



Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Updated 10/12/2015

Introduction

Mindsong is committed to supporting the right of adults with dementia who are at risk to be protected from abuse and to making sure all paid members of staff and volunteers work together and act promptly when dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse.

‘Safeguarding means protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is promoted.’

Care and Support Statutory Guidance (Care Act 2014)

We think that:

SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYBODY’S BUSINESS - Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. We will work together to prevent and minimise abuse. If we have concerns that someone is being abused our loyalty to the vulnerable person comes before anything else – our group, other service users, our colleagues and the person’s friends and family.

DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION - If we know or suspect that a vulnerable adult is being abused, we will do something about it and ensure our work is properly recorded.

This guidance is for all paid members of staff and volunteers who work with vulnerable adults with dementia in any setting or context. It is applicable to the protection from abuse of vulnerable people aged 18 or over and includes older people, people with a learning, physical or sensory disability and people with mental illness or dementia. It covers all types of abuse, including neglect and recognises that vulnerable people cannot always protect themselves.

What is a vulnerable person?

The definition of a vulnerable adult is a person over the age of 18 years who:

- Is or may be in need of / eligible for Community Care Services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness
- AND is unable to take care of him / herself
- OR is unable to protect him / herself from significant harm or exploitation

A vulnerable person may fall into any one of the following groups: older and frail people; people with a mental health need, a learning difficulty, a physical impairment, a sensory impairment; people who are substance or alcohol dependent; or family carers providing assistance to another vulnerable adult.

Anyone being cared for in a care setting is by definition at risk. This is because they are dependent on others and do not have complete freedom of choice in how they live.

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other persons(s) or group of people. Abuse may be single or repeated acts. It can be:

- *Physical*: for example, hitting, slapping, burning, pushing, restraining or giving the wrong medication.
- *Psychological and emotional*: for example, shouting, swearing, frightening, blaming, ignoring or humiliating a person, threats of harm or abandonment, intimidation, verbal abuse.
- *Financial*: including the illegal or unauthorised use of a person's property, money, pension book or other valuables, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance.
- *Sexual*: such as forcing a person to take part in any sexual activity without his or her informed consent – this can occur in any relationship.
- *Discriminatory*: including racist or sexist remarks or comments based on a person's disability, age or illness, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment. This also includes stopping someone from being involved in religious or cultural activity, services or support networks.
- *Institutional*: the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to vulnerable people. This includes a failure to ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to protect vulnerable adults and maintain good standards of care in accordance with individual needs, including training of staff, supervision and management, record keeping and liaising with other providers of care.
- *Neglect and acts of omission*: including ignoring medical or physical care needs. These can be deliberate or unintentional, amounting to abuse by a carer or self-neglect by the vulnerable person: for example, where a person is deprived of food, heat, clothing, comfort or essential medication, or failing to provide access to appropriate health or social care services.

How Might We Notice Abuse?

Concerns about or evidence of abuse can be communicated to us through:

1. A direct disclosure by the vulnerable adult.
2. A complaint or expression of concern by another member of staff, a volunteer, another service user, a carer, a member of the public or relative.
3. An observation of the behaviour of the vulnerable adult by the volunteer, member of staff or carer.

The principles of safeguarding for adults

- Empowerment: support individuals to make their own decisions as far as possible. Comply with the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Equalities Act 2010
- Prevention: it is better to act before harm occurs
- Proportionality: responses should be appropriate to the risk present and the least restrictive of individuals' rights and choices
- Protection: support and represent those in greatest need
- Partnership: services working in partnership with their local communities
- Accountability: accountable and transparent safeguarding practice
- Prevention and Confidentiality

Our Commitment

To support vulnerable adults who are experiencing, or at risk from, abuse, Mindsong is committed to:

- Identifying the abuse of vulnerable adults where it is occurring.
- Responding effectively to any circumstances giving grounds for concern, or where formal complaints or expressions of anxiety are expressed.
- Ensuring the active participation of individuals, families, groups and communities wherever possible and appropriate.
- Raising awareness of the extent of abuse on vulnerable adults and its impact on them.
- Promoting and supporting work designed to reduce abuse and the fear of abuse as experienced by vulnerable adults.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating how our policies, procedures and practices for protecting vulnerable adults are working.
- Making sure our policies, procedures and practices stay up to date with good practice and the law in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring our procedures are in line with Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures.

All members of paid staff working directly with vulnerable adults will have Disclosure and Barring Service checks and have two references provided before they will have direct contact with vulnerable adults or their carers. *Mindsong will keep a record of all checks made.*

All paid members of staff (and volunteers where appropriate) will be requested to read Mindsong's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, and will be requested to attend safeguarding training where appropriate. *All paid members of staff will update their Safeguarding Training every 3 years, and will be made aware of any changes in legislation and advice regarding Safeguarding via Mindsong's Safeguarding Officer.*

Mindsong will work with vulnerable adults in a way that meets all the aspects of confidentiality in our different policies, but where abuse to a vulnerable person is alleged, suspected, reported or concerns are raised, the Safeguarding Adults Procedure must be followed. The confidentiality of the vulnerable person will be respected wherever possible and their consent obtained, where possible, to share information. *However, if it is in the public interest to report, or if the vulnerable adult/s is still at risk the requirement to report must override confidentiality and consent.* The vulnerable person, where possible, should be made aware that staff cannot ignore issues around abuse and that steps will be taken to deal with them in as sensitive a manner as possible. The welfare of the individual is paramount.

Safeguarding Procedure

1. You think abuse has or may have occurred. Act immediately.

Make sure the person is safe.

Inform your line manager immediately.

Contact the police if it is thought a crime has just been committed.

Record details of the allegation.



2. Bringing the concern to the attention of Safeguarding Officer who in turn will contact the relevant agency

Your manager discusses the concerns with a senior manager or trustee or contacts the local authority referral agency or the police straight away.

The Procedure in Detail

1. You think abuse has or may have occurred. Act immediately.

It is the responsibility of the person first becoming aware of a situation where there may be a vulnerable adult subject to, or at risk of, abuse to:

Make Safe

Deal with the immediate needs of the person. This may mean taking reasonable steps to ensure the adult is in no immediate danger and seeking medical treatment if required as a matter of urgency.

Do NOT discuss the allegation of abuse with the alleged perpetrator.

Do NOT disturb or destroy articles that could be used in evidence. Where an assault of some kind is suspected do not wash or bathe the person unless this is associated with first aid treatment necessary to prevent further harm.

If the allegation is about a staff member or volunteer of any organisation, ensure that the allegation is properly managed. This may include suspending the member(s) of staff or volunteer. The staff member or volunteer is also entitled to support at this stage. Please refer to the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Inform

Tell your line manager immediately or the safeguarding officer if your line manager is unavailable or is implicated in the allegation. Contact the police if it is thought a crime has just been committed.

Record

Record details of the allegation as soon as possible somewhere that can be kept secure. Include:

- The allegation or concerns, including the date and time of the incident, what the vulnerable adult said about the abuse and how it occurred or what has been reported to you.
- The appearance and behaviour of the victim.
- Any injuries observed.

How to listen to someone who is being abused

If someone confides in you about abuse you must:

- Listen to what they say.

It is not up to you to investigate allegations or do make judgements based on whether or not you believe the person. Never assume that someone else will recognize and report what you have seen or heard. You can help them by listening and passing on your concerns with any information, allegations and observations without delay.

Confidentiality

It is important to understand that confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed. In safeguarding adults there are times where the rights of others must take precedence. Others might well be being abused, or at risk, and you have a responsibility to them too.

- Do not promise complete confidentiality, even if you are asked.

How to record abuse

- Write as little as possible to describe what you have seen or heard. Do not ask leading questions or probe for details. Do not rush someone.
- Make sure you only record the facts, do not make guesses or record feelings. Do not make judgements and try not to express your own feelings, such as surprise or shock.
- Only write down what is relevant to the abuse that you are concerned about
- If you have to write your opinion down, make it clear that it is your personal opinion and not a fact
- Record any details you know:
 1. dates and times
 2. who was involved
 3. any observed injuries
 4. the appearance of the victim and what they have said, in their own words

It is the responsibility of your line manager or safeguarding officer to:

1. Decide without delay on the most appropriate course of action once the allegation or suspicion of abuse has been raised.
2. Deal with any immediate needs
3. Ensure that the victim of the alleged abuse is safe
4. Ensure that any necessary emergency medical treatment is arranged
5. Ensure that no forensic evidence is lost
6. If the alleged perpetrator is also a vulnerable adult, ensure that a member of staff is allocated to attend to their needs and ensure that other service users are not put at risk.
7. Clarify the facts stated by the member of staff but do NOT in any circumstances discuss the allegation of abuse with the alleged perpetrator or, if possible, the victim.
8. Check that the circumstances fall within the safeguarding adults procedures i.e. meeting the definition of abuse as defined in this Policy and Procedures.
9. Address issues of consent and confidentiality.
10. A formal referral must be made on the same day as the alert is raised wherever:
 - A crime has been, could have been, or yet could be committed.
 - There is a suspicion that an abuse has taken place.
 - The allegation involves a member of staff or paid carer.

- Other vulnerable adults are at risk.
- The alleged perpetrator is a vulnerable adult. They are unsure if abuse has taken place

Where a decision is made NOT to refer, the alert must be recorded, with the reasons for the decision not to refer or report.

2. Bringing the concern to the attention of the relevant agency

The referral stage involves bringing the concern regarding alleged abuse or potential abuse formally to the attention of the appropriate authorities. Any individual who has been alerted to the possibility of abuse having occurred or being likely to occur should make a referral.

Referrals should be made to:

- The police if you think a crime may have been committed. Specify it is a safeguarding issue (999 in an emergency).
- Social Services

The person making the referral should ideally have the following information available; however, the lack of any of this information should not delay the referral:

- The name of the vulnerable adult, date of birth and age
- Address and telephone number of the care home or individual's home
- Why the adult is considered vulnerable
- Whether consent has been obtained for the referral, and if not the reasons e.g. the vulnerable adult lacks mental capacity or there is an over-riding public interest (e.g. where other vulnerable adults are at risk)
- Whether there are any concerns or doubts about the mental capacity of the vulnerable adult
- Whether the police are aware of the allegation, and whether a police investigation is underway

Once a referral has been made, Mindsong, through the Safeguarding Officer, still have a responsibility to the vulnerable adult/s concerned, and any reports made must be kept securely for any potential future referral.

Useful Contacts

Mindsong Administrator: Tel. 07989 936270 Email. admin@mindsong.org.uk

Safeguarding Lead: Maggie Grady 07889 286684 maggie.grady@btinternet.com

Safeguarding Trustee: Katy Bagnall 07981 959242

Gloucestershire County Council (Adult Help Desk): Tel. 01452 426868

Email: socialservicesenq@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Gloucestershire Police: Tel. 101 Website: www.gloucestershire.police.uk