

Carers' Centre

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Carers' Centre policy follows guidelines set out in Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Partnership Policies and Procedures 2010 (which should be read in conjunction with this policy). The policy states that each agency and organisation is committed to supporting the right of vulnerable adults to be protected from abuse and to ensure that all staff and volunteers work together in accordance with the B&NES Safeguarding Adults Policy and act promptly in investigating allegations or suspicions of abuse. The way we work will take into account a vulnerable adult's race, religion, cultural background, age, disability, gender and sexuality.

DEFINITIONS FOR THIS POLICY AS DEFINED IN B&NES SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Vulnerable Adults

No Secrets Guidance (2000) defines a vulnerable adult as one "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".

Adults 'who may be eligible for community care services' are those whose independence and wellbeing would be at risk if they did not receive appropriate health and social care support. They include adults with physical, sensory and mental impairments and learning disabilities, whether present from birth or due to advancing age, chronic illness or accident. They also include family and friends who provide personal assistance and care to adults on an unpaid basis. They are not a self defined community, but a group that has been created by social policy.

A vulnerable adult can be a person:

1. With a mental health problem (including dementia);
2. With a physical disability;
3. With drug and alcohol related problems;
4. With a sensory impairment;
5. With a learning disability;
6. Who has a physical illness;
7. With an acquired brain injury;
8. Who is frail and/or is experiencing a temporary illness.

Who may be:

1. Living in their own home
2. In hospital;

3. In a residential care and/or nursing home;
4. Attending a day centre;
5. Attending a social club;
6. Without a permanent home.

(The above lists are not exhaustive)

Abuse

'...a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any person or persons.'
(Department of Health, No Secrets, March 2000)

It may include:

Physical abuse, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, misuse of 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;

Discriminatory abuse, including racist or sexist remarks or comments based on a person's impairment, disability, age or illness, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment. This may also include isolation or withdrawal from religious or cultural activity, services or supportive networks; and

Institutional abuse involves the collective failure of an Organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to vulnerable people. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping. It includes a failure to ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to protect vulnerable adults and maintain good standards of care in accordance with individual needs, including training of staff, supervision and management, record keeping and liaising with other providers of care.

THIS IS NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST

Abuse may not be sudden and may build up over time, it is important to use the procedures as soon as abuse is suspected even if this has been a situation that has developed over time.

Core Principles

SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. We will work together to prevent and minimise abuse

AND

DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION

If we know or suspect that a vulnerable adult is being abused, we will do something about it and ensure our work is properly recorded

Aims of the Policy

To provide a framework for the Carers' Centre to work effectively, and in partnership with, vulnerable adults/carers and other agencies in order to:

1. Promote the well-being, security and safety of vulnerable people consistent with their rights, capacity and personal responsibility, and prevent abuse occurring wherever possible
2. Ensure that the promotion of safeguarding adult work is integral to the development and delivery of the Carers' Centre
3. Ensure that the process of reporting is as effective as possible in achieving good outcomes for vulnerable people and is recorded to a high standard
4. Ensure that the processes of prevention of abuse do not constitute any further abusive or harmful events for the vulnerable person
5. Comply with legislation and formal Department of Health Guidance

Objectives of the Policy

In order to achieve positive outcomes for vulnerable adults who are experiencing abuse, or at risk of abuse, the Carers' Centre will work together within a multi-agency framework to:

1. Identify the abuse of vulnerable adults where it is occurring
2. Respond effectively to any circumstances giving grounds for concern or where formal complaints or expressions of anxiety are expressed

3. Ensure the active participation of individuals, families, groups and communities wherever possible and appropriate
4. Raise awareness of the extent and impact of abuse on vulnerable adults
5. Promote and strengthen partnerships and actions designed to reduce abuse and the fear of abuse as experienced by vulnerable adults
6. Input information as necessary to support B&NES to gather and use information relating to the abuse of vulnerable adults in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998
7. Regularly monitor and evaluate the way in which policies, procedures and practices for the protection of vulnerable adults are working
8. Regularly review and update policies, procedures and practices to reflect the current state of knowledge in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults, and learning gained from experience
9. Ensure that the law is known, or that legal advice is taken, and used appropriately where necessary so that vulnerable adults receive the protection of the law and access to the judicial process

Principles

To protect basic civil and human rights, a set of principles must underpin all work with vulnerable adults.

The Department of Health has identified key principles in a number of documents that are considered applicable to all work with vulnerable adults wherever they live in our multi-cultural society.

PRIVACY The right of individuals to be left alone or undisturbed and free from intrusion or public attention into their affairs.

DIGNITY Recognition of the intrinsic value of people regardless of circumstances by respecting their uniqueness and their personal needs; treating with respect.

INDEPENDENCE Opportunities to act and think without reference to another person, including a willingness to incur a degree of calculated risk.

CHOICE The opportunity to select independently from a range of options.

RIGHTS The maintenance of all entitlements associated with citizenship.

FULFILMENT The realisation of personal aspirations and abilities in all aspects of daily life.

In practice, this means that the Carers' Centre will:

1. Work within B&NES multi-agency policy framework.

2. Actively promote the empowerment and well-being of vulnerable adults through our services.
3. Promote the safeguarding of those who choose self directed support or who fund their own care.
4. Act in a way that supports the right of the individual to lead an independent life based on self determination and personal choice
5. Recognise people who are unable to take their own decisions and/or to protect themselves, their assets and bodily integrity
6. Recognise that the right to self determination can involve risk and ensure that such risk is recognised and understood by all concerned, and minimised whenever possible (there will be an open discussion between the individual and the Carers' Centre about the risks involved to him or her);
7. Ensure that when the right to an independent lifestyle and choice is at risk the individual concerned receives appropriate help, including advice, protection and support from the Carers' Centre.
8. Ensure that the law and statutory requirements are known and used appropriately so that vulnerable adults receive the protection of the law and access to the judicial process.

Policy Statement

This policy provides a statement that the Carers' Centre has signed up to B&NES Joint Policy Statements

Prevention

All staff and volunteers will have Criminal Records Bureau Checks taken out and have two references provided before they will have direct contact with carers and their families. All staff and volunteers will be requested to read the Carers' Centre Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, the B&NES Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Partnership Policies and Procedures and will be requested to attend B&NES Safeguarding training.

Also See:

- **Bath & North East Somerset Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Partnership Policies and Procedures 2010**
- **The Carers' Centre Safeguarding Procedure**
- **The Carers' Centre Confidentiality Policy**
- **The Carers' Centre Comments & Complaints Procedure**
- **The Carers' Centre Whistle Blowing Policy**
- **Leaflet: "The Abuse of Older People at Home" (information for workers), "Action on Elderly Abused".**
 - **No Secrets Guidance (2000)**
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4008486