



## Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

- Living a life that is free from harm and abuse is a fundamental right of every person.
- All of us need to act as good neighbours and citizens in looking out for one another and seeking to prevent harmful and abusive situations.
- Protecting children and adults at risk is a commitment from organisations on the Isle of Wight to work together to safeguard children and adults at risk.
- The procedures aim to make sure that the safety, needs and interests of children and adults at risk are always respected and upheld. This includes upholding human rights.
- Responses to any child or adult at risk who may be experiencing abuse should be proportionate, timely, professional and ethical.
- Agencies and individuals involved in safeguarding adults need to work together to protect children and adults at risk from abuse, investigate actual or suspected abuse and neglect and support children and adults at risk who are experiencing abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Adults should be empowered and supported to make their own choices, whilst being protected from harm.

### Who is an 'adult at risk'?

An 'adult at risk' is someone who is 18 years or over who may be in need of community care due to a mental health problem, learning disability, physical disability, age or illness. As a result, they may find it difficult to protect themselves from abuse.

### What is abuse?

There are many different types of abuse, including:

- Physical – this is 'the use of force which results in pain or injury or a change in a person's natural physical state' or 'the non-accidental infliction of physical force that results in bodily injury, pain or impairment'.

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- Sexual – examples of sexual abuse include the direct or indirect involvement of the adult at risk in sexual activity or relationships which they do not want or have not consented to.
- Emotional and psychological – this is behaviour that has a harmful effect on the person's emotional health and development, or any form of mental cruelty that results in mental distress, the denial of basic human and civil rights such as self-expression, privacy and dignity.
- Institutional – institutional abuse is the mistreatment or neglect of an adult at risk by a regime, or individuals within settings and services, that adults at risk live in or use. Such abuse violates the person's dignity, resulting in lack of respect for their human rights.
- Discrimination – discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunities to some groups or individuals.
- Financial and material – this is the use of a person's property, assets, income, funds or any other resources without their informed consent or authorisation. It includes theft, fraud, exploitation and the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
  - Mate Crime-a form of crime in which a perpetrator befriends a vulnerable person with the intention of exploiting the person financially, physically or sexually. The law enshrines 6 statutory principles to safeguard adults, which the West Wight Timebank acknowledge as: Empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability.

## What to do if an adult experiencing abuse tells you about it

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If an adult experiencing abuse or neglect speaks to you about this, assure them that you are taking them seriously. Listen carefully to what they are saying, stay calm and get a clear and factual picture of the concern.

Be clear and say that you will need to report the abuse. Do not be judgemental and try to keep an open mind.

All involved with adults at risk should inform the MD Sally Gaeta if they are concerned that an adult has been abused or may be at risk of harm.'

If you hear about an incident of abuse from a third party (this is when someone else tells you about what they have heard or seen happen to a vulnerable adult at risk), encourage them to report it themselves or help them to report the facts of what they know.

## What to do if you suspect abuse:

- act to protect the adult at risk
- deal with immediate needs and ensure the person is, as far as possible, central to the decision making process
- report the abuse to an appropriate person or service (e.g. the MD Action 4 Support)
- if a crime has or may have been committed, contact the police to discuss or report it
- record the events.

A concern may be a direct disclosure by the adult at risk, or a concern raised by staff or volunteers, others using the service, a carer or member of the public, or an observation of the behaviour of the adult at risk, or the behaviour of another.

## What happens when I make a report of suspected abuse?

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Referrals to the relevant safeguarding adults referral point will be taken from anyone who has a concern that an adult is at risk. The relevant local referral process should be used. This may be a specific referral form or a telephone call. Details from the referrer about the allegation of abuse will be needed so it is helpful to have the facts of the circumstances ready to hand.

Protecting adults at risk is the responsibility of all the agencies working together.

The referral may be passed to the local safeguarding adults team or allocated to a worker who will seek to:

- clarify the circumstances of the alleged abuse or neglect
- take any immediate steps to protect the adult at risk, if needed
- decide if the safeguarding adult procedures are the required and appropriate response to the situation
- work in partnership with other agencies, like the police or health services, where necessary.

The allocated worker will call a multi-agency strategy meeting where details of the investigation and responsibilities will be agreed.

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN TELEPHONE NUMBER: 0300 300 0117**

**SAFEGUARDING ADULTS TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01983 814 980**

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