.

[Group/Organisation] will ensure that all those with access to Disclosure information are aware of this policy and have received relevant training and support.

[Group/Organisation] will make a copy of this policy available to all potential volunteers/staff that wish to undertake a role that requires a Disclosure.

Useful contacts and resources

Directorate of Adult, Community & Housing Services - Social Care Services,

Ednam House,
1 St. James Road,
Dudley, DY1 3JJ.
Telephone: 01384 815822
Fax: 01384 815865
Email:social.services@dudley.gov.uk

Dudley Adult Protection,

Ednam House,
St. James's Road,
Dudley,
DY1 3JJ
01384 813249

Emergency Duty Team

01384 818283

Commission for Social Care Inspection

(Dudley/Sandwell)
Westpoint
Mucklow Office Park
Mucklow Hill
Halesowen
B69 2DH
Tel: 0121 423 5410

Adult Care Teams 01384 815822

West Midlands Police 0845 113500

This document was compiled using 'Safeguard and Protect', Dudley's Multi-agency Policy and Procedures for the protection of vulnerable adults. 'Safeguard and Protect' can be found on the 'Adult Protection' section of Dudley MBC's website (www.dudley.gov.uk).

Incident Record Form

Your Name:
Your Position:
V. Adult's Name:
V. Adult's Address:
Next of kin names and address (if different from above)
V. Adult's date of birth:
Date and time of any incident or action prompting concerns;
Your observations:
What the V. adult said and what you said: <i>(Remember do not lead the child - record actual details. Continue on separate sheet/s if necessary.)</i>
Action taken so far:
Social Services Contact details [name, etc]:

<p>Information given:</p> <p>Details of advice received:</p>
<p>Any other external agencies contacted (<i>contact details, date and time, information given and advice received</i>)</p>
<p>Have the next of kin been informed that contact is going to be made with social services.</p> <p>Yes No</p>
<p>Signature:</p> <p>Print Name:</p> <p>Date</p>

Please remember to maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis - do not discuss this incident with anyone other than your manager or those who need to know. Please take advice on this point from your manager if you are uncertain.

Vulnerable Adult’s Policy

I confirm that I have read the policy, understand my responsibilities and confirm that I will adhere to the objectives and guidance.

Name _____

Position _____

Organisation _____

Signed _____

Date _____