

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS & PREVENTION OF ABUSE

This policy will define the action the agency is to take in safeguarding adults and preventing abuse. This policy is designed to conform to the requirements of the Guidance Document “No Secrets” (Department of Health, 2000) and is in line with Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Protection Guidance.

1. Respect for individuals

It is every person’s right to live a life free from abuse and neglect. Vulnerable adults will be treated in a way that respects and promotes the human rights of all citizens under the Human Rights Act 1998. Actions taken to protect their interests will aim to respect their dignity, privacy and beliefs, whatever their race, religion, language, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation. An individual’s communication needs will be considered at all times.

2. Handling reports of abuse

All reports of abuse will be treated seriously.

3. Capacity and consent

Individuals will be assumed to have the capacity to make informed decisions, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary. Vulnerable adults should be supported to make their own decisions based on an awareness of the choices available. In cases where there is evidence that a vulnerable adult lacks capacity to make specific decisions, where appropriate, provision will be made to find a suitable independent person to represent their ‘best interest’. In all instances where a person demonstrates a lack of capacity in relation to a specific area or decision, everything which is done must be based upon an assessment of that person’s best interests.

4. Risk

Vulnerable adults capable of making informed decisions, having been made aware of any options available to them, will be supported in making their own decisions about their lives. This will include the taking of reasonable risks as long as these do not threaten, harm, or put at risk other adults or children who may be involved.

5. The aim of this policy is to determine:

- The principles and values underlying our approach to protecting service users from abuse or potential abuse
- The ways in which we intend to protect our residents from abuse
- The action which will be taken to deal with abuse if it occurs
- Describe how we will make sure that staff are aware of this policy
- Determine the arrangements for ensuring these are regularly revised and updated

6 . Defining Abuse

'No Secrets' provides the following definitions: "Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons."

"Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or failure to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it." 'Physical, sexual, financial, emotional, discriminatory or psychological violation or neglect of a person unable to protect him/herself to prevent abuse from happening, or to remove him/herself from abuse or potential abuse by others."

We recognise that abuse can take many forms:

- **physical abuse:** including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- **sexual abuse:** including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting;
- **psychological abuse:** including 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 or material abuse:** including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits;
- **neglect and acts of omission:** including ignoring medical or physical care needs, 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; and
- **discriminatory abuse:** including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- **institutional abuse:** is abuse which arises from an unsatisfactory

regime. It occurs when the routines, systems and norms of an institution override the needs of those it is there to support.

Identifying Abusers

We accept that abuse may be committed by a range of possible people. We have a responsibility for seeking to protect our residents from all sources, which include:

- the staff and management of the agency
- volunteers working with service users
- visiting health and social care practitioners and other official visitors
- service users friends and relatives
- people who have contact with our service users while they are temporarily beyond the confines of their home

The Role and Accountability of Staff in Relation to Abuse

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Provide service users with the best possible care
- Treat service users with respect and dignity at all times
- Desist from any abusive action in relation to service users
- Report anything they witness which is or might be abusive *It is important that any allegation of abuse is taken seriously however insignificant it may seem to the worker*
- Cooperate in every possible way in any investigation into alleged abuse
- Participate in training activities relating to abuse and protection

The Role and Accountability of Management in Relation to Abuse

The Manager has a responsibility to:

- Foster structures within which it is possible to deliver the best possible care
- Encourage a culture and ethos which deters any sort of abuse
- Ensure staff are fully conversant with our Whistle Blowing Policy
- Produce and regularly revise, policies and procedures to combat abuse
- Operate personnel policies which identify, appropriately deal with and, if necessary, exclude from practice potential or actual abusers
- Our recruitment policies ensure that all potential staff are rigorously checked, by the taking up of references, CRB checks and clearance through the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults register
- Provide training for staff in all aspects of abuse and protection

- Respond promptly to any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect (including whistle-blowing) to ensure the safety and protection of service users, and will follow **Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent's Safeguarding Adults procedures** including passing on concerns to Social Services, The Police and CQC in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and Department of Health (DH) guidance *No Secrets*.
- Implement improvements to procedures if an investigation into abuse reveals deficiencies in the way in which the agency operates
- Collaborate with all other relevant agencies in combating abuse and improving the protection of service users.

Who to tell

Anyone having a concern about actual or possible adult abuse, generally, should talk urgently to the Manager or their supervisor, making clear what they know or suspect.

The only exceptions to this course of action are:

- If their professional code of conduct authorises you to act alone
- Or if the person they would normally regard as their manager or supervisor may be implicated in their concerns

In these circumstances they should talk with an alternative supervisor or contact the Director:

Director- Kirstie Owens 01782 814475

The details should include the following:

- When the incident happened
- Where the incident happened
- Who was involved (names and relationships)
- Whether there is an immediate or future risk

When a suspected incident of adult abuse is reported, the Manager/ supervisor must take it seriously and request statements from witnesses to establish the facts, in order to decide whether the allegation has some substance requiring referral and further investigation. If it appears that there are grounds to believe that adult abuse is or maybe happening the Manager/ supervisor must ensure that an alert is actioned at the earliest possible opportunity and no later than at the end of the working day in question. If the manager is uncertain that abuse has occurred or is indicated, then advice should be sought from one of the sources listed below.

The Manager or supervisor will report adult protection incidences to the **Adult Protection team** who will co-ordinate the Safeguarding arrangements including liaison with the police:

Staffordshire Social Services: 0845 6042 719

Stoke-on-Trent Social Services: 0800 561 0015

Emergency Duty Team(Staffordshire): 0845 6042 719/ mob(txt only)
07773732015 / minicom 01785 277309

Emergency Duty Team(S-o-T): 0800 561 0015

CQC: 03000 616161/www.cqc.org.uk/email enquiries@cqc.org.uk

Ensuring immediate safety

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 well-being. This may include contacting the appropriate emergency services by calling 999.

A staff member who witnesses a situation in which a resident is in actual or imminent danger should use their judgment as to the best way to stop what is happening without further harm to anyone involved, including themselves, either by immediately intervening personally or by summoning help.

Ensuring safety during an investigation

If an allegation identifies a member(s) of staff the individual(s) will be suspended in order to safeguard the alleged victim and protect them from further allegations. The suspension will continue until the Safeguarding investigation has been completed. At which stage the individual(s) will be reinstated if the allegation has not been substantiated or subject to the agency's disciplinary procedures depending on the findings.

Further Action

At the end of an incident involving possible or actual abuse, managers should review what has happened with a view to assessing whether the agency or its management has been in any way culpable, ineffective or negligent, to learning lessons for the way the agency should operate in the future, and to passing on any appropriate information to other agencies. If necessary the agency's policies, procedures and training arrangements should be modified in response to any material which has emerged from the incident or the investigation.

Other Policies Relating to Abuse and Protection

This policy should be read in conjunction with the several other policies of the agency which relate to aspects of abuse or protection of residents. These include:

- Concerns and complaints
- Management of service users money and financial affairs
- Staff supervision
- Whistle blowing

Abuse to Staff

Given the nature of some of our client group at **Homestay Care** there is a potential for residents to be abusive either verbally or physically. Abuse can happen for many reasons. These reasons can include: progression of disease, changes to medication, acute episodes of ill health, frustration or basic personality. These outbursts are rarely if ever personal.

If abusive behaviour occurs then the Agency Manager must be made aware immediately. The service users GP must be notified and the case discussed with him/her. The matter should be discussed with the family of the service user concerned. A plan of action can then be drawn up to avoid or deal with further incidents.