

## **WORCESTERSHIRE PARENT AND CARERS' COMMUNITY (WPCC)**

### **SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY STATEMENT**

Worcestershire Parent and Carers' Community (WPCC) believes that it is always unacceptable for a vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all adults by a commitment to practice which protects them.

(Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010, Mental Capacity Act 2005, Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, Modern Slavery Act 2015).

**A vulnerable adult** refers to a person aged 18 years or over who might be unable to protect him or herself from significant harm or serious exploitation because of a physical or mental disability, age or illness.

All safeguarding decisions must take account of the person's ability to give informed consent and to comply with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

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 and volunteers to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect and to pass on their concerns to the Designated Person for Adult Protection, Lesley Ann Smallman (Safeguarding Trustee).

WPCC works in accordance with Worcestershire County Council's Adult Protection Policy and Procedures. Staff, volunteers and trustees may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy will enable workers and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific adult protection issues.

#### **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Procedures**

WPCC believes that it is always unacceptable for a vulnerable person to experience abuse of any kind and their safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in the organisation.

WPCC will work in accordance with Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board Inter-Agency Guidelines for Safeguarding Adults. In order to safeguard everyone involved in WPCC we have developed the following policies and procedures:

Safeguarding Children and Young People's Policy Statement

Safeguarding and Protecting Children Procedures

Health and Safety and Risk Assessment Policy

Safe Recruitment, Induction and Safe Working Practices

Members' Agreement

Complaints procedure

Resolving problems – Disciplinary and Grievance procedures

Management of Allegations against Staff and Volunteers

Equal Opportunities

Prevent Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Our policies apply to all workers and volunteers including trustees. They can be accessed via our website or on request.

### **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 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**- 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 racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

In addition, the Care 2014 sets out the following areas which are recognised forms of abuse:

- Domestic violence – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.
- 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.

- Organisational abuse – 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 one’s own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going will-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- Self-neglect – this covers a wide range of behaviour: neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

WPCC also recognises:

- **Online abuse** - The use of the internet and other social networks such as Facebook and Twitter which causes exploitation, harassment or bullying to someone who lacks the capacity to appreciate the danger.
- **Abuse by landline or mobile device or any electronic method of communication**, the use of which encourages someone to purchase goods or services or which amounts to cold calling or a scam where the recipient is incapable of appreciating the nature of the communication and the possible consequences.

### What is Significant Harm?

Significant harm includes the impairment of physical, emotional, social or behavioural development”.

### Procedure in the event of a disclosure

It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse.

If you have any worries or concerns about a vulnerable adult, you have two options:

#### Immediate threat to the safety of a vulnerable adult

(a) Worcestershire Social Care ATIS (Access, Triage and Intervention Service) on 01905 768053

Or

(b) The Police on 999

#### Other more general concerns about a child, e.g. welfare, care, safety

Contact Lesley Ann Smallman (Safeguarding Trustee) or Sue Evans (Parent Carer rep) by calling 07955 760488

Or 01905 748278 (WPCC Office landline)

WPCC may choose to discuss the issue before making a referral by speaking to the Adult Protection Team.

Record your concerns and actions

As part of this early enquiry stage, liaison will take place between WPCCC staff and the concerned person, who will gather information and establish the nature of the situation. A decision on whether further action is necessary will be based on evidence presented.

If a referral is made, then there is a legal right to access information documented in accordance with our procedures.

WPCCC agrees to work in accordance with the requirements of the Disclosure & Barring Service for reporting staff and volunteers deemed unsuitable for working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

## **What to do if a disclosure is made to you -**

### **IF**

- A person tells you that they **have been** abused or
- A person tells you that they **are being** abused, or
- You **suspect** or
- **Witness** abuse

### **THEN YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO DO SOMETHING**

**DO** – listen calmly.

**DO** – believe what they tell you.

**DO** – tell them they were right to tell you.

**DO** – tell them it is not their fault

**DO** – Explain areas of confidentiality and say it is your responsibility to tell someone in authority because we need to keep the individual safe. (It's your legal responsibility).

**DO**- Explain the procedure to the individual making the disclosure

**DON'T** ask lots of questions, that is the responsibility of a trained social worker.

**DON'T** ask questions that are leading, eg. Did your friend do that?

**DON'T** make promises to keep secrets

**DON'T** let them think you doubt what they have said. It takes enormous courage to talk about abuse.

**DON'T** say things that may make them feel responsible, e.g. why didn't you say anything before?

**DO KEEP CALM - DON'T PANIC** Follow this procedure for reporting.  
Acting in haste can be counterproductive.

**DO** – report it to the Designated Person but nobody else.

**DO** - make detailed written notes as soon as possible within 24 hours. Try to write down the actual words used.

**DO** - Sign them, include time and date, who was present and what was said.

The Designated Person for Adult Protection shall telephone and report the matter to the ATIS (Access, Triage and Intervention) Service. 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 within 48 hours.

**Approved May 2018**  
**Under continuous review**