

## **WORCESTERSHIRE PARENT AND CARERS' COMMUNITY (WPCC)**

### **SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY STATEMENT**

Worcestershire Parent and Carers' Community (WPCC) believes that it is never acceptable for a vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its legal responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of all adults.

**A vulnerable adult** refers to a person aged 18 years or over who might be unable to protect themselves from significant harm or serious exploitation because of a physical or mental disability, age or illness.

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults. To this end it is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect and to pass on their concerns to the Designated Person for Adult Protection, Lesley Ann Smallman (Safeguarding Trustee).

WPCC works in accordance with Worcestershire County Council's Adult Protection Policy and Procedures. Staff, volunteers and trustees may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy will enable workers and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific adult protection issues.

#### **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Procedures**

WPCC believes that it is never acceptable for a vulnerable person to experience abuse of any kind and their safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in the organisation.

WPCC will work in accordance with Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board Inter-Agency Guidelines for Safeguarding Adults. In order to safeguard everyone involved in WPCC we have developed the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People's Policy Statement
- Safeguarding and Protecting Children Procedures
- Health and Safety and Risk Assessment Policy
- Safe Recruitment, Induction and Safe Working Practices
- Members' Agreement
- Complaints procedure
- Resolving problems – Disciplinary and Grievance procedures
- Management of Allegations against Staff and Volunteers
- Equal Opportunities
- Prevent Policy

Our policies apply to all workers and volunteers including trustees. They can be accessed via our website or on request.

## What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets' report suggests the following as the main types of abuse: -

- **Physical abuse**- including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse**- including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse**- including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse**- including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect and acts of omission**- including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse**- including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

In addition, the Care Act 2014 sets out the following areas which are recognised forms of abuse:

- Domestic violence – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.
- Modern Slavery – encompasses 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.

- Organisational abuse – including 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 will-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- 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.

WPCC also recognises:

- **Online abuse** - The use of the internet and other social networks such as Facebook and Twitter which causes exploitation, harassment or bullying to someone who lacks the capacity to appreciate the danger.
- **Abuse by landline or mobile device or any electronic method of communication**, the use of which encourages someone to purchase goods or services or which amounts to cold calling or a scam where the recipient is incapable of appreciating the nature of the communication and the possible consequences.

### What is Significant Harm?

Significant harm includes the impairment of physical, emotional, social or behavioural development”.

### Procedure in the event of a disclosure

It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse.

If you have any worries or concerns about a vulnerable adult, you have two options:

**Immediate threat to the safety of a vulnerable adult**

**Worcestershire Social Care Access Centre on 01905 768053**  
Or  
**The Police on 999**

**Other more general concerns about a child, e.g. welfare, care, safety**

**Contact Sue Jarvis (Safeguarding Trustee) or Tamara (Parent Carer rep) by calling 07955 760488**  
Or our office:

WPCC may choose to discuss the issue before making a referral by speaking to the Adult Protection Team.

## Record your concerns and actions

As part of this early enquiry stage, liaison will take place between WPCCC staff and the concerned person. The WPCCC staff will gather information and establish the nature of the situation. A decision on whether further action is necessary will be based on evidence presented.

If a referral is made, there is a legal right to access information documented in accordance with our procedures.

WPCCC agrees to work in accordance with the requirements of the Disclosure & Barring Service for reporting staff and volunteers deemed unsuitable for working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

### LADO – Worcestershire Children First

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is responsible for managing allegations against adults who work with young people. This involves working with Police, Children's Social Care, employers, and other professionals. The LADO does not conduct investigations directly, but rather oversees and directs them to ensure thoroughness, timeliness, and fairness. Ordinarily, to ensure impartiality, the LADO will not have direct contact with the adult against whom the allegation has been made, or the family of the young person involved, but will, as part of their role, ensure that these have information regarding outcomes.

If a person is unsure about referring to the LADO the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be contacted in the first instance after reading the leaflet for 'A Guide for Professionals and Volunteers Who Work with Children'

[https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20559/refer\\_to\\_childrens\\_social\\_care/1659/a\\_re\\_you\\_worried\\_about\\_an\\_adult\\_who\\_works\\_with\\_children](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20559/refer_to_childrens_social_care/1659/a_re_you_worried_about_an_adult_who_works_with_children) . The LADO should be contacted within one working day of the incident arising where it appears that an allegation or concerns about a person who works with children/young people has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a young person
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a young person
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to young people.

The Safeguarding Lead of WPCCC will need to assess whether to contact the LADO prior to discussing the allegation or concern with the individual. This will be undertaken on an individual basis depending on the level of risk to young people.

A formal referral can be made to

[https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20559/refer\\_to\\_childrens\\_social\\_care/1659/a\\_re\\_you\\_worried\\_about\\_an\\_adult\\_who\\_works\\_with\\_children](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20559/refer_to_childrens_social_care/1659/a_re_you_worried_about_an_adult_who_works_with_children) .

This is submitted securely to [LADO@worcschildrensfirst.org.uk](mailto:LADO@worcschildrensfirst.org.uk) . The LADO team can be contacted on 01905 846221.

Further information about what happens next, what happens at the end of an investigation, escalations, etc can be obtained the website above.

## **What to do if a disclosure is made to you - IF**

- A person tells you that they **have been** abused or
- A person tells you that they **are being** abused, or
- You suspect abuse or
- You witness abuse

## **THEN YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO DO SOMETHING**

**DO** – listen calmly.

**DO** – believe what they tell you.

**DO** – tell them they were right to tell you.

**DO** – tell them it is not their fault

**DO** – Explain areas of confidentiality and say it is your responsibility to tell someone in authority because we need to keep the individual safe. (It's your legal responsibility).

**DO**- Explain the procedure to the individual making the disclosure

**DON'T** ask lots of questions, that is the responsibility of a trained social worker.

**DON'T** ask questions that are leading, eg. Did your friend do that?

**DON'T** make promises to keep secrets

**DON'T** let them think you doubt what they have said. It takes enormous courage to talk about abuse.

**DON'T** say things that may make them feel responsible, e.g. why didn't you say anything before?

**DO KEEP CALM - DON'T PANIC** Follow this procedure for reporting.  
Acting in haste can be counterproductive.

**DO** – report it to the Designated Person but nobody else.

**DO** - make detailed written notes as soon as possible within 24 hours. Try to write down the actual words used.

**DO** - Sign them, include time and date, who was present and what was said.

The Designated Person for Adult Protection shall telephone and report the matter to the Access Centre. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing within 48 hours.

**Approved July 2024**  
**Under continuous review**