



Safeguarding Policy & Procedure

Introduction and Purpose

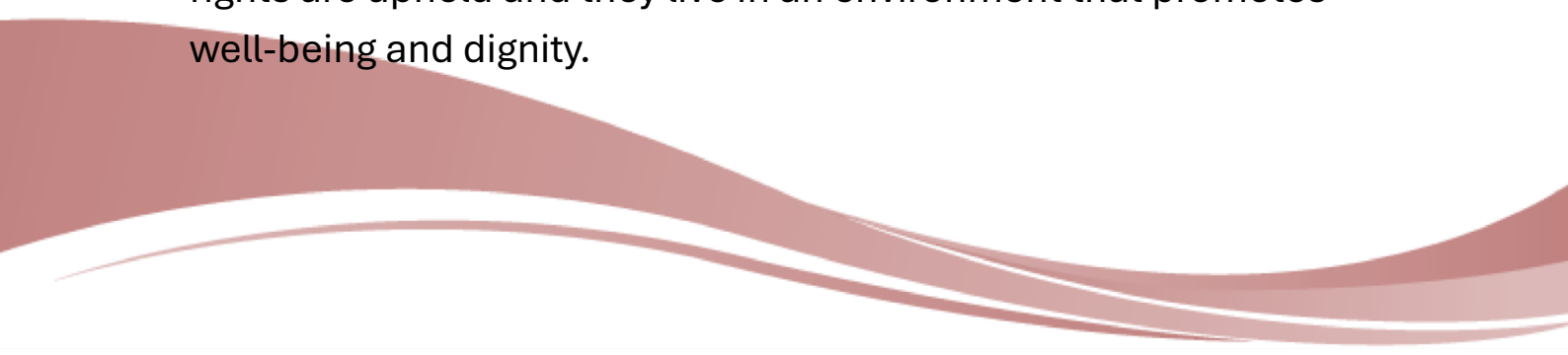
The Safeguarding Policy sets out how our organisation will prevent the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable individuals. Our responsibility is to provide a safe environment where individuals can live free from harm. This policy is designed to guide staff and volunteers in recognising, responding to, and reporting safeguarding concerns. It ensures that any safeguarding incidents are addressed in a timely, effective, and legally compliant manner.

Objectives:

- Protect vulnerable adults and children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Create a culture where the safety of individuals is everyone's responsibility.
- Ensure clear guidance for staff on how to deal with safeguarding concerns.
- Comply with the legal requirements of safeguarding vulnerable individuals.

Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding refers to the proactive measures taken to protect individuals from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, ensuring their rights are upheld and they live in an environment that promotes well-being and dignity.





Key aspects of safeguarding:

- Prevention of harm.
 - Early identification of abuse.
 - Appropriate and timely responses when abuse is suspected.
 - Creating a culture of openness, respect, and accountability.
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Who is Vulnerable to Abuse?

Vulnerable adults include:

- The elderly and frail individuals.
- People with disabilities (physical or mental).
- Those with long-term health conditions.
- Individuals with mental health issues.
- People who are socially marginalised or isolated.

These individuals may face an increased risk of abuse or exploitation and require enhanced care, vigilance, and protection.

Legal Framework and Responsibilities

Safeguarding adults is governed by various laws and regulations, including:

- **The Care Act 2014:** This legislation sets out a framework for adult safeguarding and highlights the need for timely intervention in cases of abuse or neglect.
- **The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006:** This Act established the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS),



- ensuring individuals unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults or children are identified.
- **The Human Rights Act 1998:** Guarantees the right to life, liberty, and security, protecting individuals against degrading treatment.
- **The Children Act 1989 & 2004:** Provides a framework for protecting children from abuse and neglect.

Organisations must comply with these laws to ensure the welfare and safety of vulnerable individuals.

Types of Abuse

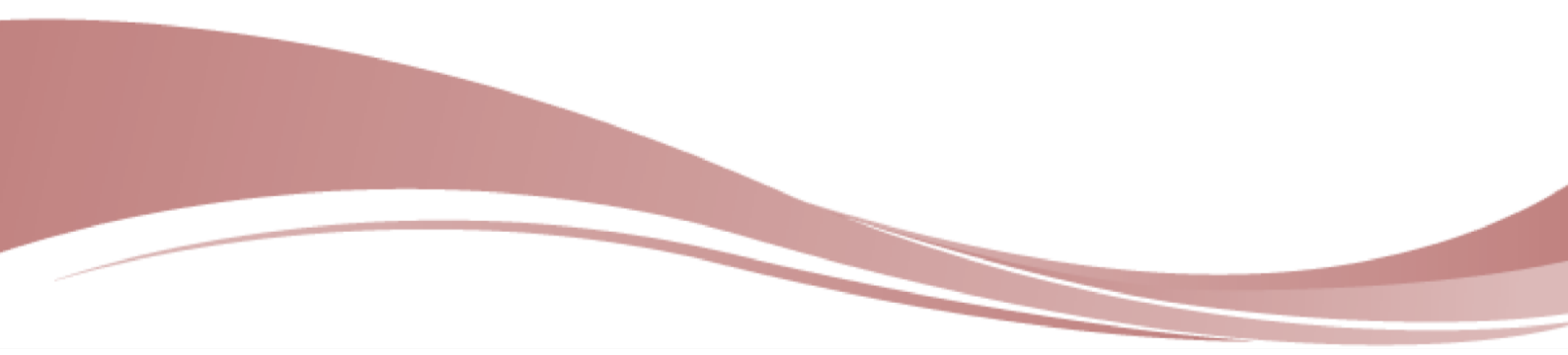
Abuse can take many forms, and each requires a different response. The types of abuse include:

Physical Abuse: Any form of harm or injury inflicted on an individual, such as hitting, slapping, pushing, or misuse of medication.

Sexual Abuse: Non-consensual sexual contact or behaviour, including rape, unwanted touching, and exploitation.

Emotional or Psychological Abuse: Includes verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, manipulation, and coercion that causes mental harm.

Neglect and Acts of Omission: Failure to meet an individual's basic needs, including inadequate care, lack of medical treatment, and poor living conditions.





Financial Abuse: Involves the illegal or improper use of someone's finances, such as theft, fraud, or coercion to gain access to their funds.

Discriminatory Abuse: Treating someone unfairly due to their race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or other protected characteristics.

Institutional Abuse: Occurs when organisational practices or routines neglect or harm individuals. This can be caused by rigid or inappropriate care practices within institutions.

Recognising the Signs of Abuse

All staff must be able to recognise the signs of abuse, which can include:

- Unexplained injuries or a history of frequent hospital visits.
- Sudden changes in behaviour, fearfulness, or withdrawal.
- Lack of personal care or poor hygiene.
- Unexplained financial problems or missing possessions.
- Withdrawal, depression, or anxious behaviours.
- Refusal to speak openly or reluctance to discuss care.

If any of these signs are observed, staff must report them immediately for further investigation.

7. Responsibilities of Staff and Management



Staff Responsibilities:

- **Duty to Act:** All staff must report any concerns about possible abuse, neglect, or exploitation to their manager or safeguarding lead.
- **Immediate Action:** If abuse is suspected, staff should ensure the safety of the individual first and take immediate action to protect them.
- **Training and Development:** All staff should complete safeguarding training and regularly refresh their knowledge of policies and procedures.

Manager Responsibilities:

- **Ensure Compliance:** Managers must ensure safeguarding procedures are consistently followed.
- **Investigate Concerns:** Managers must handle safeguarding reports swiftly and report cases to external authorities where appropriate.
- **Provide Support:** Managers should offer support to both victims and staff members involved in safeguarding concerns.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- The DSL is responsible for overseeing the safeguarding process and ensuring that all incidents are documented and investigated appropriately.



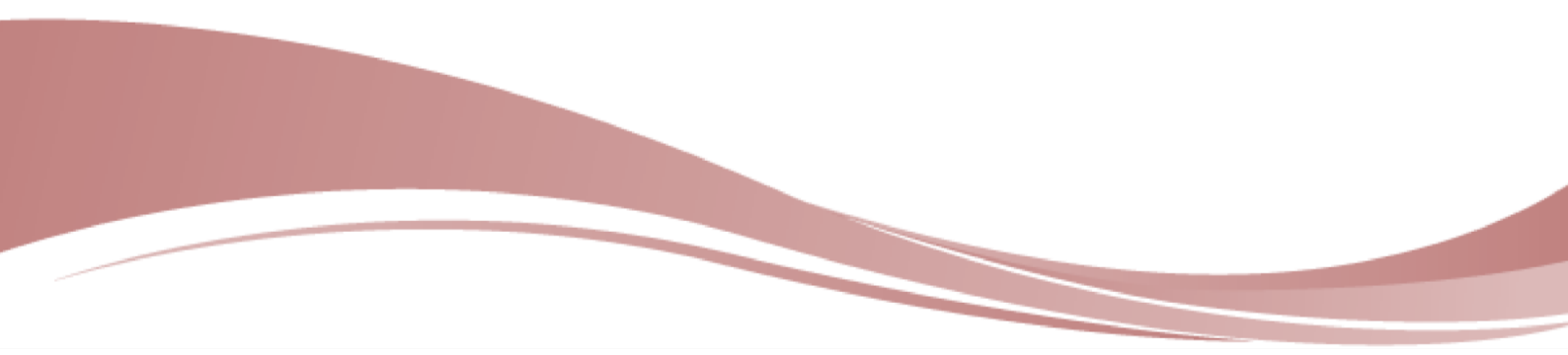
- The DSL is also responsible for liaising with external agencies, including social services and the police.

8. Reporting and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

How to Report Concerns:

1. **Report to the Safeguarding Lead:** Staff should immediately inform the DSL or manager if they suspect or witness abuse.
2. **Document the Incident:** Every concern must be documented, even if it seems minor. Detailed records help identify patterns or recurring issues.
3. **Immediate Action:** Ensure the vulnerable individual is safe. If the situation is urgent, contact emergency services or the police.

What Happens After a Report is Made:

1. **Initial Assessment:** The DSL or manager will assess the situation and decide the next steps.
 2. **Investigation:** The concern will be investigated thoroughly. This may include interviews, gathering evidence, and contacting relevant authorities.
 3. **External Reporting:** If necessary, the incident will be reported to external agencies such as the police, local authority safeguarding teams, or the Care Quality Commission (CQC).
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4. **Outcome:** If abuse is confirmed, appropriate action, such as disciplinary procedures, will be taken. In cases of severe abuse, the perpetrator may be reported to the DBS.
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9. Protection for the Victim and Staff

- **For Victims:** Immediate steps will be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the victim, including emotional and practical support such as counselling and assistance with relocation if necessary.
 - **For Staff:** Staff members involved in safeguarding cases will be offered support through counselling or other professional services.
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10. Investigations and Disciplinary Procedures

- **Internal Investigation:** Any allegations of abuse will be thoroughly investigated in line with the organisation's procedures.
- **Suspension:** In cases where a staff member is under suspicion of abuse, they may be temporarily suspended from their duties pending an investigation.
- **Disciplinary Action:** If an employee is found guilty of abuse, they may face disciplinary action, including dismissal. Severe cases may result in legal proceedings.
- **Disclosure to the DBS:** Any employee who is dismissed for a safeguarding violation will be reported to the DBS to



prevent them from working with vulnerable individuals again.

11. Training and Awareness

- **Induction Training:** All new staff members will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction.
 - **Ongoing Training:** Regular refresher courses will be provided to ensure staff stay updated on safeguarding policies and procedures.
 - **Specialist Training:** Senior staff and those with safeguarding responsibilities will receive in-depth training to handle more complex safeguarding cases.
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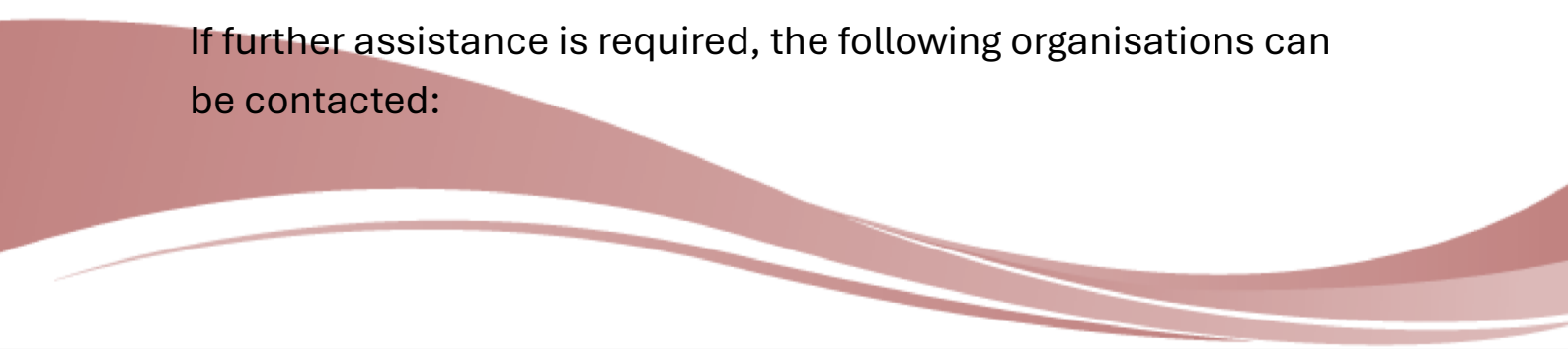
12. Learning from Safeguarding Incidents

After any safeguarding incident, the organisation will conduct a review to:

- Evaluate how the situation was handled.
 - Identify lessons learned to improve future practices.
 - Update training and procedures based on findings from the review.
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13. External Safeguarding Support and Resources

If further assistance is required, the following organisations can be contacted:





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- **Local Safeguarding Boards:** For expert advice and support.
- **Care Quality Commission (CQC):** To report concerns regarding healthcare services.
- **Police:** For immediate intervention in cases of serious abuse or criminal activity.
- **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS):** To check the background of individuals working with vulnerable groups.