



Safeguarding Overview for Communicare Volunteers

Communicare in Southampton is committed to ensuring that adults with care and support needs and children in contact with the organisation are protected from abuse. Although encountering abuse is rare, it must never be ignored. This guidance is intended to give volunteers an overview of safeguarding and their responsibilities. Please ask a member of staff if you would like more information. You are welcome to read our full safeguarding policies for adults and children.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means making sure adults with care and support needs, and children, are protected from abuse.

What do we mean by an 'adult with care and support needs'?

An adult with care and support needs is someone who is over 18 and who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- 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.

What is abuse? (See safeguarding policy for fuller definitions)

Abuse is a violation of someone's rights by another person. It could be:

- **Physical** e.g. hurting someone, restraining someone unnecessarily
- **Sexual** e.g. unwanted or inappropriate sexual acts or behaviour or exposing someone to such acts
- **Financial** e.g. taking money or goods, or persuading someone to spend money on someone else
- **Discriminatory** e.g. Racism, sexism or acts based on a person's disability, age or sexual orientation.
- **Domestic Abuse** e.g. Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse
- **Neglect** - e.g. not giving medication correctly, inadequate food or personal care
- **Psychological** e.g. emotional abuse, threats, isolation, cyber bullying
- **Institutional** or organisational - doing things for the benefit of the organisation not person
- **Modern Slavery:** human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude
- **Self Neglect:** neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and behaviour such as hoarding.

Who might be responsible?

The person responsible for the abuse might be known to the person, such as a family member or a carer, neighbour or volunteer, or they may be a stranger. It may be done on purpose or by someone who may not realise that what they are doing is abusive.

What should I do if I become aware of abuse?

You may become aware of abuse if you:

- witness a form of abuse
- suspect someone is being abused
- are told about abuse by a client or someone they know

respond, record, report

If someone tells you about abuse, or if you witness or suspect abuse, you should

Respond - If someone tells you about abuse (or if you witness it yourself) you should try to stay calm, make sure the person is immediately safe, listen to their concerns and reassure them that the issue will be taken seriously.

Record - Make sure you write down clear, accurate and relevant notes of what you have been told or, if you suspect abuse, your own concerns.

Report - Pass on your concerns to a member of the staff team as soon as possible. Please phone during office hours or leave us an answerphone message or email if the office is closed. We will contact you as soon as possible. In the unlikely event that we don't get back to you on the next working day please assume we didn't get the message and contact us again.

If the person is at immediate risk of serious abuse you should contact the police on 999.

If you feel your concern can't wait until Communicare office hours contact

SCC Adult Services on 023 8083 3003 or Children's Services on 023 8083 3004

Out of hour's emergency number: 023 8023 3344 Please let us know if you've done this.

If you have a concern about the behaviour of a member of the staff team or volunteer which you don't want to discuss with the staff team you can contact the **Communicare Welfare Office** via the main office 023 80216016 – (ask for the Welfare officer to phone you) or by writing to The Welfare Office, C/O Communicare in Southampton. Please don't do this if your concern needs an urgent response; contact adult services instead.

What you must not do

Ignore - Although encountering these kinds of incidents is rare, it is important that abuse is never ignored - if you are not sure it is best to report it to be on the safe side.

Press for information - You should not ask the person leading questions or press for more details. You should allow someone to freely recall events and share whatever is important to them.

Investigate - You should never try to investigate incidents of abuse yourself or try to confront the person you think is responsible for the abuse. If an investigation is needed, Communicare will refer the issue on to organisations such as the police and social services.

Make promises - Although you should reassure the person that the issue will be dealt with sensitively, you should never make promises to keep anything secret.

What happens next?

The Communicare Manager will make enquiries into the issue, and depending on the circumstances, it may be referred on to social services and/or the police. We will let you know we are investigating but we may not be able to give you ongoing information due to confidentiality.