



St Andrew's Community Network

Vulnerable Adult Policy

Policy Statement

St. Andrew's Community Network aims to ensure that procedures are in place to ensure the protection of vulnerable adults. This policy conforms to the requirements of the Guidance Document 'No Secrets' (Department of Health 2015) and must be read in conjunction with other St. Andrew's Community Network policies and procedures and the staff handbook.

These guidelines are based on the following values:

- All individuals, no matter how disadvantaged must have control over their life.
- People should be empowered to live as independently as possible, making informed decisions about their own lifestyle.
- People's human and civil rights must be protected
- Any intervention to reduce risk or respond to danger, must endeavour to ensure the least possible disruption to people's lives.
- Suspected or actual abuse of vulnerable adults is the responsibility of all St. Andrew's Community Network.
- People must be offered realistic alternative if they are afraid or intimidated

1. Aims:

St. Andrew's Community Network is committed to:

- Ensuring that there is a consistent and effective response to any concerns, allegations or disclosures of abuse.
- Supporting staff in reporting and investigating incidents of abuse
- Preventing abuse from occurring within St. Andrew's Community Network
- Ensuring staff have relevant knowledge and understanding of adult protection and receiving training on implementing the adult protection procedures.

2. Who is Vulnerable?

Any person aged 18 years or over whom:

- Is or may be in need of assistance by reason of mental, physical or learning disability, age or illness.
- Is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation which might be occasioned by the action or inactions of other people.

It is important to note that we consider staff members, volunteers and other service users as potentially vulnerable from improper suggestions or false accusations being made against them.

3. What is Abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. Abuse can be a single or repeated act. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable adult is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of the person subjected to it.

Different forms of Abuse:

- Physical – including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking or inappropriate sanctions
- Psychological – threats of harm, humiliation, blaming, controlling and intimidation, coercion, harassment or verbal abuse
- Sexual – including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable person has not consented or could not consent, or was pressured into consenting
- Financial or Material – including theft, fraud, or exploitation, or the misuse, misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
- Neglect and Acts of Omission – including ignoring medical or physical needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or education services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- Discrimination – including racism, sexism, genderism, ageism, religious beliefs, culture, or disability, or any other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Any or all of these forms of discrimination may be perpetrated as a result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

4. Who may be the Abuser?

Vulnerable adult(s) may be abused by a wide range of people including relatives and family members, professional staff, volunteers, other service users, friends and associates, people who deliberately exploit vulnerable people and strangers.

5. Risk of Abuse

This is greater when:

- The vulnerable person is socially isolated
- A pattern of family violence exists
- Drugs or alcohol are misused, relationships are placed under pressure

Indicators of possible abuse:

- Injuries inconsistent with explanations offered
- Sudden weight loss
- Appears to be nervous, frightened, upset, agitated or agitated
- Apparent discomfort when sitting or walking
- Bed-wetting when incontinence has not been diagnosed
- A sudden change in appearance and/or personal hygiene
- There may be no obvious indicators present.

If any of these instances were evident, the staff member should consult with the centre manager in the first before implementing any action or investigation.

6. Objectives of an Investigation

Are to:

- Establish the facts
- Assess the needs of the vulnerable person(s) for protection, support and redress; and
- Make decisions with regard to what follow up action should be taken with regard to perpetrator(s)

If concerns arise out of hours and you are particularly concerned about a situation being left until the next day, you should speak to Careline they can be contacted on the number below 24hrs 7 days a week.

Careline Tel: 0151 233 3800

7. Procedure (a flow chart detailing this process accompanies this policy as Annex 1)

In the event of alleged/suspected abuse, the following procedures must be followed:

- The Operations Manager is directly responsible for investigating any alleged or suspected incidents of abuse. Any staff member with concerns regarding the possible abuse of any service user will report the matter directly to the matter to the Operations Manager.
- In the event that the concern relates to the Operations Manager, the staff member should report directly to the CEO.
- Reporting such matters will take into account the balance, which needs to be maintained for the confidentiality of the service user's personal business and the duty of care to report suspected abuse.
- The Operations Manager will investigate the allegations / suspicions and decide on the appropriate action to be taken.
- If a criminal offence may have been committed the service user will be supported in contacting the police and any relevant professional agencies, according to individual circumstances. The wishes of the alleged abused person(s) about all aspects of the case should be taken into account as far as is reasonably practicable.
- The Operations Manager is responsible for ensuring that all records of any or all allegations are kept, including dates, times and person(s) involved, and any action(s) taken.
- All records and witness statements relating to child protection concerns and cases will remain confidential except where to so would impede an investigation. Due regard should be paid to GDPR policies when dealing with any records relating to child protection.
- Corrective action – taken against the perpetrator(s) involved in confirmed incidents of abused, and the discreet and sensitive handling of the abused person(s)
- Preventive action – strategies to be implemented, with the aim of halting further abuse

It is essential that anyone making a complaint, allegation, or expressing concern, whether staff, service users or members of the general public, should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their commitment will be treated confidential as far as possible
- They will be given support
- They will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner
- They will be kept informed of actions taken where possible

8. The rights of those involved in allegations of abuse

The vulnerable adult who is suspected of being abused, has the right to:

- Protection from further harm
- Be Listened too and taken seriously
- Information and impartial advice
- Information about alternative courses of action and to choose from those options
- Express an opinion about criminal charges
- The services of an advocate (this could be someone already supporting the individual, a member of staff or may be sought from [Liverpool Citizen Advocacy](#))
- An appropriate level of investigation
- Assurance that any allegation of abuse will be dealt with in a confidential manner

The person recognising and reporting the abuse has a right to:

- Be taken seriously
- Protection and support
- An appropriate level of confidentiality
- Be kept informed of actions that have been taken and the outcomes where possible

The alleged perpetrator has the right to:

- Seek legal representation and other advice as appropriate
- An appropriate level of confidentiality
- The presumption of innocence until the matter has been investigated
- The opportunity to state their case clearly
- Be treated with respect

9. Monitoring

Incidents of alleged or confirmed abuse will be reviewed by the Operations Manager and Trustees will be kept abreast of the number if incidents and referrals at each meeting. This process is to form a standing item at every board meeting.

10. Accountability

All staff must be aware that ignoring abuse is not an option; staff are accountable and must take responsibility for reporting any suspicion of alleged /actual abuse, neglect, oppression or discrimination. It is not the responsibility

of the concerned person to prove any allegations before reporting their suspicions to the relevant organisations.

All staff have the following responsibilities:

- To remain aware of abuse, oppression and poor support practice
- To voice their concerns, suspicions or evidence of any person, which they see or hear about
- To cooperate with any investigation of abuse
- Never prevent or persuade another person from expressing their concerns about abuse

11. Confidentiality

Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is preserved, this will be governed by what may be an overriding need to protect a person(s) who is or has been abused. All those working with vulnerable adults and the staff must make it clear when providing information about the potential abuse of a vulnerable person that confidentiality will not be maintained if the withholding of that information would prejudice the welfare of the person(s) concerned and /or other service users. This is essential when a criminal offence may have been committed. Staff should always inform service users before they disclose any information about themselves that they are not in a position to keep secret and information will be shared with other members of the staff team.

As an organisation we consider information as confidential to us unless either consent is given for it to be shared or a public risk exists greater than that related to the breach of confidentiality. For example, where there is;

- An active police investigation
- A significant risk of suicide
- A significant risk of harm to a third party
- Alleged incidents of abuse between service users

Action must be taken and implemented to reduce the risk of any further incidents.

Agreed by: The Trustees
Date: September 2023
Due for Review: September 2024

Annex One

Key Contact Details:

Chief Operating Officer – Simon Huthwaite – simonh@standrewslive.org.uk

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Rich Jones – richj@standrewslive.org.uk

