

Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy

24/04/15

Scope

This policy is authorised by the trustees and applies to the organisation as a whole.

The protection of vulnerable adults is at the heart of the aims and ethos of Age Concern Bracknell Forest. The charity exists to promote the relief of older people and in particular by operating day care facilities. Our ethos is to care about the well-being of individuals in the community.

As an organisation we will:

- Protect the well-being, security and safety of vulnerable adults consistent with their rights, capacity and personal choice.
- Comply with current legislation and formal Department of Health Guidance.
- Regularly review and update policies and procedures to reflect current legislation and the current state of knowledge in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults.
- Actively co-operate with other organisations including Bracknell Forest Council, the Police, the Clinical Commissioning Group, and Older Peoples Partnership.
- Promote awareness, guidelines and appropriate training to staff and volunteers; and ensure that they all have read this Policy.
- Generally signpost and inform older community about safeguarding.
- Undertake Criminal Records Bureau /Disclosure and Barring Service checks.
- As part of the recruitment process for both staff and volunteers, obtain written references from two individuals unrelated to the applicant

The following is guidance for our employees and volunteers to employ best practice in the care and safeguarding of vulnerable adults. It gives advice about:

- Legislation and care in the community
- Who is vulnerable
- How they may be abused, and
- What we should do to protect them

Legislation and care in the community

The Care Act 2014 came into effect on April 1st 2015. It replaces most current law regarding carers and people being cared for and embodies six principles for care:

1. **empowerment** - presumption of person led decisions and informed consent
2. **prevention** - it is better to take action before harm occurs
3. **proportionality** - proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
4. **protection** - support and representation for those in greatest need
5. **partnerships** - local solutions through services working with their communities
6. **accountability** - accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

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The Act addresses the ongoing reform of adult social care and the duties of local authorities with emphasis on **wellbeing, information and advice, and integration** with NHS and other services.

It is a statutory requirement for local authorities to have a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB); ensure enquiries into cases of abuse and neglect; and promote information sharing between the various parties providing care.

The Care Act says that if a SAB **requests information** from an organisation or individual who is likely to have information which is relevant to the SAB's functions, then they must share it with the Board.

Who is vulnerable?

Under the Care Act, safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Age Concern Bracknell Forest recognises that people who are not identified as in need of care and support may also become more vulnerable to abuse as their mental or physical capabilities are reduced by the effects of ageing.

Our staff and volunteers come into contact with vulnerable people in the course of providing:

- for adults who need the care and support of the Day Care Centre
- toenail cutting at the Day Centre for clients who may have mobility or other disabilities
- family members and carers accompanying or visiting clients of the Day Centre, who may themselves be in need of care and support
- community events, outings, transport or similar services to adults who may be vulnerable
- information provision, particularly in reply to telephone queries
- work together with volunteers who may be vulnerable due to age or learning difficulties

What is abuse?

Abuse is the misuse of power by one person over another. It can take many forms. The most prevalent are neglect, physical abuse, emotional or financial. Most cases of abuse take place in the person's own home or care home. Preventing access to basic needs or denying choice and control over their lives is also abuse.

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However, abuse can occur anywhere and by any person; and it can be deliberate or unintentional.

What must staff and volunteers do to safeguard adults?

We must make sure that what we do for clients is always in the interests of their wellbeing; be extra careful not to accidentally cause abuse; and be vigilant for any tell-tale signs of abuse.

Think - If concerned that your actions or those of colleagues may accidentally hurt someone's dignity or wellbeing, discuss it with a supervisor.

Protect - Take any immediate actions to safeguard anyone at immediate risk of harm, including summoning medical assistance or calling the police if appropriate.

Listen and support - If the Vulnerable Adult has made a direct disclosure of abuse or is upset and distressed about an abusive incident, listen to what they have to say, and ensure they are given the support they need.

Report - If you see, hear or know something that concerns you, and suspect that a vulnerable adult is being harmed or abused, you must report what you know as soon as possible to the Day Centre Manager, or (as appropriate) the Chief Officer or their deputy. If appropriate, they must then alert Bracknell Forest Council's Community Response and Reablement team on 351500, or 786543 outside normal working hours; or alert other support services.

Bracknell Forest Council is the lead agency for adult safeguarding work across the borough and they have a contact form and information documents on their website.

Preserve evidence - record and take steps to preserve any physical evidence, factual notes, witness statements, or photographs.

Remember

- Adults have a right to independence, choice and control over information about themselves. In the context of adult safeguarding it may be permissible to share information between organisations without consent, e.g. in life-threatening situations, in emergencies, or if requested by the SAB.
- Physical contact with adult clients should be restricted to that which is absolutely necessary.
- A client's personal effects (such as clothing, money, bag, purse, wallet or medication should not be handled unless absolutely necessary).
- No volunteer should be left alone with a client or clients unless a member of staff is present.
- Actively work with health and social care professionals, carers and other individuals in the community, wherever possible and appropriate.