



## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

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### **IMPORTANT NOTE FOR VOLUNTEERS of CARE EG & L**

This Policy covers both Vulnerable Adults and Children for completeness. However in general CARE EG & L does not carry children who require a child seat or other specialist equipment. So in most cases we will only be carrying Adults.

In a few instances an elder child (not requiring a car seat) may accompany one of our clients who is their parent or guardian. Responsible minors could also be acting as carers for their parents.

**This policy will be reviewed annually by the CARE committee at their first meeting after the Annual General Meeting.**

# **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

## **1/. Introduction to Safeguarding**

The principle aim of these guidelines and procedures is that the first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of all vulnerable clients, volunteers and Trustees.

### **Who is the policy for?**

This policy is designed for anyone working with, or concerned with, “CARE in East Grinstead & Lingfield” (CARE EG&L) and their interaction with vulnerable adults & children.

All volunteers working with vulnerable adults & children have a duty to protect them and should make themselves fully aware of this policy and the guidelines within it. All allegations of abuse of a vulnerable adult or child must be treated seriously. All action taken under these guidelines must be carried out sensitively, taking account of the vulnerable adult or child’s individual needs including race, culture and ethnicity, age, gender, religion, disability and sexuality.

## **2/. What is Safeguarding?**

Safeguarding means protecting an adult or child’s rights to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

Everyone has the right to be safeguarded from abuse or neglect. There is a legislative framework in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults through:

- The Children’s Act 1989 (as amended by section 53 of the Children’s Act 2004) and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- The Care Act 2014

### **The 6 Principles of Safeguarding**

- Empowerment**; people are supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- Prevention**; It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- Proportionality**; The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk present.
- Protection; support and representation** for those most in need.
- Partnership Services**; offer local solutions through working closely with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing and reporting neglect and abuse.
- Accountability and transparency** in delivering safeguarding

### **3/. AIMS of this policy within CARE EG&L**

The AIMS of this safeguarding policy is to inform, encourage and enable all volunteers and trustees of CARE EG&L in safeguarding both within CARE EG&L and in the community as a whole.

### **4/. Definitions**

#### **4.1 'Vulnerable adult' definition**

A vulnerable adult is any person aged 18 years or older who

- is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness.
- is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself, or is unable to protect himself or herself against harm or serious exploitation.
- Who decides? - Lord Chancellor's Department, 1997

#### **Vulnerable adults may:**

- be physically or mentally frail
- suffer from a mental illness, including dementia
- have a physical or sensory disability
- have learning difficulties
- have a severe physical illness
- have an acquired brain injury.

The term '**adult abuse**' is subject to wide interpretation and definition? 'No Secrets' provides the following definition:

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

#### **4.2 "Vulnerable children" definition**

Vulnerable Children means children:

- who are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for them of social care services.
- whose health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for them of social care services.
- who have a physical or mental impairment.
- who are in the care of a public authority, or
- who are provided with accommodation by a public authority in order to secure their well-being.

## 5. RISKS to Vulnerable Adults & Children

CARE EG&L recognises the RISK that a vulnerable adult or child:

- can be at risk of mistreatment and abuse and that such mistreatment and abuse constitutes a clear infringement of rights.
- has the right to request that no further action be taken.

### 5.1 Categories of Abuse

Abuse can take many different forms and can occur in many places and in any situation. Types of abuse can be:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Emotional or Psychological abuse
- Neglect
- Discriminatory abuse.

These are not mutually exclusive and many situations will combine a combination of different types of abuse.

### 5.2 Who Abuses?

The abuser is usually well known to the person being abused. They may be:

- A partner, child or relative
- A friend or neighbour
- A paid or volunteer care worker
- A health or social worker or other professional
- The person who cares for them
- Another vulnerable adult.

## 6/. Responding, Reporting & Recording

All trustees and volunteers have a duty to report any allegations or suspicions of abuse or potential abuse of a vulnerable adult or child to the Safeguarding Officer.

### **IMPORTANT**

If the vulnerable adult or child is **in immediate danger** or **in need of urgent medical attention**, action must be taken to ensure their immediate safety and well-being. This may include dialling 999 and asking for the appropriate emergency service.

In all cases the Safeguarding Officer must contact the relevant local authority:

**West Sussex County Council;** 01452 426868 (for adults) or 01403 229900 (for children).

**Surrey County Council;** 0300 470 9100 (adults) or 0300 470 9100 (for children).

The following checklist provides guidance for volunteers relating to responding, reporting and recording.

### **6.1 Responding**

It is important for the volunteer to:

- Remain calm and listen carefully.
- Try not to show shock or disbelief.
- Be objective and empathise & explain that you will need to share the information.
- Note the time, date and brief details of the incident.

#### **DO NOT:**

- press the person for further details
- promise to keep secrets
- make promises you can't keep
- be judgemental
- break the confidentiality shared between the vulnerable adult or child, yourself and the appointed person
- ask leading questions.

### **6.2 Reporting**

All allegations and/or suspicions need to be reported to the Safeguarding Officer at the earliest possible opportunity irrespective of whether the vulnerable person has requested that no further action be taken. It is then the responsibility of the Safeguarding Officer to contact Social and Caring Services to discuss the concerns.

Remember DO NOT:

- Attempt to contact the alleged 'abuser' or alleged 'victim'
- talk to other staff, volunteers or service users about the information shared with you.

### **6.3 Recording**

Accurate and detailed recording is essential. It should include:

- name and position (e.g. job title, volunteer)
- date, time and setting in which allegation was made or event witnessed
- names of other people present
- record of what was said using individuals own words
- date and sign
- a copy should be kept by the Safeguarding Officer.

Once the information is passed to Adult or Children's Services they will make a decision on whether the Police need to be informed and if there is a need for a full investigation. The Investigation team should keep you updated with the progress of the investigation on a need to know basis.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Personal information may need to be disclosed in the best interests of the vulnerable adult or children.

The following safeguards therefore need to be observed:

- information will only be shared on a need to know basis when it is in the best interests of the vulnerable adult or children
- informed consent should be obtained wherever possible
- it is inappropriate for staff, volunteers or agencies to give assurances of absolute confidentiality in cases where there are concerns about abuse
- vulnerable adults and where present their carers should be advised why, and with whom, information will be shared.