



Stoke-on-Trent Pride Staffordshire & South Cheshire

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy

Introduction

Stoke-on-Trent Pride is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, engaged in the breadth of its activities.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of staff, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of Stoke-on-Trent Pride in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse. A separate policy for safeguarding children and young people is available as the organisation's Child Protection Policy.

All adults have the right to be safe from harm and should be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To explain the responsibilities Stoke-on-Trent Pride and its staff, volunteers and trustees have in respect of vulnerable adult protection.
- To provide staff with an overview of vulnerable adult protection.
- To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where vulnerable adult protection issues arise.

Context

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

Some adults are less able to protect themselves than others, and some have difficulty making their wishes and feelings known. This may make them vulnerable to abuse. The broad definition of a 'vulnerable adult' referred to in the 1997 Consultation Paper 'Who decides?' issued by the Lord Chancellor's Department, is a person:

"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".

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults. To this end it is the responsibility of all staff to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect (see the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person/agency.

For purposes of ensuring consistent and widely understood terminology, these policy and procedures will use the phrase 'Vulnerable Adults' to identify those eligible for interventions within the procedures.

Legal framework

This guidance reflects the principles contained within the Human Rights Act 1998, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005, covering England and Wales, provides a statutory framework for people who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves, or who have capacity and want to make preparations for a time when they may lack capacity in the future. It sets out who can take decisions, in which situations, and how they should go about this.

The Human Rights Act 1998 gives legal effect in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) created a framework for whistle blowing across the private, public and voluntary sectors. The Act provides almost every individual in the workplace with protection from victimisation where they raise genuine concerns about malpractice in accordance with the Act's provisions.



The role of staff, volunteers and trustees

All staff, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of Stoke-on-Trent Pride have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults.

Staff, volunteers and trustees may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy will enable staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific adult protection issues.

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

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 (family members, relatives, professional staff, paid care workers, volunteers, other service users, neighbours, friends, associates and people who deliberately exploit vulnerable people, and strangers) and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets' report suggests the following as the main types of abuse:-

- **Physical abuse** is the non-accidental infliction of physical force that results in bodily injury, pain or impairment.

Indicators include: any injury not fully explained by the history given; injuries inconsistent with the lifestyle of the vulnerable adult; bruises or clusters of injuries forming regular patterns or reflecting the shape of an article; burns; multiple fractures.

- **Sexual abuse** is direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without consent. Consent may not be given because a person has capacity and does not want to give it, a person lacks capacity and is therefore unable to give it, and a person feels coerced into activity because the other person is in a position of trust, power or authority, or the other person is a close relative.

Indicators include: significant change in sexual behaviour or attitude; poor concentration; vulnerable adult appears withdrawn, depressed or stressed;

withdrawal, choosing to spend the majority of time alone; bruising; sexually transmitted diseases.

- **Psychological abuse** is the use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing and other verbal conduct, or any other forms of mental cruelty that results in mental or physical distress. It includes the denial of basic human and civil rights, such as choice, self-expression, privacy, dignity and emotional contact.

Indicators include: change in appetite; low self-esteem, deference, passivity and resignation, excessive compliance; unexplained fear, defensiveness, ambivalence; emotional withdrawal; sleep disturbance.

- **Financial or material abuse** is the unauthorised and improper use of funds, property or any resources belonging to an individual 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.

Indicators include: unexplained sudden inability to pay bills or maintain lifestyle; unusual or inappropriate bank account activity; withholding money; vulnerable adult does not have access to own financial documents e.g. cheque book; person managing financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative.

- **Neglect and acts of omission** - the repeated deprivation of assistance that the vulnerable adult needs for important activities of daily living, including the failure to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous to the vulnerable adult or others.

Indicators include: person appears to be withdrawn, agitated or anxious; they are inappropriately or improperly dressed; they may display physical or verbal outbursts which are out of character; depression may be identified; they may appear confused, are overly subservient or anxious to please; there may be a sudden and dramatic change on behaviour and personality, including sexualised behaviour, self-harm, eating disorders, excessive



drinking.

- **Discriminatory abuse** - exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies mainstream opportunities to some groups or individuals. It includes discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, sexuality, disability, mental health or religion.

Indicators include: lack of respect shown to an individual; signs of a sub-standard service offered to an individual; repeated exclusion from rights afforded to citizens such as health, education, employment, criminal justice and civic status.

- **Institutional abuse** is mistreatment or abuse by a regime or the individuals within an institution.

Indicators include: inappropriate or poor care; misuse of medication; lack of respect shown to the vulnerable adult; failure to ensure appropriate privacy or personal dignity; lack of flexibility and choice; lack of adequate procedures; lack of personal clothing or possessions; unnecessary or inappropriate rules and regulation; lack of stimulation and diversion interests.

Procedure in the event of a disclosure

Staff should be aware that whilst some forms of abuse are easy to recognise other situations may be more subtle and have a complicated set of dynamics at work.

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 should 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, using the Adult Cause for Concern Form to be found in the drop box and appended to this policy.

This should 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.

Responding to an allegation

All staff members should be aware that investigations into allegations of abuse cannot be carried out internally within Stoke-on-Trent Pride but must instead be opened out and coordinated with the relevant statutory agencies.

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the designated Adult Protection Officer (Counselling Services Manager) on that working day where possible. The only exception to this will be if the situation is clearly an emergency, in which case the police or medical aid should be called for without delay.

The relevant member of staff shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local Adult Social Care duty social worker or via the duty worker of the relevant Community Mental Health Team (CMHT). 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 Care department within 24 hours.

The authorities should co-ordinate a response to the situation and should advise Stoke-on-Trent Pride how to proceed. If this advice does not include clear guidance as to how to support the service user in the meantime then the staff



member should ask for it.

Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

DO

- Make sure the individual is safe and safeguard the situation if you can
- Think hard about why you suspect abuse is taking place.
- Listen to what the service user is saying and concentrate on what you are observing.
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- 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

- Arouse the suspicion of the person(s) who you suspect may be abusing the service user
- 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 a member of Stoke-on-Trent Pride's Senior Management Team.

Confidentiality

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

Staff, volunteers and trustees have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and the relevant Adult Social Care department.

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 should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent should 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 should let the adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.

Staff should 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 should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with other policies for Stoke-on-Trent Pride including:

- Confidentiality
- Disciplinary and Grievance
- Data Protection
- Recruitment and Selection
- Child Protection Policy
- Whistle-blowing Policy.

The role of key individual agencies

Adult Social Care

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 have the ability to 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.

Role of designated Adult Protection Officer

The role of the designated officer is to deal with all instances involving adult protection that arise within Stoke-on-Trent Pride. They will respond to all vulnerable adult protection concerns and enquiries. The designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer for Stoke-on-Trent Pride is the current charity secretary.

Should you have any suspicions or concerns relating to Adult Protection, contact the secretary via email: Secretary@stokeontrentpride.org.uk.

Role of line manager

The role of the line manager is to support the member of staff, trustee or volunteer involved with the incident and to ensure the correct procedures are followed.

The line manager could, if agreed with the staff member dealing with the incident, make contact with the designated Adult Protection Officer in the first instance.

The line manager should ensure that all staff within their team are familiar with Stoke-on-Trent Pride's vulnerable adult protection procedures and ensure that all staff undertake training, where appropriate.



Training

Training will be provided, as appropriate, to ensure that staff are aware of these procedures. Specialist training will be provided for the member of staff with vulnerable adult protection responsibilities.

Whistle-blowing

Stoke-on-Trent Pride strongly encourages employees to feel confident enough to report any concerns they may have using the organisation's Whistle-blowing Policy. The Public Interest Disclosure Act protects workers from victimisation when they blow the whistle inside, and if there is good reason, outside the organisation.

Complaints procedure

Stoke-on-Trent Pride has a Complaints procedure available to all staff, volunteers, trustees and clients/service users.

Recruitment procedure

Stoke-on-Trent Pride operates procedures that take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults, including arrangements for appropriate checks on new staff, volunteers and trustees where applicable.

Date of Draft	July 2015
Date of Implementation	July 2015
Date of next review	July 2022
Trustee Review / Approval	Chairman

Stoke-on-Trent Pride Staffordshire & South Cheshire

CAUSE FOR CONCERN REPORT VULNERABLE ADULTS

MEMBERS NAME:	
MEMBERS CONTACT DETAILS:	
CLIENT NAME:	
CLIENT ADDRESS:	
CLIENT DATE OF BIRTH:	
PRECISE NATURE OF CONCERN (the information given here should be factual, not opinions or hearsay. The full date and time of the incident/ disclosure should be noted);	



ACTION TAKEN BY Memeber. (the information given should state the date and time of any action taken, the name and job title of any professional contacted, including Stoke-on-Trent Pride staff, and his/her responses, if applicable):



FURTHER ACTION TAKEN BY Stoke-on-Trent Pride IF ANY) WITH DATES AND TIMES:

OUTCOME (this should indicate how the Cause for Concern has been resolved for the vulnerable adult):

SIGNED:	Carl Gratty
DATE:	01/07/2022

Continue on separate sheet as required for any section.