



**DIALOGUE
SOCIETY**

**SAFEGUARDING
VULNERABLE ADULTS
POLICY
2021**

This Safeguarding Adults policy will assist all our centres in becoming safer caring communities for adults who may be vulnerable. We must be intentional in creating a culture of safety in our centres for children and adults, where concerns are responded to quickly, those who may cause harm are managed to minimise risk to others. Those who have suffered abuse can expect understanding and healing. This policy includes information, guidelines and practice relating to adults who may be vulnerable.

All staff is required to read this very carefully and adopt and implement its policies, procedures and guidelines.

Dialogue Society is determined to continue to be cornerstones of our local communities where adults who may be vulnerable are welcomed, and where they can safely gather to learn.

Safeguarding Adults is a policy to help us ensure that the loving environments our centres provide are at the same time rooted in a culture of informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.

**POLICY FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS,
INCLUDES ALL PEOPLE AGED 18 YRS AND OVER.**

**Dialogue Society has overall responsibility for the Vulnerable
Adults Policy**

Dialogue Society Vulnerable Adults policy is a 'live' document and will, therefore, be subject to amendment as and when necessary. Each centre must personalise the information so that it covers the relevant events, groups, individuals, situations and circumstances. In order to aid centres, there is a collection of forms available to assist each centre in producing a statement and helping with safer recruitment.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Policy

Summary of the Policy

- We are committed to being respectful to all adults within our centre community.
- We are committed, within our centre community, to the safeguarding and protection of vulnerable people.
- We will carefully select and train all those with any pastoral responsibility within the Centre, including the use of Criminal Records Bureau (Disclosures and Barring Service) disclosures when legal or appropriate.
- We will respond without delay to any complaint made that an adult for whom we were responsible has been harmed, cooperating with police and the local authority in any investigation.
- We will seek to offer informed pastoral care to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate healing ministry.
- We will challenge any abuse of power by anyone in a position of trust.
- We will care for and supervise any member of our centre community known to have offended against a vulnerable person.

What does the term Vulnerable Adult mean?

The broad definition of a 'vulnerable adult', referred to in the 1997 Consultation Paper "Who Decides?" issued by the Lord Chancellor's Department, is a person:

"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."

In other words, the people who are most likely to be the subject of mistreatment, are those people who:

- Are very frail
- Are older people
- Have a mental illness including dementia
- Have a physical or sensory disability
- Have a learning disability
- Have a severe physical illness
- Are in a period of temporary vulnerability caused by bereavement; trauma or separation.

What we mean by 'Abuse'?

Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that deliberately, or unknowingly, causes him or her harm, endangers their life, or violates their rights.

Abuse may be physical, sexual, psychological, and financial or may arise through neglect.

Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual, a group or an organisation.

Abuse concerns the misuse of power; control and/or authority and can manifest itself as:

- Racially or religiously motivated assaults
- Domestic violence, sexual assault or sexual harassment
- Discrimination and oppression
- Institutional abuse. Institutional abuse involves the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to vulnerable people; it includes a failure to ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to protect vulnerable adults.

Abuse can take place in the person's home, day centre, family home, and place of employment, community setting and in public places (including centres and ancillary buildings).

Any act of abuse, whether a single action or repeated, is a violation of individual human and civil rights.

Issues of Spirituality

Within faith communities, harm may be caused to vulnerable adults by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include:

- The misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline
- Oppressive teaching
- Obtrusive healing and deliverance ministries
- The denial of the rights to faith and religious practice

Any concerns in relation to these matters should be dealt with via the procedures and guidelines accepted by the local authorities.

Spiritual growth and well-being among vulnerable adults can be enhanced by:

- Inclusive acts of worship
- Providing for the dietary, dress and other requirements of faith
- Enabling adequate and reasonable access to them by representatives of their faith community
- Accepting the integrity of the person's religious belief and spirituality.

Abuse can take various forms:

Physical Abuse

This is the ill treatment of an adult, which may or may not cause physical injury. It includes, but is not limited to:

Hitting	Slapping
Pushing	Kicking
Forcing	Restraining
Withholding or misuse of medication.	Biting
Squeezing	Suffocation
Drowning	Killing

Emotional Abuse

This is the use of threats or fear to negate the vulnerable person's independent wishes; it includes but is not limited to:

Lack of privacy/choice	Denial of dignity
Made to feel worthless	Lack of love or affection
Threats	Humiliation
Blaming	Controlling
Pressuring	Coercion
Fear	Ignoring the person
Verbal attitude	
Deprivation of social contact/deliberate isolation	

Financial Abuse / Legal Abuse

This is the wilful extortion or manipulation of vulnerable adults' legal or civil rights including misappropriation of monies or goods; it may include but is not limited to:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Misuse of finances/lack of money | Exploitation |
| Theft or fraudulent use of money | Embezzlement |
| Misuse of property or possessions | |

Neglect

This is any pattern or behaviour by another person, which severely impairs the individual; this can include but is not limited to:

- Failure to intervene in situations where there is a danger to the vulnerable person or others, particularly when a person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk
- Not giving personal care
- Withholding food, drink, light and clothing
- Deliberate withholding of aids such as hearing or mobility
- Restricting access to medical services
- Limiting choice
- Denial of social, religious, cultural contacts,
- Denial of contact with family
- Left alone unsupervised

Misuse of Medication

This may include but not be limited to:

- Withholding medication
- Deliberate poisoning
- Inappropriate use of medication

Sexual Abuse

Any sexual act carried out without the informed consent of a vulnerable adult is abuse. It includes contact and non-contact abuse.

Non-contact abuse may include but not be limited to:

- Sexual remarks and suggestions
- Introduction to indecent material
- Indecent exposure
- Teasing

Contact Abuse may include but not limited to:

- Indecent assault

- Touch
- Sexual intercourse
- Being forced to touch another person

Perpetrators of abuse may be:

- Relatives and other family members
- Neighbours
- Visitors
- Carers – informal/formal
- Professional staff
- Volunteers
- Other service users
- Care practitioners
- Strangers
- Clergy
- Professional centre workers
- Centre members
- Member of a community group such as a place of worship or social club
- People who deliberately exploit vulnerable people
- Members of centre visiting teams

From time to time, Organisations can and do abuse and cause harm by the way they conduct their day to day practice - centres need to be aware and sensitive to this.

Factors which may lead to abuse

Abuse can occur in any setting, no matter where a person lives or where they are being cared for. Abuse can occur in residential or day care settings, in hospitals, in other people's homes centres and other places previously assumed safe, and in public places.

Abuse is more likely to occur if the vulnerable adult:

- Rejects help
- Has a communication difficulty
- Has challenging behaviour
- Behaves in an unusual way
- Is not helpful or co-operative
- Is behaviourally disturbed or there are major changes in personality behaviour

Research has shown that mistreatment is more likely to occur if carers:

- Feel lonely or isolated and have no one to talk to

- Are under stress due to poor income or housing conditions
- Have other responsibilities i.e. work, family
- Are showing signs of physical or mental illness
- Are becoming dependant on alcohol or drugs
- Family relationships over the years have been poor
- Live where family violence is the norm

Other factors to look for include:

- Carer has their own problems
- Carer perceived the dependant adult as being deliberately awkward
- Vulnerable adult has few/no social contacts
- Vulnerable adult may have limited use of verbal communication or have preferred use of alternative communication systems

Indicators of abuse

The lists below are purely indicators. The presence of one or more does not necessarily confirm abuse.

Physical Abuse:

- A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries
- Bruising or burns of unusual location or type
- Finger marks
- Being excessively withdrawn and or compliant
- Appearing frightened of / avoiding physical contact

Emotional Abuse:

- Person in state of neglect
- Difficulty in making choices because they have never been allowed to make them for themselves
- Low self esteem
- Making derogatory statements about a person's ability when they are present

Individual features may include but are not limited to:

- Very eager to please and appear subservient
- Change in appetite
- Unusual weight gain / loss
- Tearfulness
- Inappropriately dressed
- Unkempt and unwashed

Financial Abuse:

- Unexplained or sudden withdrawal of money from accounts
- Extraordinary interest by family members and other people in the vulnerable person's assets
- Inability to budget and pay bills that is out of character with previous behaviour
- When a trustee who has the 'Power of attorney' is not making appropriate arrangements for the use of that money or property.

Neglect:

- Excessively and inappropriately craving attention
- Marked change in relationship between vulnerable adult and others
- Poor physical state of person and / or their home

Sexual Abuse:

- A change in the person's usual behaviour
- Withdrawal, choosing to spend the majority of time alone
- Overt sexual behaviour / language by the vulnerable person
- Self inflicted injury
- Disturbed sleep pattern
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothes

Abuse can be intentional or unintentional, passive (e.g.) neglect, or active (e.g.) hitting.

It may be part of a significant pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident. It can take place in the person's home, day centre, family home, community settings - anywhere.

A single act of abuse or repeated acts of abuse is a violation of the individual's human and civil rights.

Designated Safeguarding Lead**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

Contact: info@dialoguesociety.org

The designated Safeguarding Lead is the person who has the duty to ensure a company's safeguarding policy is followed by all members of staff in the setting.

The DSL is the first point of contact in any safeguarding incident. All staff are aware of who the DSL is and have DSL's contact details.

DSL's clear duty when abuse is suspected or discovered.

Their duty is:

- To contact the emergency services first, e.g. police, ambulance, if in a life-threatening situation, then report the abuse to the local authority Safeguarding Adults Service.
- To report suspected acts of abuse
- To be alert to what abuse means and take it seriously
- To think about what they see and ask if it is an acceptable practice
- To work strictly following anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-ageist and anti-disability practices
- To ensure the safety of the person suspected of being mistreated as well as their safety
- To be alert to hints, signals and non-verbal communication that could indicate abuse, which is being denied or deliberately hidden.

What to do if someone discloses abuse to you:

- Stay calm and try not to show shock
- Listen carefully rather than question directly
- Be sympathetic
- Be aware of the possibility that medical evidence might be needed

Tell the person that:

- They did the right thing by telling you
- You are treating this information seriously
- It was not their fault

DO NOT:

- Press the person for more details
- Stop someone who is freely recalling significant events as they may not tell you again
- Promise to keep secrets: explain that the information will be kept confidential, i.e. information will only be passed to those people who have “a need to know”
- Make promises that you cannot keep (such as “This will not happen to you again”)
- Contact the alleged abuser
- Be judgemental (e.g. “Why didn’t you run away?”)
- Pass on information to anyone who doesn’t have a “need to know” i.e. do not gossip

Recording

At the first opportunity, make a note of the disclosure and date and time and sign your record.

It would help if you aimed to:

- Note what the people said, using their own words and phrases.
- Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.
- Note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time.
- Record only factual information, **DO NOT** write your opinions.
- Use a pen or biro with black ink so that the report can be photocopied.
- Be aware that your report will be required later as part of legal action or disciplinary procedure.

The DSL should then inform the appropriate contact points, unless they are the suspected abuser, then either contact the Local Authority must be informed.

Statutory Agencies - Social Care (Adult Services)

For emergencies call 999

General Helplines

National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 200 0247

www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Parent line Plus 0808 800 2222 www.parentlineplus.org.uk • Helpline for parents

Samaritans 0845 790 9090 www.samaritans.org.uk

Stop It Now 0808 1000 900 www.stopitnow.org.uk Helpline for abusers, potential abusers and others concerned with sexual abuse

Women's Aid 0808 2000 247 www.womensaid.org.uk

Voluntary organisations for people who may be vulnerable

Action on Elder Abuse 080 8808 8141 www.elderabuse.org.uk

Age Concern England www.ageconcern.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society 0845 300 0336 www.alzheimers.org.uk

Help the Aged 020 7278 1114 www.helptheaged.org.uk

Livability 0207 452 2000 www.livability.org.uk

• Working with disabled people for social inclusion, empowerment and justice

MENCAP 0207 454 0454 www.mencap.org.uk

MIND — The National Association for Mental Health 0845 766 0163

www.mind.org.uk

RNIB — The Royal National Institute for the Blind 0845 766 9999

www.rnib.org.uk

RNID — The Royal National Institute Deaf People 0808 808 0123

www.rnid.org.uk

Scope 0808 800 3333 www.scope.org.uk

Resources for adult survivors of abuse

- Support and self-help for survivors
MACSAS 0808 801 0340 www.macsas.org.uk
- Support and networking for survivors of sexual abuse by those in ministry
NAPAC 0800 085 3330 www.napac.org.uk
- National Association for People Abused in Childhood
RESPOND 0808 808 0700 www.respond.org.uk
- For survivors or abusers with learning difficulties
Survivors UK 0845 122 1201 www.survivorsuk.org
- Support for male survivors S:\Vox www.svox.org.uk
- Support and self-help for survivors

Pastoral care

- Holyrood House: Centre for Health and Pastoral Care 01845 522850
www.holyroodhouse.freeuk.com
- Offering counselling and psychotherapies

Useful websites

Dept. for Education and Skills www.dfes.gov.uk
Dept. of Health www.dh.gov.uk
Home Office www.homeoffice.gov.uk
Independent Safeguarding Board www.isa-gov.org.uk
Criminal Records Bureau www.crb.gov.uk
Centre of England www.cofe.anglican.org

Last reviewed: 1 November 2021