



Waddington Street Centre Protecting Vulnerable Adults from Abuse - Policy Statement

Waddington Street Centre (WSC) has a legal and moral responsibility to provide a duty of care to all vulnerable persons through implementing procedures to safeguard their well-being and protect them from harm.

This policy statement should be read in conjunction with information and guidance available through the County Durham Adult Safeguarding Board at <http://www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info/>

and

No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse setting out a code of practice for the protection of vulnerable adults - first published 20 March 2000 and last updated 22 January 2015.

Aim:

To define the practice and procedures for employees and volunteers, in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable people. It is aimed at protecting both the individual and the member of staff.

Objectives:

- To ensure that all employees and volunteers working with vulnerable people are carefully selected, understand and accept responsibility for the safety of those individuals in their care.
- To ensure that the vulnerable persons welfare is of paramount importance when undertaking any activities.
- To respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse and to ensure confidential information is restricted to the appropriate individuals within Waddington Street Centre and appropriate external agencies.

Who do we mean by vulnerable adults?

"Vulnerable adult", generally means a person aged 18 or over who has a condition of the following type:

- I. a learning or physical disability;
- II. a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or
- III. a reduction in physical or mental capacity.

Waddington Street Centre seeks to serve the needs of its service users. (People who receive services from WSC are known as Waddy members but are referred to in this policy as 'service users') In doing so, it takes seriously the welfare of all its service users who attend the centre or any other premises that the centre manages.

Waddington Street Centre aims to ensure that service users are welcomed into a safe, caring environment with a happy, friendly atmosphere.

Waddington Street Centre recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures which are designed to prevent, and to be alert to, such abuse. The Centre is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with vulnerable adults and to providing supervision.

Recommended procedures

1. Plan work to minimise situations where there may be the possibility of abuse.
2. Give all workers, staff and volunteers, clear roles and responsibilities.
3. Carry out a full recruitment procedure for all workers, staff and volunteers, to include appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service - DBS - checks and written references.
4. Use supervision and support as a means of protecting service users.
5. Establish a system whereby service users know they may talk with an independent person.
6. Ensure comprehensive training is available on the use of these guidelines.
7. Publicising and promoting the centre's complaints procedure.

1. How to deal with abuse

1.1 : Duty to prevent abuse and to report abuse

It is Waddington Street Centre's duty both to prevent abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected. It is not the responsibility of employees/volunteers to deal with suspected abuse but it is their responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate person. It is important that all employees/volunteers should be aware of their responsibilities if abuse is suspected.

The normal rule of client confidentiality cannot be observed when abuse is discovered or suspected.

When workers suspect, discover or are told/learn about abuse occurring in or outside the Centre, they should follow the reporting procedures outlined in Section 8.1.3 of the Centre's Operations Manual -Reporting Abuse - Procedure for Staff.

The Centre also complies with the 'Safeguarding Adults – Country Durham Inter-Agency Policy and Statement of Commitment, Supplementary Guidance and Procedural Framework and Flowcharts', details of which can be found in Section 7 of the Operations Manual.

1.2 : Types of abuse

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission

- Self-neglect

"Harm" should be taken to include not only ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical), but also "the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development".

1.3 Multiple forms of abuse may occur in an ongoing relationship or an abusive service setting to one person or to more than one person at a time, making it important to look beyond single incidents or breaches in standards, to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence or ignorance.

1.4 Some instances of abuse will constitute a criminal offence which may lead to criminal proceedings and appropriate intervention must take this into account.

1.5 In all cases priority must be given to ensuring the safety and care of the vulnerable adult/s.

2. Key issues in relation to intervention

All abuse harms the individual and should be investigated by Waddington Street Centre.

Risk - does the vulnerable adult appreciate and understand the nature and consequences of any risk they may be subject to and do they willingly accept such risk?

The vulnerable person's wishes are critical in determining what action to take. All people have a right to make choices, insofar as they are able, and maintain their independence even when this involves a degree of risk. Where an individual chooses to accept this risk, their wishes should be respected within their capacity to anticipate and understand the level and the possible consequences.

Self-determination - is the vulnerable adult able to make their own decisions and choices and do they wish to do so?

Where a vulnerable adult appears to be able to make informed decisions and choices and is not being intimidated the available options should be explored with them. Their wishes should be respected, unless these conflict with a statutory duty to intervene, or unless another person[s] is considered to be at risk. A refusal of help must not be allowed to deter responsible agencies from protecting other vulnerable people who may also be at risk of harm. In all circumstances the vulnerable adult should be consulted and involved in decision making.

Consent - did the person subject to abuse consent and did he or she consent willingly?

Action with which the vulnerable adult does not agree, or does not understand to what he or she is agreeing, may be abusive. Consent is a critical issue in defining when sexual or financial transactions might be deemed abusive and in determining whether to intervene.

The person's ability to understand the nature of the act or relationship is one dimension of this assessment and the other is an assessment of any pressure or intimidation they are subject to as a result of the perpetrator's authority or status, threats or intimidation, violence or fear of reprisals.

Capacity - does the person subject to abuse have the capacity for self-determination, the capacity to understand to what they are consenting, or alternatively the capacity to refuse?

The vulnerable adult's capacity is the key to action in that if someone has 'capacity' and declines assistance this limits the help that can be given to that person. It will not however limit the action that may be required to protect others who may be at risk of harm. In order to make sound decisions in these situations it will be necessary to assess the vulnerable adult's emotional, physical, intellectual and mental capacity in relation to self-determination and consent.

In determining what action to take, account should be taken of the rights of all people to make choices and take risks, also taking into account their capacity to make choices and take risks and also taking into account their capacity to make decisions about arrangements for investigating or managing the abusive situation.

3. Guiding Principles

Everyone is entitled to:

- privacy
- be treated with dignity
- lead an independent life and to be enabled to do so
- be able to choose how they lead their lives
- the protection of the law
- have their rights upheld regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background.

4. Legal

Criminal law - vulnerable adults are protected in the same way as any other person against criminal acts; thus if a person commits theft, rape or assault against a vulnerable adult they should be dealt with through the criminal justice system, in the same way as in cases involving any other victim.

5. Dealing with concerns and complaints

5.1 : All those making complaints, allegations or expressing concern, whether they be staff, service users, carers or members of the general public, should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will be treated confidentially
- They will be given support and afforded protection if necessary
- They will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner

- They will be kept informed of action that has been taken and its outcome

5.2: The objectives of an adult abuse investigation will be to:

- Establish matters of fact
- Assess the needs of the vulnerable adult for protection, support and redress and make them aware of the potential impact on themselves
- Decide what sanctions are necessary with regard to the perpetrator
- Decide what action should be taken if the service or its management have been culpable, ineffective or negligent.

6. Reporting Abuse - Procedure for staff

All staff have a duty to report concerns or allegations of abuse. Reporting these details, even when a colleague or the staff of another organisation may be involved, is essential. Managers have a duty to respond and provide effective support to staff at such times.

- Staff must ensure that the alleged victim is safe and supported
- Do not have discussion about the alleged abuse with the individuals involved or other staff
- Contact your manager, as soon as the alleged victim is safe. In the absence of either of these contact the Community Mental Health Team.
- If the manager is unavailable (or is the alleged perpetrator) you should contact the Chair of the Board of Directors.
- Record exactly what your concerns are, and why you have them. Be clear, factual and concise. Date and sign your recording
- If the alleged perpetrator is in your vicinity, do not confront them about the incident
- If you suspect that physical or sexual abuse has taken place, DO NOT assist the alleged victim to wash, bathe, change clothing or access food or drink. To do so could contaminate any evidence that the police would require. Durham City police must be contacted at the earliest possible moment in such instances and your manager will advise on this.
- Your manager will inform you of any further requirements from yourself regarding the allegation and any further action that will be required of you.
- You will receive effective and appropriate support from your manager following your report.
- If the alleged perpetrator is a staff member, the organisation's procedures for staff investigation, with possible suspension or removal from regular service user's contact duties, will be invoked.

The Manager must respond to all reported allegations of abuse.

- Record all details reported to you in a clear and concise manner
- Ensure that the alleged victim is safe and supported
- If the alleged perpetrator is another service user, ensure that they are also supported so that neither they nor anyone else is at risk
- Instruct the reporting staff member and others on duty of their responsibilities.

Date this policy was approved by the Board of trustees: 8th June 2020