

Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure

Date of Issue: August 2021

Date of Renewal: August 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 Debt Centre Greenwich is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use the service of Debt Centre Greenwich are not abused and that the way in which we work with individuals minimises the risk of abuse.

1.2 This policy outlines the duty and responsibility of staff, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of Debt Centre Greenwich in relation to the protection of adults at risk from abuse or harm.

1.2 The key aims of the policy are to ensure the following:

- Staff and volunteers are aware of what abuse is and how to spot it
- Debt Centre Greenwich has a clear system of reporting concerns as soon as abuse is identified or suspected
- Abuse is responded to appropriately, respecting confidentiality
- Harm and abuse are prevented through rigorous recruitment and interview process

2. Who is an adult at risk?

2.1 Adult abuse can happen to anyone who is 18 or over. The Care Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as anyone who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and/or
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and/or
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

These adults for example may:

- be frail due to age, ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment, or a combination of these
- have a learning disability
- have a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment
- have mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder
- have a long-term illness/condition
- be users of substances or alcohol
- be unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support

3. What is abuse and what are the indicators of abuse?

3.1 Abuse is any action that harms another person and includes the following:

- Physical abuse: including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- Domestic violence: including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, so called 'honour' based violence or coercive control.
- Sexual abuse: including rape, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.
- Psychological abuse: including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact (including withholding affection or causing isolation), humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- Financial or material abuse: including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

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- Modern slavery: encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced-labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
- Discriminatory abuse: including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- Organisational abuse: including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- Neglect and acts of omission: including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- Self-neglect: this covers a wide range of behavior neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behavior such as hoarding.

3.2 Abuse may be a one-off incident or occur multiple times, and it may affect one person or more. Indicators of abuse include but are not limited to:

- Dramatic/unusual changes in behaviour
- Multiple bruising that is not consistent with the explanation
- Cowering and flinching
- Over-sexualised behaviour
- Lack of eye contact

3.3 Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm or exploitation of the person subjected to it. The person responsible for the abuse is very often, but not always, well known to the person being abused and could be:

- A family member
- A friend
- A paid or unpaid carer

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- A health or social care professional
- Another resident or service user

3.4 Abuse can be caused by a person deliberately intending to harm or neglect or failing to take the right action or through their ignorance. It can involve one or a number of people.

4. Procedure in the event of an incident or allegation or disclosure made to a staff member, trustee or volunteer

4.1 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 on 999
- Offer support and reassurance
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Ascertain and establish the facts
- Record the events in writing (hard copy or soft copy) including dates, times, places, persons present, and stick to the facts
- Explain areas of confidentiality
- As soon as possible consult a member of staff or the Safeguarding Officer (details below)

DO NOT

- Ignore the allegation/disclosure
- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgemental, voice your own opinion, or dismiss the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Ask leading questions, assume information, make promises
- Elaborate in your notes
- Assume that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to the safety and wellbeing of the adult

4.2 Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the staff member/volunteer manager on that working day where possible.

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4.3 This report should include the following information:

- 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

4.4 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 safeguarding officer.

5. Procedure following a reported allegation or disclosure of abuse

5.1 The Safeguarding Officer and/or The Debt Centre Manager will conduct a sensitive inquiry into the report of abuse and will:

- Report the matter to the appropriate adult social services (local authority, referral agency, Contact Assessment Team/Adult Safeguarding Team)
- Produce a written record of the telephone conversation with the appropriate adult social services including the date, time and details of the person(s) to whom the matter is reported to. This report will be emailed to that person within 2 working days of the telephone conversation taking place.
- Identify the best course of action with the necessary adult services

5.2 It should be noted that local authorities are required to help people express their wishes and feelings, support them in weighing up their options, and assist them in making their own decisions when dealing with a safeguarding enquiry or a safeguarding adult review.

6. Confidentiality & Consent

6.1 Adult protection raises issues of confidentiality which should be clearly understood by all.

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- 6.2 Staff, volunteers and trustees have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of adults at risk with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and adult social services.
- 6.3 If an adult confides in a member of staff, volunteer or trustee and asks that the information is kept secret, it's important that it is sensitively explained to the individual that this is not possible as alleged abuse needs to be reported to the appropriate agencies.
- 6.4 However, the adult should be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.
- 6.5 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 appropriate as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority.
- 6.6 Where a disclosure has been made, the Debt Centre Manager or Safeguarding Officer should let the adult know that disclosure to the local authority/police has taken place.
- 6.7 Staff should assure the adult that they will be kept informed of any action to be taken and why. The adult's involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully recorded and their feelings supported.
- 6.8 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 contain details required in the initial cause for concern form.

7. Prevent harm and abuse through rigorous recruitment and interview process

- 7.1 Debt Centre Greenwich takes account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults, including arrangements for the careful and fair recruitment of volunteers and trustees as appropriate.

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8. Contact Information

Debt Centre Greenwich Safeguarding Officer:

Name: Beverley Campbell

Telephone: 07738 777 007

Email: debtcentregreenwich@gmail.com

Debt Centre Manager:

Name: Leanne Rivett

Telephone: 07738 777 007

Email: debtcentregreenwich@gmail.com

Adult safeguarding referral contact information for Greenwich Council:

Phone: 020 8921 2304 (out of hours: 020 8854 8888)

Email: aops.contact.officers@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

9. Further sources of information:

London multi-agency safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures:

<http://londonadass.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/LONDON-MULTI-AGENCY-ADULT-SAFEGUARDING-POLICY-AND-PROCEDURES.pdf>

Care Act 2014: Care and Support statutory guidance:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315993/Care-Act-Guidance.pdf

Link to the Royal Greenwich Safeguarding Adults Board website:

<http://greenwichsafeguardingadults.org.uk>

Signature of chair:

Date of signature/ratification of policy:

or what date was this policy adopted by The Board of Trustees

Date that next review is due: August 2022

Date policy reviewed: