

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS IN THE AREA MEETING

RD7.1.2

Safeguarding principles and procedures

Page 1 of 4

(For immediate guidance see RD7.1.11)**Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse****Understanding abuse and neglect**

Defining child abuse or abuse against a vulnerable adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or vulnerable adult.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

Article 19.1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Article 19.2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Of the activities listed in Art 19.2, our role is to provide effective procedures for prevention, identification, reporting and referral. We will be supportive of, and work as required with, Social Services and the Police in their duties of investigation, treatment, follow-up and judicial involvement.

For adults, the starting point is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights particularly Article 5 which states:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Safeguarding awareness

West Wiltshire & East Somerset Area Meeting is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone.

We are working towards all our volunteers receiving induction training and undergoing recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis, based on the range of training available from CCPAS and other appropriate bodies.

The Trustees will also ensure that children and vulnerable adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other related matter where they have a concern.

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Safeguarding principles and procedures

Page 2 of 4

(For immediate guidance see RD7.1.11)**RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

Under no circumstances should a worker/volunteer carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

Follow these procedures:

- It is recommended that the recipient of a disclosure seeks immediate guidance from CCPAS (24 hour helpline Tel: 0845 120 45500) in the event of any concern.
- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or deputy who is appointed by the Area Meeting to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to the Clerk to Trustees or their named deputy.
- Where the concern about a child remains, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Children's Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection and where the adult has given his/her consent, contact Adult Social Services or take advice from CCPAS as above.
- If an allegation is deemed credible by Police and/or Social Services, and requiring further investigation by either, The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will work with the Clerk to Trustees to inform the insurance company and the Charity Commission.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- The Trustees will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from CCPAS. The Trustees hope that members of West Wiltshire & East Somerset Area Meeting will use the procedure outlined in this document (RD 7.1.2). If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Trustees demonstrate their commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the safeguarding co-ordinator is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

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Safeguarding principles and procedures

Page 3 of 4

(For immediate guidance see RD7.1.11)**Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:****ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY, NEGLECT OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or CCPAS) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, **preferably by taking them to Accident and Emergency Department** and informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by CCPAS (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by CCPAS if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

The following procedure will be followed where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:

SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE

If a vulnerable adult has a physical injury or symptom of sexual abuse the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves giving due regard to their autonomy, privacy and rights to lead an independent life.
- If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.
- For advice contact the Adult Social Care Vulnerable Adults Team who have responsibility under Section 47 of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and

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**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND
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Safeguarding principles and procedures

Page 4 of 4

(For immediate guidance see RD7.1.11)

government guidance, 'No Secrets', to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively CCPAS can be contacted for advice.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH CHILDREN

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a Safeguarding Adviser (SA) / Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

"Working Together 2006" Sections 6.20 – 6.30 [Allegations of abuse made against a person who works with children] state that local authorities should have a designated officer to manage cases where an accusation is made against someone working with children (whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity). These individuals are often known as Safeguarding Advisers or Local Authority Designated Officers. Where accusations involve a worker then speak to social services and the police and ask whether the individual needs to be referred.

In addition to this, whether or not there are such mechanisms in operation, consideration should be given to whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

This document will be reviewed when the Policy (RD7.1.1) is reviewed.

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