



## **Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults Policy Mayfield & Five Ashes Community Services (MAYFACS)**

### **Policy statement**

- The welfare of the vulnerable adult is paramount.
- All adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to quickly and appropriately.
- All staff/volunteers working for MAYFACS has a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

### **Policy aims**

The aim of this Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults Policy is to promote good practice and to ensure all staff/volunteers make an informed and confident response to specific vulnerable adult protection issues.

The following information aims to help all staff/volunteers to recognise abuse and know what to do should they be concerned that a vulnerable adult known to them is being or has been abused.

### **Who is a vulnerable adult?**

A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or older who may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation. This could be due to a number of factors, including:

- Age
- Mental health problems
- Physical disability
- Learning disability
- Sensory impairment
- Illness
- Addiction to alcohol or drugs
- Dependency on others
- Social isolation

Vulnerable adults may also be at risk due to experiences of vulnerability in childhood, or if they have fewer protective factors in place, such as a stable household income or supportive family.

### **What is abuse?**

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

- It may consist of a single act or repeated acts.
- It may be planned or unplanned.
- It may be the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.
- It may happen when a vulnerable adult is persuaded to enter into a transaction to which they have not consented or cannot consent.

### **Abuse can take many forms:**

- Physical abuse – for example, hitting, pushing, shaking, over medicating or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual abuse – for example, unwanted touching, kissing or sexual activity, or where the vulnerable adult cannot



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- or does not give his or her consent.
- Psychological / emotional abuse - including verbal abuse, intimidation, isolation, humiliation, bullying or the use of threats.
- Financial abuse – theft, exploitation, the illegal or improper use of a person's money, property, pension book, bank account or other belongings.
- Neglect - the repeated deprivation of help that a vulnerable adult needs which, if withdrawn, will cause him or her to suffer.
- Discriminatory abuse - including racist or sexist abuse, and abuse based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

## Where can abuse happen?

Abuse can take place in any setting:

- In their own home
- In the home of someone else
- In a residential or nursing home
- In a day centre, adult education centre or other establishment
- In a hospital or GP surgery
- At work
- In a public place
- At an organised activity

## Who abuses?

The person responsible for the abuse may or may not be familiar to the abused but can often be well known to the adult being abused. They may be:

- A relative, friend or neighbour
- A paid or volunteer carer
- A professional worker
- Another resident or service user
- An occasional visitor or service provider

## What should you do?

- It is not the responsibility of anyone working for MAYFACS either in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not a vulnerable adult is being abused or that abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns.
- Talk to the person in a safe and private place.
- Listen sensitively but be careful not to ask leading questions. Try not to show you are shocked.
- Find out what the person wants and explain that you will discuss the situation with the Manager and/or a Trustee.
- Contact the Manager and/or Trustee who will refer the allegation to the social services department, who may involve the police.

## What you should not do

- Do not confront the person you think is responsible for the abuse
- Do not destroy any evidence



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- Do not start to investigate the situation
- Do not be judgemental
- Do not make any promises you cannot keep
- Do not take the allegations lightly or dismiss them

## **Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

## **Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse**

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The vulnerable adult's name and date of birth.
- The vulnerable adult's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the incident. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The vulnerable adult's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have any carers/relatives been contacted?
- If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.

## **What will happen next?**

What happens next will depend on the wishes of the person and the seriousness of the situation. If they are in physical danger, ensuring their safety will be most important.

In response to the referral, trained staff will carry out a careful and sensitive enquiry. Information and advice will be offered so that the person and their family can make an informed choice, care will be taken to support and protect them.

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

- A criminal investigation
- An adult protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and an adult protection investigation may well influence a disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.



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POLICY No.

**01**

DATE POLICY REVIEWED/REVISED: Sept 2024      DATE FOR NEXT REVIEW: Sept 2027

TRUSTEE SIGNATURE: Signed on hard copy

TRUSTEE NAME (Print): L.Firrell (Chair)