

Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

Age Concern Voluntary Association for the Elderly Merstham, Redhill and Reigate (Age Concern MRR) will not tolerate the abuse of adults with care and support needs. It is committed to promoting wellbeing, preventing harm, and responding effectively if concerns are raised.

The organisation is committed to the aims of adult safeguarding to:

- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs.
- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible.
- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live.
- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned.
- Raise public awareness so that communities, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying, and responding to abuse and neglect.
- Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult.
- Address what has caused the abuse or neglect.

To contribute to meeting these aims we will:

- Manage our services in a way which minimises the risk of abuse occurring.
- Work with adults with care and support needs and other agencies to end any abuse that is taking place.

To achieve these aims we will:

- Ensure that all managers, employees, and volunteers have access to and are familiar with this safeguarding adult policy and procedure and their responsibilities within it.
- Ensure concerns or allegations of abuse are always taken seriously.
- Ensure the Mental Capacity Act is used to make decisions on behalf of those adults at risk who are unable to make decisions for themselves.
- Ensure all staff receive training in relation safeguarding adults at a level relevant to their role.
- Ensure that people using our services, and where relevant their relatives and their friends, have access to information about how to report concerns or allegations of abuse.
- Ensure there is a named lead person to promote adult safeguarding awareness and practice within the organisation.

This policy and procedure has been developed to be consistent with the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Definitions

Who does adult safeguarding apply to?

The definition of adults that adult safeguarding processes may apply to is set out in section 42 of the Care Act 2014. They are people who:

- Are aged 18 years or more, and
- have needs for care and support (whether or not these are currently being met),
- are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs are unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

This includes adults with physical, sensory, and mental impairments and learning disabilities, however those impairments have arisen, such as whether present from birth or due to advancing age, chronic illness or injury. Also included are people with a mental illness, dementia or other memory impairments, and people who misuse substances or alcohol. In this policy the term “adult” means people coming within this definition.

What is abuse?

Abuse can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual should always be considered. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. The following are examples of issues that would be considered as abuse or neglect:

- Physical abuse includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, unlawful or inappropriate restraint, or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- Domestic abuse is “an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse... by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality” (Home Office, 2013). Domestic violence and abuse may include psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; as well as so called ‘honour’ based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Sexual abuse includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult at risk has not consented or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- Psychological abuse includes 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 from services or supportive networks.

- Financial and material abuse includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- Modern slavery includes human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use the means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhuman treatment. Neglect and acts of omission includes 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 includes abuse based on a person's race, sex, disability, faith, sexual orientation, or age; other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment or hate crime/hate incident.
- Organisational abuse includes neglect and poor 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.
- Self-neglect covers a wide range of behaviours, such as neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviours such as hoarding. A safeguarding response in relation to self-neglect may be appropriate where:
 - a person is declining assistance in relation to their care and support needs, and
 - the impact of their decision, has or is likely to have a substantial impact on their overall individual wellbeing

What is an adult safeguarding enquiry?

Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 says that when the tests are met (an adult who is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect which they cannot protect themselves from because of their care and support needs) there must be an adult safeguarding enquiry.

The objectives of an adult safeguarding enquiry are to:

- Establish facts
- Ascertain the adult's views and wishes
- Assess the needs of the adult for protection, support and redress and how they might be met
- Protect from the abuse and neglect, in accordance with the wishes of the adult;
- Make decisions as to what follow-up action should be taken with regard to the person or organisation responsible for the abuse or neglect

- Enable the adult to achieve resolution and recovery

The Care Act does not specify what an enquiry will consist of, nor does it create any powers for carrying out an adult safeguarding enquiry. An adult safeguarding enquiry is simply the collection of whatever actions using existing powers, duties and processes is needed to meet the purposes. The benefit of putting the matter in to an adult safeguarding framework is:

- To ensure there is proper recognition of the abuse and neglect issue
- To help the multi-agency response to the concern do the best at involving the right organisations and people, sharing information between them, having a shared understanding of the risks and how to respond to them, and to minimise duplication of effort
- To give a focus on ensuring the care and support needs of the person are taken account of.

Raising Awareness

Everyone's responsibility – All staff and volunteers at Age Concern MRR have a responsibility to keep older people who need care and support safe from abuse and neglect.

Prevention – We will put sensible measures in place to prevent abuse, including the use of safe recruitment practices, promoting safe working practice and raising awareness of safeguarding.

Protection – We will provide policy, procedures, information and training to enable all Age Concern MRR staff and volunteers to identify and respond appropriately to concerns about abuse.

Partnership - Age Concern MRR will work in Partnership with statutory, regulatory and other relevant organisations to ensure that safeguarding concerns are responded to appropriately.

Empowerment – We will be person-centred and uphold rights in our safeguarding work.

Accountability - We aim to be transparent in our approaches and recognise the need for continuous learning and improvement.

Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding Concerns Manager

The Chief Officer for Age Concern MRR is the Safeguarding Concerns Manager and has the responsibility to decide whether it is appropriate to refer a safeguarding concern to the local authority and what other actions might be needed.

Organisational lead for safeguarding adults

The Chief Officer for Age Concern MRR is the Organisational lead for safeguarding adults and is responsible for ensuring this policy and procedure is reviewed and up to date, and that all staff and volunteers working for the organisation have appropriate training and information to fulfil their roles.

Expectations on all staff and volunteers

Anyone who may come in to contact with adults with care and support needs, whether in a volunteer or paid role, must understand their own role and responsibilities regarding adult safeguarding

- They must be aware of the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- They must keep their knowledge and skills up to date by meeting the training requirements expected of their role
- They must understand what is expected of them if they become aware that an adult with care and support needs is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect
- They must take all reasonable actions in line with those expectations
- They must take all reasonable actions to prevent adults with care and support needs from experiencing abuse and neglect

Expectations on managers

Managers of volunteers and staff must

- Ensure the people they manage are made aware of the expectations on them regarding adult safeguarding issues
- Have access to the support they need to meet those expectations

Trustees

Age Concern MRR trustees approve the Safeguarding Policy and have a duty of care to the charity, which includes taking the necessary steps to safeguard those at risk from abuse, managing risk and protecting the reputation of the charity.

Breaches of Policy

Failure to comply with the Age Concern MRR safeguarding policy may be managed in several ways, depending on the nature and consequences of any incident. In some cases, a combination of responses may be required.

- Local authority co-ordinated safeguarding investigation
- Police investigation
- Referral to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)
- People & Performance disciplinary process
- Serious incident reporting to The Charity Commission
- Internal review or co-operation with an external review

Safe Employment

The organisation is committed to achieving best practice in respect to the safe recruitment of employees and volunteers.

The organisation is committed to working within best practice as established by the Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS)

Equality Statement

Age Concern MRR is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and that promote equality of opportunity. Everyone who accesses our services or works for us in a paid or voluntary capacity should be safe, empowered to play a part in promoting their own welfare and that of others and able to live a life free from abuse. This applies to all, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or belief.