



Thomley Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy

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Version Control Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy

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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 an Adult at Risk (formerly 'Vulnerable Adult')

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- 3.1. *3.1. In line with the Care Act 2014, an “adult at risk” is a person aged 18 or over who:
 - has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting those needs); and
 - is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and as a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect, or the risk of it.*
- 3.2. Vulnerability is not fixed — it depends on personal circumstances and environment. Each case must be considered individually.
- 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 difficulties
 - 3.3.8. Exhibits distressed behaviours
- 3.4. A person's vulnerability will depend on their circumstances and environment, and each case must be considered individually.

4. Definition of Abuse

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- 4.1. Adults may be subject to a range of types of abuse, as defined by the Care Act 2014:
- Physical abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Psychological or emotional abuse
 - Financial or material abuse
 - Neglect and acts of omission
 - Discriminatory abuse
 - Organisational abuse
 - Domestic abuse
 - Modern slavery
 - Self-neglect
- 4.2. Indicators of abuse may overlap with safeguarding concerns for children, but must be considered in the context of adult rights to self-determination and independence.

5. Support for those who report abuse

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- 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

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

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- 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 appropriate authority immediately. 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
- 7.3. Concerns should be reported to the Duty Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead at Thomley in the first instance. Where there is immediate risk of harm, staff should contact the police via 999.
- 7.4. Reporting agencies available include:
 - 7.4.1 Oxfordshire County Council - [Reporting a safeguarding concern about someone | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
 - 7.3.2. Buckinghamshire County Council - [Report abuse of an adult | Care Advice Buckinghamshire](#)
 - 7.3.3. Thames Valley Police (for criminal matters)

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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. Decisions about consent must follow the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which assumes adults have capacity unless proven otherwise.
- 9.2. The consent of the vulnerable adult must be obtained except where:
 - 9.2.1. The vulnerable adult lacks the mental capacity to make a decision, and it is indicated that a referral would be in their best interests.
 - 9.2.2. Others are, or may be, at risk.
 - 9.2.3. A crime has been committed.
 - 9.2.4 Seeking consent would place the person at further risk.