



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Purpose: The Patchworking Garden Project has a suite of policies to ensure safe and effective working in the charity. This policy is about Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults in the project.

Introduction

The Patchworking Garden Project (PGP) is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of abuse.

Living a life that is free from harm and abuse is a fundamental right of every person. All of us need to act as good neighbours and citizens in looking out for one another and seeking to prevent the isolation which can easily lead to abusive situations and put adults at risk of harm.

Our safeguarding policy

- Protects adults at risk from neglect and abuse;
- Enables staff and volunteers to know what to do if they are worried; and
- Shows that our organisation is responsible

The PGP is committed to working with the main statutory agencies – local councils, the police and NHS organisations and other local voluntary organisations, where appropriate, to promote safer communities, to prevent harm and abuse and to deal with suspected or actual cases of abuse. Our procedures aim to make sure that the safety, needs and interests of adults at risk are always respected and upheld. This includes upholding human rights.

All volunteers, in whatever setting and role, are the frontline in preventing harm or abuse occurring and empowering the person at risk to take action where concerns arise.

Who is an 'adult at risk'?

The policy relates to the safeguarding of **adults at risk**. Adults at risk are defined as individuals aged over 18 who:

- have needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and

- 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.

(Care Act, 2014)

What is abuse?

There are many different types of abuse, including:

- **Discriminatory**

Including forms of harassment, bullying, slurs, isolation, neglect, denial of access to services or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, religion or because someone is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. This includes racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia or any other form of hate incident or crime.

- **Domestic abuse or violence**

Including an incident or a 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 regardless of gender or sexual orientation. This includes psychological/emotional, physical, sexual, financial abuse; so called 'honour' based violence, forced marriage or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

- **Financial or material**

Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, exploitation, 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.

- **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.

- **Neglect and acts of omission**

Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to access appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

- **Organisational (sometimes referred to as institutional)**

Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in a person's own 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.

- **Physical**

Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

- **Psychological (sometimes referred to as emotional)**

Including threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber-bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.

- **Sexual**

Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual assault, sexual acts, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting. It also includes sexual exploitation which is exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where the person receives "something" (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, mobile phones, cigarettes, gifts, money) or perceived friendship/relationship as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing sexual acts.

- **Self-neglect**

Includes a person neglecting to care for their personal hygiene, health or surroundings; or an inability to provide essential food, clothing, shelter or medical care necessary to maintain their physical and mental health, emotional wellbeing and general safety. It includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts.

What to do if an adult experiencing abuse tells you about it

If an adult experiencing abuse or neglect speaks to you about this, assure them that you are taking them seriously. Listen carefully to what they are saying, stay calm and get a clear and factual picture of the concern.

Be honest and avoid making assurances that you may not be able to keep, for example, complete confidentiality. Be clear and say that you need to report the abuse. Do not be judgemental and try to keep an open mind.

Do not keep concerns relating to potential abuse of vulnerable adults to yourself. Confidentiality may NOT be maintained if the withholding of information will prejudice the welfare of the adult.

All staff (professionals and volunteers) of any service involved with adults at risk should inform the relevant manager if they are concerned that an adult has been abused or may be at risk of harm.

If you hear about an incident of abuse from a third party (this is when someone else tells you about what they have heard or seen happen to a

vulnerable adult at risk), encourage them to report it themselves or help them to report the facts of what they know.

Everyone with a duty of care to an adult at risk should:

- act to protect the adult at risk
- deal with immediate needs and ensure the person is, **as far as possible, central to the decision-making process**
- report the abuse to an appropriate person or service (initially this will be the session host)
- record the events.

All concerns of abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult at risk can be reported to Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board.

During office hours

Contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- Tel: 0300 470 9100
- Email: mash@surreycc.gov.uk
- Secure email: mash@surreycc.gcsx.gov.uk
- Fax number: 01483 519862

Out of hours

- Call the Adult Social Care Emergency Duty Team on: 01483 517898

However, if a serious crime has taken place or there is a need for an immediate police response to protect the adult at risk, **consider dialling 999.**

What happens when I make a report of suspected abuse?

The referral may be passed to the local safeguarding adults team or allocated to a worker who will seek to:

- clarify the circumstances of the alleged abuse or neglect
- take any immediate steps to protect the adult at risk, if needed
- decide if the safeguarding adult procedures are the required and appropriate response to the situation
- work in partnership with other agencies, like the police or health services, where necessary.

Personnel and Training

The lead volunteer for ensuring the implementation of the safeguarding adults policy is Christine Munford. She will maintain an overview of safeguarding concerns, take a lead on liaising with other agencies and keeping informed about local developments in safeguarding. She will ensure that all staff and volunteers at The PGP have access to relevant training and support.

Allegations of abuse by volunteers.

Support volunteers themselves may be the subject of an allegation of abuse. If you are the subject of such an allegation or made aware of an allegation, then you must immediately report this to Christine Munford and Carmel O'Shea or Chair of Trustees. In these instances the PGP will report the allegation to Social Services and ensure that they are given all assistance pursuing any investigation. Suspension and/or disciplinary action may be taken.

In these circumstances The PGP will be as supportive as possible to the volunteer concerned who will also be encouraged to seek appropriate external help and support.

Staff and volunteer recruitment

When volunteers are being recruited to roles that involve regular direct work with vulnerable adults this will be taken into account by the PGP in the recruitment process, which will include DBS checks, take up of appropriate references, and relevant interview questions to ensure safer recruitment.

This policy will be reviewed annually.