



# Communicare in Southampton

...helping neighbours in need

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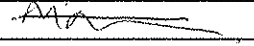
# SAFEGUARDING ADULTS POLICY

### Principle:

No-one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading  
treatment or punishment

*Human Rights Act 2000*

### Amendment History

Date	
November 2017	Revised and Amended
 Signed by Miles Newton, Chair of Trustees on	
<del>October 2018</del> MAY 2019	To be reviewed 
<del>October 2019</del> MAY 2020	To be reviewed 

## **1. Aim of this Policy**

**Communicare in Southampton recognises that we have a moral and legal responsibility to protect adults' rights to live safely and free from abuse and neglect. We recognise that adults we support often face circumstances which make them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.**

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live safely, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is being promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances. *Care Act 2014-updated March 2016*

This policy draws heavily upon '*Safeguarding Adults, a multi-agency tool kit produced by Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton May 2015*

### **2 a. Factors which increase a person's vulnerability to abuse and exploitation**

Many of the people we support will have personal characteristics or be in situations which increase the risk of them facing abuse.

*Vulnerability factors taken from Safeguarding Adults, a multi-agency tool kit produced by Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton May 2015*

***Personal characteristics of a person at risk that can increase vulnerability may include:***

- Not having mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety including fluctuating mental capacity associated with mental illness and other conditions
- Communication difficulties
- Physical dependency – being dependent on others for personal care and activities of daily life
- Low self esteem
- Experience of abuse
- Childhood experience of abuse.

***Social/situational factors that increase the risk of abuse may include:***

- Being cared for in a care setting, that is, more or less dependent on others
- Not getting the right amount or the right kind of care that they need
- Isolation and social exclusion

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- Stigma and discrimination
- Lack of access to information and support
- Being the focus of anti-social behaviour.

## 2 b. Definitions of Abuse and Exploitation

“**Abuse** is the harming of another individual usually by someone who is in a position of power, trust or authority over that individual. The harm may be physical, psychological or emotional or it may be directed at exploiting the vulnerability of the victim in more subtle ways (*for example, through denying access to people who can come to the aid of the victim, or through misuse or misappropriation of his or her financial resources*). The threat or use of punishment is also a form of abuse. .... In many cases, it is a criminal offence”  
*Centre for Policy on Ageing (1996)*

**No abuse is acceptable and some abuse is a criminal offence and must be reported to the Police as soon as possible.**

Abuse can happen anywhere and can be carried out by anyone:  
 Informal carers, family, friends, neighbours, paid staff, volunteers, other service users or tenants, strangers etc. The abuser may not know that what they are doing is wrong but this does not mean it isn't abuse.

Types of abuse	Behaviours include
<b>Physical</b>	Hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions
<b>Sexual</b>	Rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.
<b>Psychological</b>	Emotional abuse, 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 supportive networks.
<b>Financial or material</b>	Theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
<b>Neglect and acts of omission</b>	Ignoring medical or physical care needs, failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care, welfare benefits or educational services, withholding the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

<b>Discriminatory</b>	Racism, sexism or acts based on a person's disability, age or sexual orientation. It also includes other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment such as disability hate crime.
<b>Domestic abuse</b>	Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse and so called 'honour' based violence.
<b>Organisational abuse</b>	Neglect and poor care practice within a care setting such as a hospital or care home or in relation to care provided in someone's own home ranging from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be neglect or poor practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within a care setting.
<b>Modern slavery</b>	Encompassing 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.
<b>Self-Neglect*</b>	Covers a wide range of behaviour including neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and behaviour such as hoarding.

\*'In the majority of cases where there are concerns of self-neglect by a vulnerable adult, the best route to provide an appropriate intervention is via community care assessments, care programme approach, and/or risk assessment, risk management and review'. For more details see the Safe Guarding Adults Multi-Agency Toolkit

### 3. Rights and Responsibilities

#### Responsibilities of Communicare in Southampton

- To ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the adult safeguarding policy and are adequately trained
- To take concerns raised by service users, their relatives, volunteers or any other person seriously and follow the correct procedure in response
- Where appropriate to pass on concerns to other agencies and cooperate fully with any investigations initiated by other agencies
- To support and where possible secure the safety of individuals
- To ensure that correct recruitment procedures are followed for all staff and volunteers including DBS checks as appropriate – see Employment of Ex-Offenders Policy

#### Responsibilities of employees and volunteers

- To be familiar with the adult protection policy and procedures

(Volunteers are given a simplified version which references the main policy and emphasises the importance of reporting concerns to staff. The full policy is available upon request.)

- To take appropriate action in line with the policies of Communicare in Southampton
- To cooperate fully with any investigations
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions. Failure to do so will be regarded as gross misconduct, possibly resulting in dismissal.

#### **Rights of Vulnerable Adults**

- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
- To be involved in any process as appropriate.
- To receive information about the outcome

#### **Support for those who report abuse**

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they be staff, volunteers, service users, carers or members of the general public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
- If service users, they will be given immediate protection from the risk of reprisals or intimidation
- If Staff or volunteers they will be given support and afforded protection if necessary in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

## **4. Good Practice**

### **a. Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers**

Communicare in Southampton recruitment procedures and policies include:

- Risk assessment of role to assess need for DBS Disclosures
- Completion of a Communicare application form
- Check references
- DBS check if appropriate –see Employment of Ex-Offenders Policy

### **b. Training**

- Familiarisation with all policies and procedures during induction
- Further training, dependent on nature of role, inc:
  - Risk assessment & management
  - Types of abuse and recognising signs of abuse
  - Keeping appropriate records
  - Listening skills

### **c. Management and Supervision**

It is the line manager's responsibility to clarify with the worker or volunteer their roles and responsibilities regarding their relationships with vulnerable adults with whom they may be in contact. Supervision for staff and volunteers will monitor the work and offer the opportunity to raise any issues.

### **d: Investigation of abuse allegations**

In all cases of suspected abuse Communicare will conduct an internal investigation into the allegations or suspicions, unless the circumstances or seriousness of the allegation indicate that an externally led investigation should take priority. In this case a referral must be made as soon as possible – see section 5.

The investigation will usually be carried out by the manager unless they are the subject of the allegations or unavailable in which case the chair of trustees shall assume responsibility for directing the investigation.

The objectives of an investigation, subject to any criminal investigation, will be to:

- Establish the facts;
- Decide what actions are necessary with regard to the vulnerable person, taking into account their wishes
- Decide what actions are necessary with regard to the alleged perpetrator;
- Decide what actions are necessary with regard to the management of Communicare In Southampton's services.

The investigation should not delay the intervention required for the protection of the vulnerable person.

As a matter of course allegations of criminal behaviour will be reported to the police and other agencies as required.

Employees or volunteers who are implemented in an investigation may have their roles adapted or restricted whilst the investigation is taking place.

Employees may be suspended pending the outcome of an investigation which if proven could result in dismissal.

Volunteers may be asked not to continue with the voluntary activity pending the outcome of the investigation which if proven could result in them being deemed unsuitable to continue as a volunteer.

### **e. Record Keeping**

- There should be a written record of any concerns. If the concern is of a less serious nature or relating to possible self-neglect a note will be made in the normal client record stating the concern and any action taken. If the concern is of a more serious nature a note will be put in the file stating that there is information in the secure file. Allegations or concerns against volunteers will be recorded in this way. This confidential information will be kept in a

password protected file on the computer and/ or a locked drawer by the appropriate person, and will be kept for as long as deemed necessary, in line with Data Protection principles. *(Please refer to Data Protection Policy)*.

- All incidents should be discussed in supervision with line manager.

**f. Access to an independent person – to be known as the 'Welfare Officer'.**

Communicare in Southampton will appoint an independent person, to be known as the 'Welfare Officer'. The Welfare Officer will not be an employee or a volunteer who has regular contact with service users. Information about the role of the Welfare Officer and how to contact them will be made available to service users and their families.

**The Welfare Officer may be contacted via the Communicare Office:**

The Welfare Officer  
Communicare in Southampton  
Voluntary Action Centre  
Kingsland Square,  
St Mary's  
Southampton  
SO14 1NW

The current Welfare Officer is Julia Painter.

## **5. What to do if abuse is witnessed or suspected**

### **Follow the principles of 'Respond, Record, Report'**

#### **Respond:**

All allegations or suspicions are to be treated seriously. Reassure the person making the report that they will be taken seriously. Respect any request for privacy but do not promise confidentiality. If the person is self-disclosing ask them what action they would like you to take but do not make promises you may not be able to keep. You should not ask the person leading questions or press for more details.

If the person is injured or if they are at risk of serious harm contact the emergency services immediately

If it appears a crime has been committed take steps to secure possible evidence.

#### **Record:**

All allegations of abuse or suspected abuse must be recorded. Staff or volunteers who witness incidents or who have something disclosed to them should make notes as soon as possible of what they witnessed or were told. Try to record what was



actually said. Volunteers should report to the office as soon as possible, staff to their line manager. Staff should complete the 'Safeguarding Adults Concern/Referral Form' for all incidents which may be investigated. Records should be stored securely as outlined in section 4.

## Report

Volunteers and staff should report all concerns or disclosures to their line manager /volunteer coordinators as soon as possible. If the office is closed or their line manager is unavailable and the concern is both serious and urgent it should be passed onto the emergency services or adult safeguarding team and the line manager /volunteer coordinator informed that this has happened.

### Contact SCC Adult Services on 023 8083 3003

If it is not clear whether or not the concern should be passed onto adult services or other authorities, line managers will involve the general manager (or if they are unavailable or implemented the chair of trustees) who will investigate and decide whether to refer.

The following factors should be taken into account.

- **Risk** – does the vulnerable adult understand the nature and consequences of any risk they may be subject to, and do they willingly accept such a risk?
- **Self-determination** – is the vulnerable adult able to make their own decisions and choices, and do they wish to do so?
- **Seriousness** – A number of factors will determine whether intervention is required. The perception of the victim must be the starting point. Factors informing assessment of seriousness will include:
  - The **perception** by the individual and their **vulnerability**
  - The **extent** of the abuse
  - The **length of time** it has been going on
  - The **impact** on the individual
  - The risk of **repetition/escalation** affecting this/other vulnerable adults
  - Is a **criminal offence** being committed?
- Communicare must report all serious incidents to the charity commission- this includes serious safeguarding accusations against staff and volunteers regardless of the outcome of investigation
- If an accusation against a member of staff or volunteer is substantiated and they were engaged in a regulated activity the matter may need to be reported to the DBS. Contact the LSGB for advice if needed.

More information can be found in the practice guidance.

## **6. Summary**

- The employee/volunteer's responsibility is to protect the vulnerable adult if they are at risk
- Each employee or volunteer has a duty to take action
- Employees or volunteers should not have to cope alone in a situation where they have received a disclosure of abuse or suspect that abuse is taking place.



