

Veterans Community Network

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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VCN SAFEGUARDING POLICY V43SEPTEMBER 2023

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Safeguarding Policy

VCN provides a Veteran Peer Mentoring service to Veterans, Reservists and their families in the regions of Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, and Buckinghamshire, who have care and support needs relating their mental health and / or substance misuse. Any individual with care and support needs may be

- at risk of abuse or neglect and
- because of these care and support needs, are unable to protect themselves.

VCN are committed to safeguarding all our beneficiaries with care and support needs and will not tolerate any abuse of any of its' forms that will result in harm including but not limited to; physical, domestic violence or abuse, sexual abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, financial or material abuse, modern slavery, discriminatory abuse, organisational or institutional abuse, neglects or act of omission and self-neglect"

This policy outlines the steps VCN will make to safeguard an adult with care and support needs if they are deemed to be at risk or may be at risk from harm. This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of VCN in working together with other professionals and agencies in promoting the adult's welfare and safeguarding them from abuse and neglect. In the Care Act (2014), the statutory guidance also includes self-neglect and this may be especially pertinent when considering some Veterans' care and support needs.

VCN will ensure that decisions made will allow adults to make their own choices and include them in any decision making. VCN will also ensure that safe and effective working practices are in place.

This policy is intended to support staff and volunteers working within VCN to understand their role and responsibilities in safeguarding adults. All staff and volunteers are expected to follow this policy.

The key objectives of this policy are for all employees and volunteers of VCN to:

- have an overview of adult safeguarding
- be clear about their responsibility to safeguard adults
- ensure the necessary actions are taken where an adult with care and support needs is deemed to be at risk

This policy is based on:

- The Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support statutory guidance
- MK Councils Adults policy and procedures
- MK Local Safeguarding Adults Board's local procedures and appendices

Under the Human Rights Act 1998, everyone has the right to live free from abuse and neglect.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights/human-rights-act>

Copies of this policy are available within VCN and all staff and volunteers sign that they have read this Policy and know where to access it for reference and updates.

What is Safeguarding adults?

'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 including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.'
Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Department of Health, updated February 2017

All adults should be able to live free from fear and harm. But some may find it hard to get the help and support they need to stop abuse.

An adult may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to many reasons, including their mental or physical incapacity, sensory loss or physical or learning disabilities. This could be an adult who is usually able to protect themselves from harm but maybe unable to do so because of an accident, disability, frailty, addiction or illness.

VCN adheres to following the six key principles that underpin safeguarding work (See Care Act guidance)

- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Proportionality
- Protection
- Partnership
- Accountability

VCN will not tolerate the abuse of adults. All staff and volunteers should ensure that their work reflects the principles above and ensure the adult with care and support needs is involved in their decisions and informed consent is obtained. VCN should ensure that the safeguarding action agreed is the least intrusive response to the risk. Partners from the community should be involved in any safeguarding work in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. VCN should be transparent and accountable in delivering safeguarding actions.

What is Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)?

MSP means a case should be person-led and outcome-focused. The individual should be involved in identifying how best to respond to their safeguarding situation by giving them more choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.

VCN will ensure that adults are involved in their safeguarding arrangements and each individual is dealt with on a case-by-case basis. As adults may have different preferences, histories and lifestyles, the same process may not work for all.

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Who do adult safeguarding duties apply to?

The Care Act 2014 sets out that adult safeguarding duties apply to *any* adult who:

- has care and support needs, and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect, and
- is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect, because of those needs.

Who do I go to if I am concerned?

The named responsible person for safeguarding duties for VCN is the Service Director, Dr Gillian Le Page; Mobile number: 07902632949.

All staff and volunteers should contact the Service Director for any concerns/queries they have in regard to safeguarding adults. Case notes must be updated with any decision or actions taken, it is the responsibility of the staff member / volunteer to update these records.

The Service Director will be responsible to make decisions about notifying adult social services if required and consider alternative actions, where necessary.

The Service Director will also ensure that the safeguarding adults policies and procedures are in place and up to date. They will ensure a safe environment is promoted for staff and volunteers and adults accessing the service. The Service Director will ensure they are up to date with their safeguarding adults training.

What should I do if I am concerned?

Staff and volunteers at VCN who have any adult safeguarding concerns should:

1. Respond
 - Take emergency action if someone is at immediate risk of harm/in need of urgent medical attention. Dial 999 for emergency services
 - Get brief details about what has happened and what the adult would like done about it, but do not probe or conduct a mini-investigation
 - Seek consent from the adult to take action and to report the concern. Consider whether the adult may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other people's safety and wellbeing. If you decide to act against their wishes or without their consent, you must record your decision and the reasons for this.
2. Report
 - Name the person to whom staff/volunteers need to report any potential safeguarding concerns. This will usually be the organisation's designated safeguarding lead (see above)

3. Record

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- As far as possible, records should be written contemporaneously, dated and signed. Keep records about safeguarding concerns confidential and in a location where the alleged abuser will not have access to the record. Access should not be given to any unauthorised personal for accessing confidential information including the sharing of passwords.

4. Refer

In making a decision whether to refer or not, the designated safeguarding lead should take into account:

- (1) the adult's wishes and preferred outcome
- (2) whether the adult has mental capacity to make an informed decision about their own and others' safety
- (3) the safety or wellbeing of children or other adults with care and support needs
- (4) whether there is a person in a position of trust involved
- (5) whether a crime has been committed

This should inform the decision whether to notify the concern to the following people:

- o the police if a crime has been committed and/or
- o adult social services for possible safeguarding enquiry (see relevant area information)
- o relevant regulatory bodies such as the Charities Commission
- o family/relatives as appropriate (seek advice from adult social services)

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and may affect one person or more. Staff and volunteers should look beyond single incidents to identify patterns of harm. Accurate recording of information will also assist in recognising any patterns.

What are your roles and responsibilities?

All staff, management, Trustees, and volunteers at VCN are expected to report any concerns to the named person for safeguarding. If the allegation is against one of VCN staff, volunteer or Trustee, in the first instance, it should be reported to the safe guarding lead. If the laeelgation concerns the Safeguarding lead, it should be raised with a non connected Trustee.

members,

The designated safeguarding adults lead should be responsible for providing acknowledgement of the referral and brief feedback to the person raising the original concern. Feedback should be given in a way that will not make the situation worse or breach the Data Protection Act. If the police are involved, they should be consulted prior to giving feedback to the referrer to ensure any criminal investigation is not affected.

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The local authority will decide on who will lead on a safeguarding enquiry should it progress to that stage. The named organisation should not conduct its own safeguarding enquiry unless instructed to do so by the local authority.

Staff and volunteers should ensure that the adult with care and support needs is involved at all stages of their safeguarding enquiry ensuring a person-centred approach is adopted.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 is to be used when decisions on behalf of those adults with care and support needs who are unable to make some decisions for themselves. Refer to the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice>. You will need to involve an advocate if the person lacks capacity to make decisions about the safeguarding concern.

Why is it important to take action?

It may be difficult for adults with care and support needs to protect themselves and to report abuse. They rely on you to help them.

Confidentiality and information sharing

VCN expects all staff, volunteers and Trustees to maintain confidentiality at all times. In line with Data Protection law, VCN does not share information if not required.

It should however be noted that information should be shared with authorities if an adult is deemed to be at risk of immediate harm. Sharing the right information, at the right time, with the right people can make all the difference to preventing harm. For further guidance on information sharing and safeguarding see: <https://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/safeguarding-adults/sharing-information/keymessages.asp>

Recruitment and selection

VCN is committed to safe employment. Safe recruitment practices, such as Disclosure and Barring checks reduce the risk of exposing adults with care and support needs to people unsuitable to work with them. All VCN staff, volunteers and Trustees will have DBS checks in line with VCN's DBS Policy and Procedure.

Training, awareness raising and supervision?

VCN ensures that all staff and volunteers receive basic awareness training on safeguarding adults as they may come across adults with care and support needs who may be at risk of abuse. Those adults may report things of concern to staff or volunteers who should be equipped with the basic knowledge around safeguarding adults and be confident to identify that abuse is taking place and action is required. All staff and volunteers should be clear about the core values of VCN and commitment to safeguarding adults.

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It is also useful to discuss training with staff who have attended training sessions to ensure they are embedding this in practice.

Voluntary organisations (including volunteers) who support adults with care and support needs can access the basic awareness safeguarding adults training provided by Combat Stress Learning Platform.

Safeguarding Children

As a Charity, the core activities of VCN means that we do not work with any person under 18 years of age. However, we may come across families where we are concerned about the risk to a child or young person under 18 years of age who may be being harmed by the behaviour of the adult.

The position of VCN on Safeguarding Children and Young People is that it is everyone's responsibility to report concerns.

This covers families where there is a risk or evidence that a child is being harmed by:

Physical Abuse
Sexual Abuse
Emotional Abuse
Neglect
Domestic Abuse.
Exploitation
Victim of Modern Day Slavery

Any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child(ren), should be discussed with the Service Director in the first instance unless the concern of harm is so severe in which place the police should be notified using the 999 emergency number.

Please also consider that it may not always be in the best interest of the child to discuss concerns with the adult as this could result in further harm to the child or the destruction of evidence.

Staff can access the basic awareness safeguarding adults training provided by Combat Stress Learning Platform.

There should be written records of all safeguarding concerns and onward referrals.

Prevent

Radicalisation and extremism of adults with care and support needs is a form of emotional/psychological exploitation. Radicalisation can take place through direct personal contact, or indirectly through social media.

If staff are concerned that an adult with care and support needs is at risk of being radicalised and drawn into terrorism, they should treat it in the same way as any other safeguarding concern.

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For more information about Prevent see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

Useful contacts

VCN's safeguarding lead is
Dr Gillian Le Page;
Service Director
07902632949
gill@vcn.org.uk

Useful links

Care Act- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

Carer and support statutory guidance-

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/506202/23902777_Care_Act_Book.pdf

Prevent-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

Information sharing-

<https://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/safeguarding-adults/sharing-information/keymessages.asp>

Source: <https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse/>

Key Government Initiatives and Legislation for Safe Guarding Adults

- Achieving Best Evidence 2002
- Care Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Data Protection Act 1998

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Key Government Initiatives and Legislation for Safe Guarding Children

- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [The United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child 1992](#)
- [The Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [The Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [Designated Safeguard Lead](#)

These lists are not exhaustive.

Appendix 1

Abuse and neglect

There are 10 recognised categories of abuse under the Care Act 2014:

1. Neglect and acts of omission;
2. Sexual abuse;
3. Physical abuse;
4. Psychological/emotional abuse;
5. Discriminatory abuse which includes hate crime;
6. Financial or material abuse;
7. Organisational abuse;
8. Domestic violence when the victim is an adult at risk;
9. Modern slavery; and
10. Self-neglect which includes hoarding.

Abuse includes financial abuse; and for that purpose “financial abuse” includes—

(a) having money or other property stolen,

(b) being defrauded,

(c) being put under pressure in relation to money or other property, and

(d) having money or other property misused.

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However, you should keep an open mind about what constitutes abuse or neglect as it can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual case should always be considered.

For more information, read section 14.17 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance.

What are the possible signs of abuse?

Abuse and neglect can be difficult to spot. You should be alert to the following possible signs of abuse and neglect:

- Depression, self-harm or suicide attempts
- Difficulty making friends
- Fear or anxiety
- The person looks dirty or is not dressed properly,
- The person never seems to have money,
- The person has an injury that is difficult to explain (such as bruises, finger marks, 'non-accidental' injury, neck, shoulders, chest and arms),
- The person has signs of a pressure ulcer,
- The person is experiencing insomnia
- The person seems frightened, or frightened of physical contact.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour
- The person is withdrawn, changes in behaviour

You should ask the person if you are unsure about their well-being as there may be other explanations to the above presentation.

Who abuses and neglects adults?

Abuse can happen anywhere, even in somebody's own home. Most often abuse takes place by others who are in a position of trust and power. It can take place whether an adult lives alone or with others. Anyone can carry out abuse or neglect, including:

- partners;
- other family members;
- neighbours;
- friends;
- acquaintances;
- local residents;
- people who deliberately exploit adults they perceive as vulnerable to abuse;
- paid staff or professionals; and
- volunteers and strangers

www.islington.gov.uk/safeguardingadults



Appendix 2

Categories of abuse and neglect as defined by the Care and Support Statutory Guidance (2014)

Neglect and acts of omission

Ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

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.

Physical abuse

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

Psychological/emotional 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.

Discriminatory abuse

including hate crime Forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Financial or material abuse

Theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult at risk'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.

Organisational abuse

Neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one-off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Domestic violence

Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence; female genital mutilation; stalking and forced marriage.

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Modern slavery

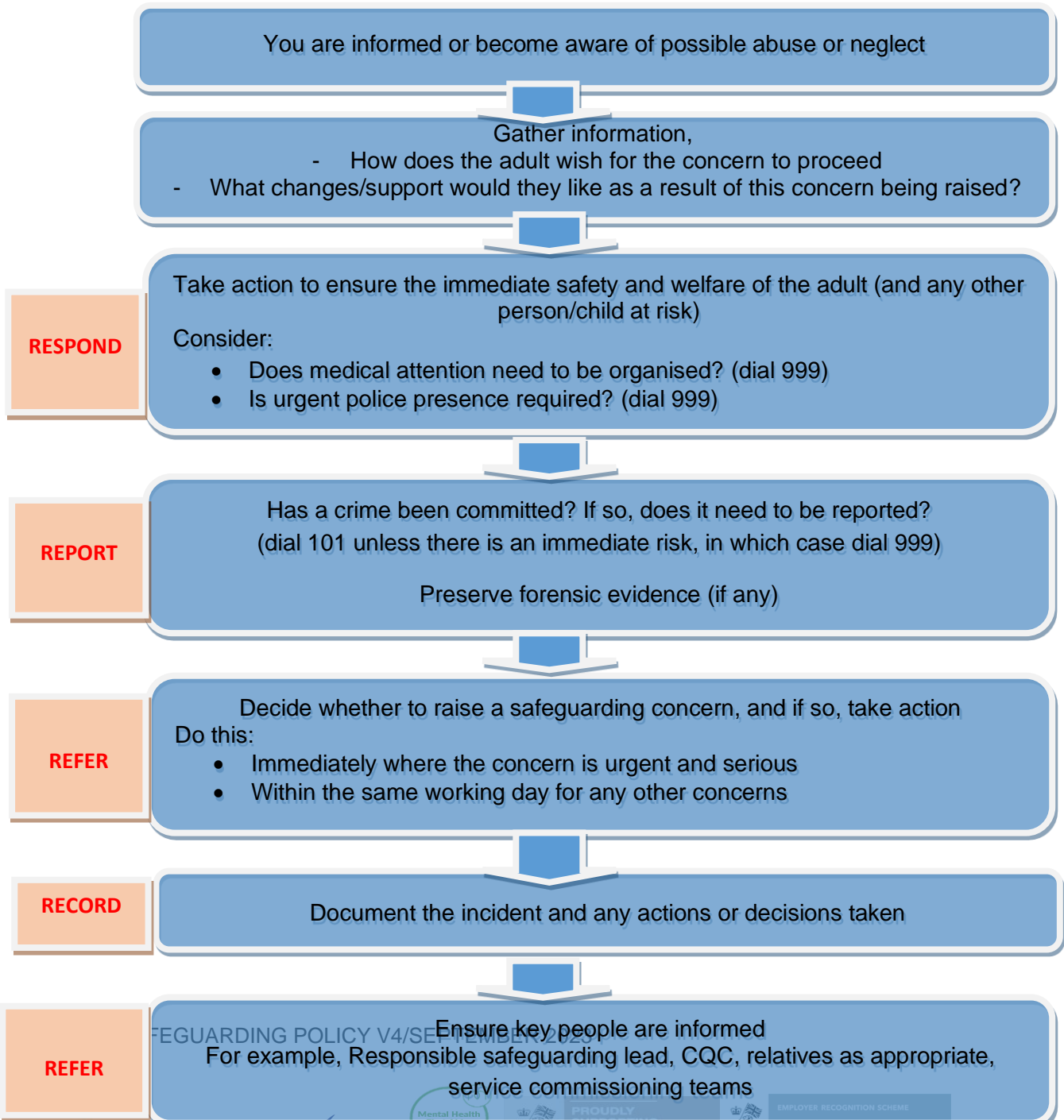
Slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Self-neglect

Neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene,

Appendix 3

Raising a safeguarding concern





SUPPORT

Provide support or feedback for the person identifying the safeguarding concern