



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Leads on Safeguarding:

Kelly Rowley

Sarah Guttridge

Contact safeguarding leads on **07954100179**

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Aims of This Policy

The aim of this policy is to outline the practice and procedures for all of the Dorcas Befriending Project's volunteers and paid staff to contribute to the prevention of abuse of vulnerable adults through raising awareness and providing a clear framework for action when abuse is suspected.

Definitions

A. Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over whom:

“Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness”

and

“Who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation” (No Secrets; DH, 2000)

B. Definition of Abuse

“Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons” (No Secrets; DH, 2000)

Abuse may be single or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological and can be an act of neglect or an omission to act. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

Types of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- **Sexual Abuse:** including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting
- **Psychological Abuse:** including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks;

- **Financial or Material Abuse:** including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits;
- **Neglect and Acts of Omission:** including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating; and
- **Discriminatory Abuse:** including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

No abuse is acceptable and some abuse is a criminal offence

Rights and Responsibilities

A. Responsibilities of the Dorcas Befriending Project

- To ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of the safeguarding adults policy and are adequately trained
- To DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service – previously CRB) check volunteers and employees that have access to or work with vulnerable adults
- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected
- To ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability

B. Responsibilities of the Dorcas Befriending Projects Volunteers and Staff

- To be familiar with the safeguarding adults policy and procedures
- To take appropriate action in line with the policies of the Dorcas befriending project
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions. Failure to do so will be regarded as gross misconduct, possible resulting in dismissal.

C. Support for those who report abuse

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they be staff, volunteers, service users, carers or members of the general public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously

- Their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
- Staff and volunteers will be given support and afforded protection if necessary in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

D. The Vulnerable Adult has the right:

- To be made aware of this policy
- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
- To be involved in any process as appropriate
- To receive information about the outcome

Good Practice

A. Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

- All staff and volunteers will require a DBS check
- Completion of an application form
- References will be thoroughly checked
- All staff and volunteers have a duty to declare any existing or subsequent convictions. Failure to do so will be regarded as gross misconduct, possibly resulting in dismissal and must sign a declaration form when joining the Dorcas befriending project.

B. Training

- All staff and volunteers must familiarise themselves with all of the Dorcas Befriending Projects policies and procedures
- All staff and volunteers will receive an induction

C. Supervision

- All staff and volunteers will have regular reviews by a trained volunteer/ member of staff
- All staff and volunteers may request a review by a trained volunteer/ member of staff at any time

D. Record Keeping

- There should be a written record of concerns, held in a secure area by the secretary for as long as necessary in line with the Data protection policy
- All incidents should be reported to safeguarding leads for the Dorcas project

Identification of Abuse

A. Physical signs of abuse

- A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries
- Bruising in well protected areas, or clustered from repeated striking
- Finger marks
- Burns of unusual location or type
- Injuries found at different states of healing
- Injury shape similar to an object
- Injuries to head/ face/ scalp
- History of GP or agency hopping, or reluctance to seek help
- Accounts which vary with time or are inconsistent with physical evidence
- Weight loss due to malnutrition, or rapid weight gain
- Ulcers, bed sores and being left in wet clothing
- Drowsiness due to too much medication, or lack of medication causing recurring crises/ hospital admissions

Please Note: Some ageing processes can cause changes which are hard to distinguish from some aspects of physical assault e.g. skin bruising can occur very easily due to blood vessels becoming fragile

B. Sexual Abuse Signs

- Disclosure or partial disclosure (use of phrases such as 'It's a secret')
- Medical problems e.g. genital infections, pregnancy, difficulty walking or sitting
- Disturbed behaviour e.g. depression, sudden withdrawal from activities, loss of previous skills, sleeplessness or nightmares, self-injury, showing fear or aggression to one particular person, repeated or excessive masturbation, inappropriately seductive behaviour, loss of appetite or difficulty in keeping food down
- Behaviour of others towards the vulnerable adult
- Circumstances e.g. two service users found in a toilet area, one in a distressed state

C. Psychological/ Emotional Signs

- Isolation
- Unkempt, unwashed smell
- Over meticulous

- Inappropriately dressed
- Withdrawn, agitated, anxious not wanting to be touched
- Change in appetite
- Insomnia, or need for excessive sleep
- Tearfulness
- Unexplained paranoia, or excessive fears
- Low self esteem
- Confusion

D. Neglect Signs

- Physical condition poor
- Clothing in poor condition
- Inadequate diet
- Untreated injuries or medical problems
- Failure to be given prescribed medication
- Poor personal hygiene

E. Financial or Material Signs

- Unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills
- Unexplained or sudden withdrawal of money from accounts
- Disparity between assets and satisfactory living conditions
- Extraordinary interest by family members and other people in the vulnerable person's assets

F. Discriminatory Signs

- Lack of respect shown to an individual
- Signs of substandard service offered to an individual
- Exclusion from rights afforded to others, such as health, education, criminal justice

G. Other Signs of Abuse

- Inappropriate use of restraints
- Sensory deprivation e.g. glasses or hearing aid
- Denial of visitors or phone calls
- Failure to ensure privacy or personal dignity
- Lack of flexibility of choice e.g. bedtimes, choice of food
- Restricted access to toilet or bathing facilities
- Lack of personal clothing or possessions

- Controlling relationships between care staff and service users

H. People who might Abuse

Abuse can happen anywhere and can be carried out by anyone e.g.:

- Informal carer's, family, friends, neighbours
- Paid staff, volunteers
- Other service users or tenants
- Strangers

What to Do

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:

- **Risk** – Does the vulnerable adult, staff or volunteer understand the nature and consequences of any risk they may be subject to, and do they willingly accept such risk?
- **Self-determination** – Is the vulnerable adult able to make their own decisions and choices, and do they wish to do so
- **Seriousness** – A number of factors will determine whether intervention is required. The perception of the victim must be the starting point. Factors informing assessment of seriousness will include:
 1. The perception by the individual and their vulnerability
 2. The extent of the abuse
 3. The length of time it has been going on
 4. The impact on the individual
 5. The risk of repetition or escalation involving this or other vulnerable adults
 6. Is a criminal offence being committed

Actions and Considerations

THE FIRST PRIORITY SHOULD ALWAYS BE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS. TO THIS END IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL STAFF TO ACT ON ANY SUSPICION OR EVIDENCE OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT AND TO PASS ON THEIR CONCERNS TO A RESPONSIBLE PERSON OR AGENCY.

- In situations of immediate danger, take urgent action by calling the relevant emergency services e.g. police, ambulance, GP

- Remember to have a regard to your own safety. Leave the situation if it is not safe for you.
- Listen to the vulnerable adult, offer necessary support and reassurance
- Issues of confidentiality must be clarified early on. For example staff or volunteers must make it clear that they will have to discuss the concerns with the safeguarding leads for the Dorcas project
- Where a vulnerable adult expresses a wish for concerns not to be pursued then this should be respected wherever possible. However, decisions about whether to respect the service user's wishes must have regard to the level of risk to the individual and others, and their capacity to understand the decision in question. In some circumstances the vulnerable adult's wishes may be overridden in favour of considerations of safety.
- Decision to override the vulnerable adult's wish not to take the matter further should if possible be the product of discussion with safeguarding leads for the Dorcas project.
- Note your concerns and any information given to you or witnessed by you
- Report concerns to safeguarding leads for the Dorcas project
- **IT IS NOT NECESSARY OR ADVISABLE FOR YOU TO SEEK EVIDENCE.** By supporting the vulnerable adult and carefully logging any information given to you at this stage, you lay the foundations for an effective formal investigation.
- Understand the need not to contaminate, or to preserve evidence if a crime may have been committed.

Information Required

The following information if known will be required when you contact the relevant person or agency.

- Details of the alleged victim – name, address, age, gender, ethnic background including principle language spoken, details of any disability
- Details of GP and any known medication
- Whether the individual is aware of and has consented to you contacting the relevant person or agency
- The mental capacity of the individual (are there any concerns that the individual may not have the mental capacity to make the decision)
- If appropriate when approaching the alleged victim or perpetrator
- Reasons for concerns and therefore the referral
- Details of how these concerns came to light
- Specific information relating to these concerns
- Details of any arrangements which have already been made for the protection of the vulnerable adult or any immediate action taken

- Details of anyone else to whom this referral has also been made
- Details of the alleged perpetrator and if they are a vulnerable adult
- Details of alleged abuse and information about suspicions
- Details of any other background information
- An impression of how serious the situation might be
- Details of any other professional involved
- Details of carers and any significant family members, neighbours, friends advise the relevant person or agency on the preferred/ advised method or environment

INFORMATION PASSED ON MUST BE RELEVANT, NECESSARY AND UP TO DATE
CONFIRM IN WRITING INFORMATION GIVEN VERBALLY

Questions regarding referral

When considering the decision as to whether to refer elsewhere (e.g. to Police, Social Services, and National Care Standards Commission) the following should be taken into account:

- The wishes of the vulnerable adult, & their right to self-determination
- The mental capacity of the vulnerable adult
- Known indicators of abuse
- Definitions of abuse
- Level of risk to this individual
- The seriousness of the abuse
- The effect of the abuse on the individual
- Level of risk to others
- The effect of the abuse on others
- Whether a criminal offence has been committed
- Whether other statutory obligations have been breached
- The need for others to know
- The ability of others (e.g. Police, Social Services) to make a positive contribution to the situation

Mental Capacity

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

- The vulnerable adult lacks the mental capacity to make a decision, and a risk assessment indicates that referral would be in their best interests

- Others may be at risk
- A crime has been committed

Who to Contact

- In the case of an emergency, contact the relevant emergency service e.g. (police, fire brigade etc.)
- Otherwise contact the safeguarding leads for the Dorcas Befriending project by calling **07954100179**, if necessary leave a message with your details and a brief description of the problem. The safeguarding leads will contact you back within 24 hours to discuss your concerns, and who will provide further advice and support and contact the relevant agencies. (Please be aware that your phone company may charge different rates for calls to mobiles)
- Once you have spoken to the safeguarding leads for the Dorcas Befriending project, please make a written copy of your concerns and email these to uchair@dorcas-befriending.org.uk (For data protection reasons do not put the client's details in the email –we will already have this information)

Do's and Don'ts

Staff member or volunteer should:

- Stay Calm
- Listen patiently
- Reassure the person they are doing the right thing by telling you
- Explain what you are going to do
- Report to the safeguarding leads for the Dorcas project
- Write a factual account of what you have seen, immediately.
- Forward a copy of the written account to the safeguarding leads for the Dorcas befriending project

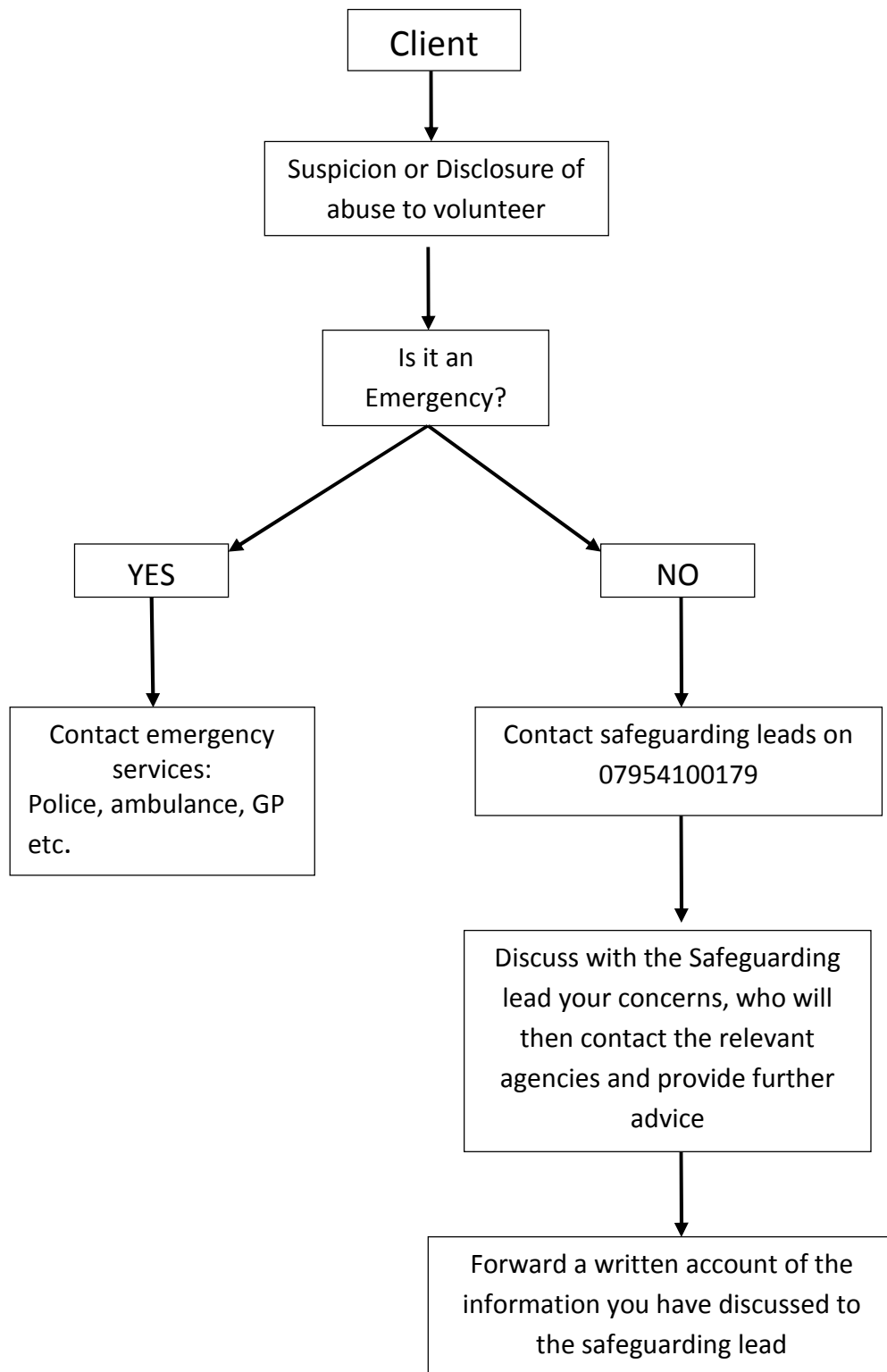
Staff member or volunteer should not:

- Appear shocked, horrified, disgusted or angry
- Press the individual for details (unless requested to do so)
- Make comments or judgements other than to show concern
- Promise to keep secrets
- Confront the abuser
- Risk contaminating evidence

Discuss with the safeguarding leads who will:

- Ascertain whether the situation might fall within the definitions of abuse outlined in this policy
- Consider the vulnerable adult's capacity to make decisions
- Ascertain any immediate action required
- Contact the relevant agencies

Flow Chart



Contact Details of Relevant Agencies

Social Services - Information and Access Team:

57 Calshot Street
N1 9XH

This is the first point of contact. This team takes initial details and refers on to the most appropriate team.

Telephone: 020 7527 2299

Safe-Haven Fax: 020 7527 5114

The fax can receive Alerts from outside Social Services

Email: access.service@islington.gov.uk

Emergency Duty SW Team:

5pm – 9am weekdays,
24 hours at weekends and Bank Holidays

Telephone: 020 7226 0992

Archway Community Care Centre

North Locality Adults

4 Vorley Road
N19 5JH

Telephone: 020 7527 7500

Fax: 020 7527 7507

Calshot Community Care Centre

South Locality Adults

57 Calshot Street
N1 9XH

Telephone: 020 7527 6400

Fax: 020 7527 6407

Canonbury Community Care Centre

Mental Health Services

68 Halliford Street
N1 3RH

Telephone: 020 3317 4850

Fax: 020 7527 8207

CMHT only accepts referrals from GPs

Drayton Park & Archway Community Mental Health Team

1 Lowther Road
N7 8US

Telephone: 020 3317 6370

Fax: 020 7690 3519 (Drayton Park CMHT)

Fax: 020 7690 3516 (Archway CMHT)

CMHT only accepts referrals from GPs

**Elthorne Community Care Centre
Mental Health Services**

17-23 Beaumont Rise
N19 3AX

Telephone: 020 7527 7300

Fax: 020 7527 7307

CMHT only accepts referrals from GPs

**Learning Disabilities Service
Islington Learning Disabilities Partnership**

52d Drayton Park
N5 1NS

Telephone: 020 7527 6600

Fax: 020 7527 6607

Sensory Team & BSL interpreting team

23-26 St Albans Place
N1 0NX

Telephone: 020 7527 4443

Fax: 020 7527 3279

020 7527 3282 (minicom)

**Whittington Hospital
Social Work Team**

Ward MB3
Highgate Hill
N19 5NF

Telephone: 020 7288 5260

Fax: 020 7288 5262

Islington Police Station

2 Tolpuddle Street, N1 0YY

Telephone: 0300 123 1212

Community Safety Team / Office Telephone: 020 7421 0174

http://cms.met.police.uk/met/boroughs/islington/06advice_and_support/community_safety_unit_csu

http://www.met.police.uk/reporting_crime/index.htm

Care Quality Commission

Finsbury Tower
103 – 105 Bunhill Row
London
EC1Y 8TG
Helpline 03000 616161

Independent Safeguarding Authority

PO Box 181
Darlington
DL3 9FA
Helpline: 0300 123 1111
Email: info@vbs-info.org.uk For Advice

Head of Safeguarding Adults Islington Council/NHS Islington

338-346 Goswell Road,
London
EC1V 7LQ
Telephone: 020 7527 8160
Telephone: 020 7527 816

Safeguarding Training Courses

Rachel Adelson-Kettle
Telephone: 020 7527 8883
Further Helpful organisations can be found on the Islington councils Signposting Document:
http://www.islington.gov.uk/DownloadableDocuments/LeisureandCulture/Pdf/Signpost14_06_2011.pdf

Author(s):	Kelly Rowley
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