



Thomley Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy

Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy

Version Control Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy

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Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy

Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Who is this for?	4
3. Definition of a Vulnerable Adult.....	4
4. Definition of Abuse	5
5. Support for those who report abuse.....	5
6. People who may Abuse.....	6
7. What to do	6
8. To refer or not to refer	7
9. Issues of Mental Capacity and Consent	7

Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy is to be read alongside Thomleys' Safeguarding Children/Young Policy.
- 1.2. The following areas are the same for each Policy:
 - 1.2.1. Introduction
 - 1.2.2. Purpose
 - 1.2.3. Designated Safeguarding representatives
 - 1.2.4. Definitions of Abuse
 - 1.2.5. Management of concerns
 - 1.2.6. Investigation procedures

2. Who is this for?

- 2.1. This Policy/Procedure is for:
 - 2.1.1. Employees
 - 2.1.2. Casual Staff
 - 2.1.3. Volunteers
 - 2.1.4. Trustees

3. Definition of a Vulnerable Adult

- 3.1. A vulnerable adult is a person over 18 who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness.
- 3.2. A vulnerable adult is or may be unable to take care of him/herself, or is unable to protect him/herself from significant harm or serious exploitation.
- 3.3. A vulnerable adult may be a person who:
 - 3.3.1. Has a physical or sensory disability
 - 3.3.2. Is physically frail or has a chronic illness
 - 3.3.3. Has a mental illness or dementia
 - 3.3.4. Has a learning disability
 - 3.3.5. Is old and frail
 - 3.3.6. Misuses drugs and/or alcohol
 - 3.3.7. Has social or emotional problems
 - 3.3.8. Exhibits challenging behaviour

Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy

- 3.4. A person's vulnerability will depend on their circumstances and environment, and each case must be considered individually.

4. Definition of Abuse

- 4.1. In addition to those mentioned in the Safeguarding Children/young people, vulnerable adults can also be financially abused. This could include:
 - 4.1.1. Including theft, fraud,
 - 4.1.2. Exploitation, pressure in connection with wills property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

5. Support for those who report abuse

- 5.1. All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they are staff, service users, carers or members of the general public should be reassured that:
 - 5.1.1. They will be taken seriously
 - 5.1.2. Their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
- 5.2. If a visitor, they will be given immediate protection from the risk of reprisals or intimidation.
- 5.3. If Staff, they will be given support and afforded protection if necessary in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (Whistleblowing)
- 5.4. The Vulnerable Adult has the right:
 - 5.4.1. To be made aware of this policy
 - 5.4.2. To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
 - 5.4.3. To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
 - 5.4.4. To be involved in any process as appropriate
 - 5.4.5. To receive information about the outcome

Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy

6. People who may Abuse

- 6.1. Abuse can happen anywhere and can be carried out by anyone e.g.:
 - 6.1.1. Informal carers, family, friends, neighbours
 - 6.1.2. Paid staff, volunteers
 - 6.1.3. Other visitors
 - 6.1.4. Strangers

7. What to do

- 7.1. All allegations or suspicions are to be treated seriously. No abuse is acceptable and some abuse is a criminal offence and must be reported to the Police as soon as possible. To determine the appropriate action it is important to consider:
 - 7.1.1. Risk – does the vulnerable adult, staff member or volunteer understand the nature and consequences of any risk they may be subject to, and do they willingly accept such a risk?
 - 7.1.2. Self-determination – is the vulnerable adult able to make their own decisions and choices, and do they wish to do so
 - 7.1.3. Seriousness – A number of factors will determine whether intervention is required. The perception of the victim must be the starting point.
- 7.2. Factors informing assessment of seriousness will include:
 - 7.2.1. The perception by the individual and their vulnerability
 - 7.2.2. The extent of the abuse
 - 7.2.3. The length of time it has been going on
 - 7.2.4. The impact on the individual
 - 7.2.5. The risk of repetition or escalation involving this or other Vulnerable Adults
 - 7.2.6. Is a criminal offence being committed

Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy

8. To refer or not to refer

8.1. When considering the decision as to whether to refer elsewhere (e.g. to Police or Social Services) the following should be taken into account:

- 8.1.1. The wishes of the vulnerable adult, & their right to self-determination
- 8.1.2. The mental capacity of the vulnerable adult
- 8.1.3. Known indicators of abuse
- 8.1.4. Definitions of abuse
- 8.1.5. Level of risk to this individual
- 8.1.6. The seriousness of the abuse
- 8.1.7. The effect of the abuse on the individual
- 8.1.8. Level of risk to others
- 8.1.9. The effect of the abuse on others
- 8.1.10. Whether a criminal offence has been committed
- 8.1.11. The need for others to know
- 8.1.12. The ability of others (e.g. Police, Social Services) to make a positive contribution to the situation

9. Issues of Mental Capacity and Consent

9.1. The consent of the vulnerable adult must be obtained except where:

- 9.1.1. The vulnerable adult lacks the mental capacity to make a decision, and a risk assessment indicates that referral would be in their best interests.
- 9.1.2. Others may be at risk.
- 9.1.3. A crime has been committed.