

**Safeguarding Adult Policy**

This policy is designed to provide guidance for Ham & Petersham SOS (HAPSOS) volunteers & staff, in the event that they suspect abuse & or neglect, or are party to a disclosure of abuse or neglect from a service-user.

The Care Act 2014 provides a definition and framework for safeguarding adults at risk.

**What does Safeguarding adults mean?**

Safeguarding means protecting the health, wellbeing & human rights of adults at risk, enabling them to live safely, free from abuse & neglect.

It is about people & organisations working together to prevent & reduce both the risks & experience of abuse or neglect

It is also making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is supported & their views, wishes, feelings & beliefs are respected when agreeing on any action.

**Who is an “adult at risk”?**

An “adult at risk” is someone who may be in need of help because they have care & support needs. They may be unable to stop someone else from harming or exploiting them. Not all of our members would therefore fall into this category.

**Forms of abuse & neglect**

Abuse happens when someone hurts you or treats you badly. Abuse can happen once or continue over months or years. It can be accidental or deliberate and may take many forms. Just because there is no obvious injury it does not mean there is no abuse.

The Care and Support statutory guidance identifies types of abuse, but also emphasises that an organisation should not limit their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect. The specific circumstances of an individual case should always be considered.

Below is a list of the sort of behaviour which could give rise to a safeguarding concern (this is an illustrative guide and is not intended to be exhaustive list) :

**Types of abuse & neglect:**

* **Neglect and acts of omission**

Ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, and the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. Neglect also includes a failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the person concerned or to others, particularly when the person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk for themselves.

* **Self-neglect**

This covers a wide range of behaviour: neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

* **Disability Hate Crime**

The Criminal Justice System defines a disability hate crime as any criminal offence, which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person’s disability or perceived disability.

* **Discriminatory abuse**

Discrimination on the grounds of race, faith or religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation and political views, along with racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist comments or jokes, or comments and jokes based on a person’s disability or any other form of harassment, slur or similar treatment. Excluding a person from activities on the basis they are ‘not liked’ is also discriminatory abuse

* **Domestic abuse**

The Home Office (March 2013) defines domestic abuse as: Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: Psychological; Physical; Sexual; Financial; Emotional. Domestic Abuse includes controlling and coercive behaviour

* **Financial or material abuse**

Theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

* **Hate Crime**

The police define Hate Crime as ‘any incident that is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be racist, homophobic, transphobic or due to a person’s religion, belief, gender identity or disability’. It should be noted that this definition is based on the perception of the victim or anyone else and is not reliant on evidence. In addition it includes incidents that do not constitute a criminal offence.

* **Mate Crime**

A ‘mate crime’ as defined by the Safety Net Project is ‘when vulnerable people are befriended by members of the community who go on to exploit and take advantage of them. It may not be an illegal act but still has a negative effect on the individual.’ Mate crime is often difficult for police to investigate, due to its sometimes ambiguous nature, but should be reported to the police who will make a decision about whether or not a criminal offence has been committed. Mate Crime is carried out by someone the adult knows and often happens in private. In recent years there have been a number of Serious Case Reviews relating to people with a learning disability who were murdered or seriously harmed by people who purported to be their friend.

* **Organisational abuse**

This is the mistreatment, abuse or neglect of an adult by a regime or individuals in a setting or service where the adult lives or that they use. Such abuse violates the person’s dignity and represents a lack of respect for their human rights.

* **Physical abuse**

Assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

* **Psychological abuse**

Emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

* **Restraint**

Unlawful or inappropriate use of restraint or physical interventions. In extreme circumstances unlawful or inappropriate use of restraint may constitute a criminal offence. Someone is using restraint if they use force, or threaten to use force, to make someone do something they are resisting, or where an adult’s freedom of movement is restricted, whether they are resisting or not.

Restraint covers a wide range of actions. It includes the use of active or passive means to ensure that the person concerned does something, or does not do something they want to do, for example, the use of key pads to prevent people from going where they want from a closed environment.

* **Sexual abuse**

Rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

* **Sexual exploitation**

Involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where adults at risk (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. It affects men as well as women. People who are sexually exploited do not always perceive that they are being exploited.

In all cases those exploiting the adult have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength, and/or economic or other resources. There is a distinct inequality in the relationship. Signs to look out for are not being able to speak to the adult alone, observation of the adult seeking approval from the exploiter to respond and the person exploiting the adult answering for them and making decisions without consulting them

**Signs and indicators of abuse and neglect**

Abuse can take place in any context and by all manner of perpetrator. There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. These include but are not limited to:

* Over or under use of medication; burns in unusual places - hands, soles of feet; bruising at various healing stages; bite marks; bruising in the shape of objects; unexplained injuries or those that go untreated; reluctance to uncover parts of the body.
* Person has belongings or money going missing.
* Person is not attending their usual HAPSOS events and is not responding to calls.
* Person is losing or gaining weight / an unkempt appearance.
* A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person. Lack of trust or lack of self-esteem. For example, a client may be looking quiet and withdrawn when their family member comes into a room, in contrast to their volunteer whom they greet with a smile.
* Signs of self-harm.
* Unauthorised deprivation of liberty. For example a person maybe locked in their own home and not allowed to leave.
* Person may have a fear of a particular group or individual.
* Person may tell you / another person they are being abused – i.e. a disclosure.

**What to do if you have a concern, or if someone raises concerns with you?**

Procedure to be followed by the volunteers & staff:

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| **Step** | **Action to be taken** |
| **1** | If the older person appears to be in immediate physical danger, contact the emergency services by dialing 999 |
| **2** | **The Organiser at HAPSOS is the contact regarding abuse or neglect issues. All volunteers & staff can discuss any issues or concerns, or refer telephone calls to the Organiser who will discuss with the relevant authorities in confidence.**  **If the concerns of abuse involve the Organiser then contact should instead be made with the Chair of the board of HAPSOS or another board member.** |
| **3** | All details of allegations, or suspicions of abuse, should be recorded accurately & factually. Volunteers & staff where possible must make written (by hand or entered onto CharityLog) notes on the allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect. |
| **4** | If there is a suspicion of abuse or neglect, or clear evidence of it, **a referral should be made to Social Services by the Organiser**, subject to the consent of the person involved.Every effort should be made to ensure the person understands why a referral is advised and what it will entail. |
| **5** | In the event of a telephone call identifying abuse you should explain to them that a referral should be made to Social Services. They can take this step themselves or use HAPSOS. |
| **6** | If the person involved does not wish the referral to be made, then their wishes should be honoured, unless:   * They or others are in physical danger. * There is concern that the client is incapable of making an informed decision. * Others are at risk from the abuser. |
| **7** | If no referral is made in line with the person’s wishes, then all other courses of action should be considered, & the situation monitored, reviewed and records kept. |
| **8** | A referral to Social Services should include:   * A statement of the exact concern, including personal details of the individual if known. * In situations where there is obvious evidence of a criminal offence, a simultaneous referral to the police may be made. |
| **9** | Once a referral to Social Services has been made, they will respond according to their own procedures. Their response should be made within 48 hours of the referral |

**Training**

All trustees, staff and volunteers should all receive Adult Safeguarding training appropriate to their role. For all staff or volunteers who are working with adults at risk, this requires them as a minimum to have awareness training that enables them to:

* Understand what safeguarding is and their role in Safeguarding Adults
* Recognise an adult potentially in need of safeguarding and take action
* Understand the procedures for making a safeguarding Alert
* Understand dignity and respect when working with individuals
* Have knowledge of policy, procedures and legislation that supports safeguarding adults activity

**Please discuss with the Organiser the appropriate training that you should undertake.**