



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & ADULTS at RISK POLICY

Reviewed & agreed 25th May 2023
Next review due May 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children engaged in the breadth of its activities, and adults at risk. In accordance with the Charity Commission, protecting people and safeguarding responsibilities are governance priorities for all trustees who must take reasonable steps to protect people who come into contact with Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre from harm. Beneficiaries of our services should also be made aware of this policy.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of trustees, staff and volunteers working on behalf of Whitstable Umbrella Community Centre in relation to the protection of adults at risk and of children from abuse.

“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)

Trustees, staff or volunteers may receive disclosures of abuse or observe children or adults who are at risk. In these situations, it is important to follow the correct procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse concerning a child or adult at risk.

2. TYPES OF ABUSE

One needs to be alert to the following whether online or in person:

- sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation
- criminal exploitation
- a charity’s culture, which may allow poor behaviour and poor accountability
- people abusing a position of trust they hold within a charity
- bullying or harassment
- health and safety
- commercial exploitation
- cyber abuse
- discrimination on any of the grounds in the Equality Act 2010
- people targeting your charity
- data breaches, including those under General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- negligent treatment
- domestic abuse

- self-neglect
- physical or emotional abuse
- extremism and radicalisation
- forced marriage
- modern slavery
- human trafficking
- female genital mutilation

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts.

3. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Safeguarding children duties apply to any charity working with, or coming into contact with, anyone under the age of 18.

The 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' guidance published by the Government was updated in 2010

Safeguarding children means to:

- protect children from abuse and maltreatment
- prevent harm to children's health or development
- ensure children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- take action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

4. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK

In accordance with the Care Act 2014 a vulnerable adult is now identified as an 'adult at risk'. An adult at risk of abuse or neglect is defined as someone who has needs for care and support, who is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect as a result of their care needs and is unable to protect themselves.

Safeguarding adults at risk means protecting their right to live in safety and free from abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding duties for adults at risk apply to any charity working with anyone aged 18 or over who:

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

An adult at risk of abuse may:

- have an illness affecting their mental or physical health
- have a learning disability
- suffer from drug or alcohol problems

- be frail.

5. OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

WUCC, in the shape of its trustees, staff and volunteers, will:

- accept the moral and legal responsibility to provide a duty of care to protect and safeguard the wellbeing of children and adults at risk engaged in any activity over which it has supervision and control;
- appoint a designated Safeguarding Lead who will handle safeguarding concerns and regularly provide information to the Board of Trustees about the number of safeguarding concerns raised and how quickly they were reported to the appropriate authorities;
- respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children and vulnerable adults;
- undertake recruitment procedures that take account of the need to protect children and vulnerable adults;
- if appropriate and with guidance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), ask volunteers and staff to complete a Basic DBS check - an enhanced record check must only be carried out if the volunteer is undertaking Regulated Activity (Department of Health. 2011);
- obtain two character references for all staff and volunteers who apply to work at the WUCC;
- train and supervise its employees and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and adults at risk and reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse against themselves. All staff will undertake safeguarding training when coming into post (unless they have undertaken this training within the previous 12 months) and will take refresher training on a regular basis, and not less than once every two years;
- require all staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by this Policy and Procedure;
- ensure that any partner it works with or commissions work from has a suitable safeguarding and protection policy and procedure in place;
- ask all staff and volunteers working outside of the WUCC to work in accordance with the Lone Working Policy and to make staff or a person of contact aware of any home visits they are carrying out, being sure to give details of address and time of visit so that their whereabouts is known and traceable at all times whilst working with/for the Umbrella Centre;
- always receive written consent to take and use images of children and vulnerable adults prior to the taking of photographs and/or video footage. Parents/carers and vulnerable adults will be made aware of when, where and how the images may be used, so that their decisions about consent will be informed.

6. PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

The following procedure must be followed whenever an allegation is made that a child or adult at risk has been abused, or when there is a suspicion that a child or adult at risk has been abused.

- It is not the responsibility of anyone representing WUCC to take individual responsibility for deciding whether or not abuse or poor practice is actually taking place. However, it is the responsibility of everyone representing WUCC to report concerns in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action.
- All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously and investigated. The procedure for making an allegation should be explained in full.
- Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the child or adult at risk.

- If the complainant is the child or adult at risk questions should be kept to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged. Leading questions should be avoided. The use of leading questions can cause problems for the subsequent investigation and any court proceedings.
- Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead. If they are not available, the incident must be reported to the Chair of Trustees.
- If an individual discloses that they have suffered sexual abuse or severe harm that required medical attention the police must be contacted immediately on 999.
- The designated Safeguarding Lead will, together with whoever reported the allegation, write up an initial report (see Appendix 2 – Children at Risk, Appendix 3 – Adults at Risk) within 24 hours, covering the name of the child or adult at risk who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the allegation, a description of any injuries observed, the date, time and place where the alleged abuse happened, the complainant's name (if different from the victim of the alleged abuse) and names of other witnesses/others present.
- The Safeguarding Lead will then report the matter to the Kent & Medway Social Services Duty Social Worker by telephone. A verbal referral should be made by telephone on
03000 41 61 61 for an adult at risk or 03000 41 91 91 (out of hours)
03000 41 11 11 for a child at risk.
- A written note of the date and time of the contact will be made and include the name and position of the person with whom the issue was discussed. The telephone contact will be confirmed in writing to the Kent and Medway Social Services department within 48 hours.
- All information received and discussed will be treated in confidence and only shared in a professional context with individuals who need to be involved in resolving the situation.

7. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST WUCC STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Any concerns for the welfare of a child or adult at risk arising from abuse or poor practice by a member of staff, trustee or volunteer must be dealt with in the same way as allegations against other people and reported immediately to the designated Safeguarding Officer.

If the allegation is about the designated Safeguarding Officer, the report should be made to the Chair of Trustees. The procedure listed under Section 6 above will then be followed and the issue referred to Social Services.

Where there is a complaint of abuse against a trustee, member of staff or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation:

- Criminal
- Child protection
- Disciplinary or misconduct.

WUCC's disciplinary investigation will take into account all relevant information, including the results of any police and Social Services investigation, and those of other partners. In accordance with the disciplinary procedure any individual accused of abuse would normally be suspended, pending further police and Social Services inquiries.

8. 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
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to your designated person for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation

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
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation

9. CONFIDENTIALITY AND SHARING INFORMATION

Confidentiality and the possible impact on the child or vulnerable adult

While personal information held by professionals and agencies is subject to a legal duty of confidence and should not normally be disclosed without the subject's consent, it is essential that trustees, staff and volunteers respond quickly where they have concerns or suspicions of abuse. Any concerns about confidentiality should not override the rights of children and/or vulnerable adults at risk of, or suffering, harm. WUCC's responsibility for protecting children and vulnerable adults means that, where necessary to protect welfare, it will breach confidentiality to raise concerns. Information sharing must be done in a way that is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the common law duty of confidentiality.

However, a concern for confidentiality must never be used as a justification for withholding information when it would be in the child or vulnerable adult's best interests to share information.

Do not promise to keep secrets.

Should it become necessary to pass on information shared by another party this decision should always be discussed with the person in question and where possible their cooperation sought beforehand. Explanations of the reasons, processes, likely sequence of events, and who to contact for information or for support should also be provided.

When a child or vulnerable adult makes an allegation of abuse, they may hope that the abuse will stop without further enquiries. They may fear the effect this will have on their family and may fear retribution from the abuser. They should be helped to understand why the referral (to the designated Safeguarding Officer) must be made and what is likely to happen as a result. It is important to reassure the child or vulnerable adult, but he/she must not be told that their allegation will be treated in a particular way or that the information will be kept a secret. A record should be kept of any decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If the decision is to share, then the record must include what has been shared, with whom and for what purpose.

Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to trustees, staff and volunteers.

APPENDIX 1: TYPES OF ABUSE

The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets' 2000 report lists eight types of abuse:

- **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;
- **Discriminatory abuse** - including race, sex, culture, religion, politics, that is based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment or hate crime;
- **Institutional abuse** - institutional abuse, although not a separate category of abuse in itself, requires specific mention simply to highlight that adults placed in any kind of care home or day care establishment are potentially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. This can be especially so when care standards and practices fall below an acceptable level as detailed in the contract specification;
- **Multiple forms of abuse** - multiple forms of abuse may occur in an ongoing relationship or an abusive service setting to one person, or to more than one person at a time, making it important to look beyond single incidents or breaches in standards, to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence or ignorance.

APPENDIX 2: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & VULNERABLE ADULTS INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Please complete this form as fully as possible and hand it to your designated Safeguarding Lead or in their absence to the Chair of Trustees who will be able to support you in following policy and procedures to ensure that the person you are concerned about is safeguarded effectively and that you as a trustee/member of staff or volunteer are safeguarded. The designated Safeguarding Lead is also responsible for confidentially storing and monitoring this information in line with data protection guidelines.

Individual's Details:

Name:

Date of Birth:

Home address inc. phone number:

Name of Parent/Carer in case of a child or Carer/Responsible Adult in the case of an Adult:

Contact no:

Date and time of incident or disclosure:

Presentation of individual:

Please note details of physical, behavioural and emotional wellbeing.

Please document any visible marks or injuries.

Details of what happened or disclosure of allegations:

Do not interpret information – use the same language that was used by the injured party.

Name, role and contact details of any witnesses:

Are you reporting your own concerns or those reported to you by someone else?

Name, role and contact details of person completing form:

Are you reporting your own concerns or those reported by someone else?

What action was taken?

If no action taken please explain why.

Who did you report the incident to?

Please include name, contact details, role, date and method used.

Any other relevant information:

Signed..... Date Time

This form should be kept in a secure and safe place in compliance with confidentiality guidelines.