



## **SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS' POLICY**

This policy, and the way in which it operates, shall be reviewed annually.

Date adopted 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020

Date of latest review March 2025

**Date of next review January 2026**

**Signed** R. Blain

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**Position** Operations Manager

**Date** 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025

## 1. AIMS

- The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of The Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Staff, volunteers, and all user groups at CCSE in relation to Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.
- All adults have the right to be safe from harm and must be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

*"Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons"* Kent and Medway Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults (2010)

## 2. OBJECTIVES

- To explain the responsibilities the SLT and all User Groups have in respect of vulnerable adult protection.
- To provide all user groups with an overview of vulnerable adult protection
- To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where vulnerable adult protection issues arise.

## 3. CONTEXT

- For the purpose of this policy 'adult' means a person aged 18 years or over.

### What do we mean by abuse?

- Abuse of a vulnerable adult may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may occur because of a failure to undertake action or appropriate care tasks. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur where a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a

financial or sexual transaction to which they have not, or cannot, consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the individual.

- Concerns about abuse may be raised and reported to the social services agency because of a single incident or repeated incidents of abuse. However, for some clients the issues of abuse relate to neglect and poor standards of care. They are ongoing and if ignored may result in a severe deterioration in both physical and mental health and even death.
- Anyone who has concerns about poor care standards and neglect in a care setting may raise these within the service, with the regulatory body and/or with the social services agency.
- Where these concerns relate to a vulnerable adult living in their own home, with family or with informal carers they must be reported to the social services agency. These reports must be addressed through the adult protection process and a risk assessment must be undertaken to determine an appropriate response to reduce or remove the risk.

#### **4. Who is included under the heading 'vulnerable adult?'**

- An Adult (a person aged 18 or over) 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'.  
*(Definition from 'No Secrets' March 2000 Department of Health)*
- This could include people with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people and people with a physical disability or impairment. It is important to include people whose condition and subsequent vulnerability fluctuates. It may include an individual who may be vulnerable because of their role as a carer in relation to any of the above.

- *It may also include victims of domestic abuse, hate crime and anti-social abuse behavior.* The persons' need for additional support to protect themselves may be increased when complicated by additional factors, such as physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behavior, drug or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, poverty or homelessness.
- Many vulnerable adults may not realize that they are being abused. For instance, an elderly person, accepting that they are dependent on their family, may feel that they must tolerate losing control of their finances or their physical environment. They may be reluctant to assert themselves for fear of upsetting their carers or making the situation worse.
- It is important to consider the meaning of 'Significant Harm'. The Law Commission, in its consultation document 'Who Decides,' issued in Dec 1997 suggested that; 'harm' must be taken to include not only ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical), but also 'the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioral development'.

## **5. The role of the Management and all User Groups**

The Management, User Groups and volunteers involved with CCSE have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults.

This policy will enable User Groups to make informed and confident responses to specific adult protection issues.

## 6. Key Principles

### ***Principle 1: Empowerment***

#### What does this mean?

People should be supported and encouraged to make their own decisions. This should be done by:

- making services more personal
- giving people choice and control over decisions
- asking people what they want the outcome to be

#### What does this mean for the adult?

You are asked what you want to happen and services plan safeguarding round this.

### ***Principle 2: Prevention***

#### What does this mean?

Organisations should work together to stop abuse before it happens by:

- raising awareness about abuse and neglect
- training staff
- making sure clear, simple and accessible information is available about abuse and where people can get help

### ***Principle 3: Proportionality***

#### What does this mean?

When dealing with abuse situations services must ensure that they always think about the risk. Any response should be appropriate to the risk presented. Services must respect the person, think about what is best for them and only get involved as much as needed.

### ***Principle 4: Protection***

#### What does this mean?

Organisations must ensure that they know what to do when abuse has happened by:

- what to do if there are concerns
- how to stop the abuse
- how to offer help and support for people who are at risk

### ***Principle 5: Partnership***

#### What does this mean?

Organisations should work in partnership with each other and local communities. Local people also have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting abuse.

### ***Principle 6: Accountability***

#### What does this mean?

Safeguarding is everybody's business. Everyone must accept that we are all accountable as individuals, services and as organisations.

Roles and responsibilities must be clear so that people can see and check how safeguarding is done.

## **7. TYPES OF ABUSE**

- 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 an omission 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 it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

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Nhs.uk suggests the following as the main types of abuse:

### **Sexual abuse**

This includes:

- indecent exposure
- sexual harassment
- inappropriate looking or touching
- sexual teasing or innuendo
- sexual photography
- being forced to watch pornography or sexual acts
- being forced or pressured to take part in sexual acts
- rape

### **Physical abuse**

This includes:

- being hit, slapped, pushed or restrained
- being denied food or water
- not being helped to go to the bathroom when you need to
- misuse of your medicines

### **Psychological abuse**

This includes:

- emotional abuse
- threats to hurt or abandon you
- stopping you from seeing people
- humiliating, blaming, controlling, intimidating or harassing you
- verbal abuse

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- cyberbullying and isolation
- an unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks

### **Domestic abuse**

This is typically an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse by someone who is, or has been, an intimate partner or family member.

### **Discriminatory abuse**

This includes some forms of harassment, slurs or unfair treatment because of:

- race
- sex
- gender and gender identity
- age
- disability
- sexual orientation
- religion
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave

### **Financial abuse**

This could be someone stealing money or other valuables from you. Or it might be that someone appointed to look after your money on your behalf is using it inappropriately or coercing you to spend it in a way, you're not happy with.

Internet scams and doorstep crime are also common forms of financial abuse.

### **Neglect**

Neglect includes not being provided with enough food or with the right kind of food or not being taken proper care of.



Leaving you without help to wash or change dirty or wet clothes, not getting you to a doctor when you need one or not making sure you have the right medicines all count as neglect.

## **Abuse in your home**

You're more at risk of abuse at home if:

- you're isolated and do not have much contact with friends, family or neighbours
- you have memory problems or difficulty communicating
- you become dependent on your carer
- you do not get on with your carer
- your carer is addicted to drugs or alcohol
- your carer relies on you for a home, or financial or emotional support

## **8. CHILDREN**

- It is essential that the needs of any children within an abusive or domestic violence situation where there is a vulnerable adult involved are considered and acted upon. Please contact the Lead for Safeguarding or Senior Manager and/or the local Children's Services Safeguarding team.

## **9. PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A DISCLOSURE**

- It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.
- This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a vulnerable adult has been abused.
- Promises of confidentiality must not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

- A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.
- This must include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

## **10. RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION**

- Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to a member of the Safeguarding team.
- The nominated person shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local adult social services duty social worker. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 24 hours.

## **11. RESPONDING APPROPRIATELY TO AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE**

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

### **DO**

- Make sure the individual is safe.
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them.
- Listen

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- Offer support and reassurance.
- Ascertain and establish the basic 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 areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to your manager for
- Support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation.
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

## DON'T

- Confront the alleged abuser.
  - Be judgmental or voice your own opinion.
  - Be dismissive of the concern.
  - Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts.
  - Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence.
  - Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation.
  - Ask leading questions.
  - Assume Information
  - Make promises.
  - Ignore the allegation.
  - Elaborate in your notes.
  - Panic
- It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional

adult protection agencies, following a referral from the designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer.

## 12. CONFIDENTIALITIES

Vulnerable adult protection raises issues of confidentiality which must be clearly understood by all.

- The Management Committee and all User Groups have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies, and adult social services.

Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

- All personal information regarding a vulnerable adult will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only record details required in the initial contact form.
- If an adult confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the adult sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.
- Within that context, the adult must, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.
- Where possible, consent must be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority.
- Where a disclosure has been made, staff must let the adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.

- Staff must assure the adult that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The adults' involvement in the process of sharing information must be fully considered and their wishes and feelings considered.

## THE ROLE OF KEY INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES

### Adult Social Services

- The Department of Health's recent 'No secrets' guidance document requires that authorities develop a local framework within which all responsible agencies work together to ensure a coherent policy for the protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse.
- All local authorities have a Safeguarding Adults Board, which oversees multi-agency work aimed at protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults. It is normal practice for the board to comprise of people from partner organisations who can influence decision making and resource allocation within their organisation.

### The Police

- The Police play a vital role in Safeguarding Adults with cases involving alleged criminal acts. It becomes the responsibility of the police to investigate allegations of crime by preserving and gathering evidence. Where a crime is identified, the police will be the lead agency and they will direct investigations in line with legal and other procedural protocols.



- The role of the Safeguarding Team is to deal with all instances involving adult protection that arise within the organisation. They will respond to all vulnerable adult protection concerns and enquiries.
- The designated Safeguarding Lead for CCSE is Ray Blain (Operations Manager). Supported by members of the SLT team.