



Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Total Wellbeing Matters is committed to safeguarding and protecting people from abuse. The purpose of this policy and its appendices is to provide an overview of types of abuse, to outline the responsibilities of staff working on behalf of Total Wellbeing Matters, to specify the process by which we will respond to safeguarding concerns and to highlight the key arrangements in place to promote and protect the welfare of those we work with.

Policy Statement

Total Wellbeing Matters is committed to the right of all adults to live in safety without fear of abuse, neglect or exploitation, and to have their dignity and preferences respected.

We recognise that abuse can be perpetrated by anyone: staff, other customers, family or members of the public.

We follow Dorset Council Adult Safeguarding Boards Safeguarding guidance to ensure that reported concerns and allegations are followed up in a professional, timely and respectful manner.

Total Wellbeing Matters works to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all adults with whom we work.

Key Principles of Adult Safeguarding

We follow the six key principles underpinning all adult safeguarding work:

Empowerment: individualised approach, person-led decisions and informed consent

Prevention: It is better to take action before harm occurs

Proportionality: the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented

Protection: support and representation for those in greatest need

Partnership: services working with their communities; communities playing a part in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse

Accountability: accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

What is abuse?

Abuse can take many forms, including:

- Physical – e.g. pushing, slapping, rough handling, hitting, over-medicating, restraint
- Sexual – eg rape, sexual assault, sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting to; inappropriate touching
- Psychological – e.g. shouting, continual criticism, undermining confidence, humiliation and threats. Emotional abuse such as threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact; coercion, unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- Exploitation: - eg unfairly manipulating someone for profit or personal gain
- Financial or material: – e.g. theft, fraud, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or withholding benefits, 'borrowing' and not paying back, misuse or misappropriation of of benefits, property and possessions

- Neglect and acts of omission: – e.g. ignoring / excluding, not offering appropriate medical or physical care; (this can include withholding referral to other agencies e.g. GP, dentistry or welfare rights); the withholding of medication, adequate nutrition or heating
- Discrimination – e.g. discrimination on grounds of age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or personal prejudice resulting in harassment or slurs.
- Organisational – where the culture in an organisation or specific care setting undermines individual choice and self-determination e.g. where a client is prevented from accessing services and goods to which they are entitled; neglect or poor care practice
- Self Neglect: eg lack of self-care, squalor or hoarding
- Domestic abuse – eg physical or sexual violence or threats, controlling behavior
- Modern slavery, eg forced labour or domestic servitude.

Who is an adult at risk?

The Care Act 2014 redefined who may be seen as a ‘vulnerable adult’, and refers instead to ‘adults at risk’. An adult at risk may be any person aged 18 years or over who:

- has care and support needs *and*
- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect *and*
- is unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs

Safeguarding Children

Total Wellbeing Matters works with adults, but from time-to-time will come into contact with children under the age of 18, through pupils on work experience placed within the organisation, and because there may be children in the household of some families that we support.

If a member of staff has any concerns that a child is suffering abuse or is at risk of suffering abuse they will report this to the office within one working day, If there is an immediate risk of harm the staff member should ring 999.

The responsible manager receiving any such concern will, if appropriate, make a referral to the Adult Social Services. A record of the concern and action taken or not taken will be recorded on the Safeguarding Log.

Total Wellbeing Matters protects school placements and volunteers under the age of 18 by:

- ensuring that they are not in one-to-one situations with customers, carers or members of the public;
- They do not undertake any regulated activity
- They have a named member of staff who provides supervision and a point of contact

Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005

Having mental capacity means that a person is able to make their own decisions. In some circumstances a person may not be able to make a particular decision at a particular time because their mind or brain is affected by illness or disability. There are many reasons why someone might lack capacity at a particular point – for example due to a stroke or brain injury, a mental health problem, dementia, a learning disability, confusion, drowsiness or unconsciousness because of an illness or the treatment for it or substance misuse.

Lack of capacity may not be a permanent condition. Assessments of capacity should be time- and decision-specific. You cannot decide that someone lacks capacity based upon age, appearance, condition or behaviour alone.

Reporting and responding to a concern

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that any concerns arising from situations they observe, allegations (reports from third parties) or disclosures (reports from someone about themselves) relating to potential abuse, are reported to the office within one working day, even if they are unsure whether the concern is justified.

If the line manager is not available then a report should be made to Dorset Council on 01305 221016 or the Emergency Duty Service on 0300 1239895

When a concern has been reported, the line manager will discuss the matter with the person raising the concern before ensuring that the safeguarding concern is appropriately actioned and recorded. Where appropriate, Dorset Council guidance will be followed and the matter will be reported to Dorset Council's safeguarding team and to other statutory bodies (e.g. the police) for their consideration and action. If it is believed that someone is in immediate danger, the police will be called straight away.

The **consent** of the adult deemed to be at risk will normally be sought, before information is shared, in line with the principles outlined above. In some cases it may not be practical or safe to seek such consent, or the adult may lack capacity in relation to this issue. In these cases a referral, or at least a discussion, may take place without active consent.

In some circumstances an adult with **capacity** may refuse consent but a referral is still made because it is deemed *either* that the risk of physical harm is so serious that the withholding of their consent isn't reasonable, *or* because another adult or child is at risk, *or* where there is an overriding public interest. An example of the latter would be an allegation of abuse made against a staff member of an agency providing personal care where the potential risk to other adults would outweigh the lack of consent. The reasons for a referral without consent will be recorded carefully. Total Wellbeing Matters will seek the advice of DC's safeguarding team where there is doubt or concern about consent or capacity issues.

If a member of staff or a volunteer believes that their line manager is involved in, or **colluding** with, any potential abuse, they should raise their concern with Dorset Council. Staff raising genuine concerns about colleagues or managers within Total Wellbeing Matters will be supported and their job/role will be unaffected by such action.

Where the concern is one of **potential discrimination or the undermining of choice** within Total Wellbeing Matter's services it should be reported to the Director. An investigation of the facts will then follow to decide if any action is required.

Supervision and Support

Staff providing services directly to our clients receive regular one to one sessions, and an annual appraisal so that they receive adequate support and coaching, and opportunities to develop their good practice. Additionally informal opportunities to seek advice or exchange information with the line manager or a senior manager are provided throughout the week.

Responding to Potential Abuse

A concern might arise from

- Something you *observe* (for example: bruises, a marked change in behaviour etc)
- An *allegation* that is made (for example you are told that someone has behaved inappropriately or put a client or colleague at risk)
- A *disclosure*: where a client tells you something about themselves or their circumstances that lead you to believe that they are being abused or are at risk of abuse

The role of frontline staff is to RECOGNISE, RESPOND, RECORD AND REPORT.

If you observe something that causes you concern (eg a bruise or burn), you should ask the client what happened, unless to ask would be inappropriate or cause further distress (eg if other people were present, or if the person had severe dementia)

- You should record exactly what you have seen / been told at your earliest opportunity and report it to your line manager within one working day
- **If someone makes an allegation** to you, listen carefully and explain that you will need to pass these concerns to your line manager. Reassure them that their concerns will be taken seriously. If the allegation is made by a family member or a worker from another agency – take their name and contact details and assure them a manager from Total Wellbeing Matters will contact them as soon as possible. Pass the information to your line manager as soon as possible, and within one working day.
- **If a client makes an allegation** of poor practice or abuse about another worker, follow the instructions for disclosure below.
- **If someone discloses** potential or actual abuse to you:
 - Try not to show shock or disbelief
 - Don't interrupt someone who is freely recalling significant events, allow them to tell you whatever they want to share
 - Listen carefully and reflect back what you are being told to ensure you have correctly grasped what is being said
 - Reassure the person that they are right to share this information with you; show empathy with them
 - Don't make promises to keep secrets – explain carefully that what they have said is worrying and that you have to share that with your line manager
 - Do not ask leading questions, ('So was it Peter who did that?') or attempt to 'investigate' in any way.
 - Don't make judgements
 - Do not contact the alleged abuser
 - Don't share this information with anyone other than your line manager

1) As soon as you can, write down an account of your conversation, try to use the words / phrases that the person used. Sign and date your record.

2) Take up the opportunity for a debrief with your line manager / another manager; it can be profoundly upsetting to hear someone disclose abuse and it is not something you can discuss with other people

If the person is injured or you judge that they are at immediate risk of serious harm – ring 999

Reporting a safeguarding concern

Please follow these steps unless there is an immediate and urgent risk of harm, in which case you must ring the police. You would then record and report as set out below.

A) Recording your concern

1. As soon as you can, write down your concerns as a file note. If someone has made a disclosure to you, you should try to record their own words as well as you can. Don't add in your own interpretation of the situation – your notes should be as factual as possible. Sign and date them, and keep them confidentially and securely. These notes will form the basis of the discussion you have when you report your concerns in.

Please remember it is **not** the role of Total Wellbeing Matters staff to undertake any sort of investigation or to confront or question the alleged perpetrator if known. This role is only appropriate for social workers from the Safeguarding Adults team and/or the police.

B) Reporting your concern

You must report your concern within 1 working day to your line manager by phone or in person. Please do not rely on text, email or voice messages.

If it is the weekend or evening and you do not feel you can wait for the next working day to report your concerns, for example if you judge there is a significant risk to the client if you wait; then you should ring Dorset County out of hours Tel. 0300 1239895 Evenings and weekends, including Bank Holidays

If you raise an urgent safeguarding alert you will be asked for certain key information such as:

- Name, address, gender of the person about whom you have concerns
- Their date of birth
- Their contact information – telephone or mobile numbers
- Whether anyone else lives in the house, and whether they may also be at risk
- What has prompted your concerns
- Your name, role, contact information

If you do not have some of this information, such as the client's date of birth, do not be put off making the call if you believe it cannot safely wait until the next working day. If you make an emergency call to the police they are likely to ask for very similar information.

What happens next: how safeguarding concerns are dealt with

Your line manager will make sure they understand the information you have provided and in consultation with a senior manager will decide on a course of action, which they will explain to you.

Remember: it is better to seek advice or a discussion, including from the Safeguarding team, than to fret or stay concerned without taking appropriate action.