

Vale 50+ Strategy Forum

Safeguarding Policy

The Vale 50+ Strategy Forum recognises the need to ensure the appropriate safety and protection of vulnerable adults, children and young people. This Safeguarding Policy sets out how we will ensure our responsibilities around safeguarding are met.

The purpose of this policy

The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to:

- Provide adults at risk, children and young people with appropriate safety and protection.
- Allow all members to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues.

The Policy is split in to two distinct sections one covering the safeguarding of adults and one covering children and young people. The Forum recognises that although its primary focus and levels of contact are with those aged over fifty they still have a responsibility to ensure that considerations around children and young people are also met. More information regarding definitions and indicators of abuse and good practice guidelines are provided in the appendices and should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Safeguarding adults

The Forum strongly believes that everyone has the right to protection from harm. The purpose of this policy is to help Forum members understand their responsibilities to safeguard adults at risk and promote their welfare and to be clear about the actions they must take if they have concerns about a person's welfare.

Protection from abuse and neglect is an integral part of the policy and of the practice of all organisations working with, or coming into contact with, adults at risk. This includes the Forum.

Part 7 of the Social Services & WellBeing (Wales) Act 2014 defines an 'adult at risk' as someone who:

- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect
- Needs care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs)
- As a result of these needs is unable to protect themselves against abuse neglect, or the risk of either

People with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people and disabled people may fall within this definition.

The Forum believes that:

- All abuse/neglect of adults at risk contravenes their human rights.
- All adults at risk whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- Abuse/neglect of adults at risk is never acceptable and Forum members have a responsibility to report concerns to the Police and Vale of Glamorgan Council Safeguarding team. This can be done directly or through the Chairperson of the Forum but with full consideration to the need for confidentiality and to act promptly.
- When we work with partners, they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards for the protection of vulnerable adults in their programmes and must co-operate with each other on issues relating to the identification, investigation, treatment and prevention of abuse of vulnerable adults.
- We have a duty to promote the needs of older people and to ensure they have the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation.
- All suspicion and allegations of abuse and neglect will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately

The Forum recognises the need to work closely with appropriate agencies with regards to any concerns around safeguarding and will follow the following core values and principles:

- The right to privacy, dignity, independence, self-determination, choice, fulfilment and the maintenance of all the rights and entitlements associated with citizenship.

- A person's right to involvement in decision-making is promoted to the fullest capacity.
- A person is enabled to protect him/herself from harm.
- Involvement of others significant to the person's life is identified and supported.
- The response is appropriate and only as intensive as the situation demands.
- The adult at risk and the alleged abuser have the right to the protection of the law.
- The opportunity and right to comment or complain about the service received.
- The opportunity and right to independent advice and advocacy when requested. This will also apply to those who are incapable of making such a request but are deemed in need of such independent advice and advocacy.
- The awareness and understanding of other agencies, organisations and the public is raised and with it, a commitment to respond.

Definitions and indicators of abuse are detailed in Appendix A and good practice guidelines are detailed in Appendix B.

Safeguarding children and young people

The Forum strongly believes that all children and young people have a right to protection from harm. The purpose of this policy is to help Forum members understand their responsibilities to safeguard children and promote their welfare and to be clear about the actions they must take if they have concerns about a child's welfare.

All organisations which make provision for children and young people must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child / young person is paramount.
- All children and young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicion and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All members have a responsibility to report any concerns to the appropriate officer as soon as these concerns arise.

A child is defined by the Children Act 1989 as anyone less than 18 years of age. Everyone must follow the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008 and any Local Safeguarding Children Board protocols for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children. They must know who to contact to express concerns about a child's welfare.

Although the Forum does not provide services for children and young people it will through the nature of its activities come in to contact with children and young people and those providing services to them.

The Forum believes that:

- All child abuse contravenes children and young people's rights.
- All children and young people have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- The situation for all children and young people must be improved through promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation.
- Child abuse is never acceptable.
- We have a commitment to protecting children and young people with/for whom we work.
- When we work through partners, they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards for the safeguarding of children and young people in their programmes.

Definitions and indicators of abuse are detailed in Appendix A and good practice guidelines are detailed in Appendix B.

What does safeguarding mean for the Forum?

It is important that members have an understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and know who to contact for advice and support or to report a concern.

- All Forum members should receive training on adult safeguarding and children and young people as appropriate and in line with their role and involvement in the Forum and its activities.
- All Members must adhere to the Forum's Safeguarding Policy and good practice guidelines (Appendix B).

- All members should contact the Police or the Vale of Glamorgan Council Safeguarding Team if they have a concern about safeguarding. Due regard should be made to the need for confidentiality and to act promptly. It may also be necessary to contact the Chairperson of the Forum to make them aware of the situation. The relevant authorities will advise on this matter,

It is vital that all Forum members in contact with vulnerable people:

- Are aware of situations which may present risks.
- Plan and organise the work and the working environment so as to minimise risks.
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues of concern to be discussed.
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between Forum Members and other contacts so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged.
- Empower people – discuss their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what to do if there is a problem.

The Forum is committed to preventing abuse and supporting positive cultures and good practice and will work to achieve this by:

Awareness: We will ensure that members are aware of the issues of safeguarding and the risks to adults and children.

Prevention: We will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that all members minimise any perceived risks to vulnerable people they may be in contact with while representing the forum.

Reporting: We will ensure that members are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of people.

Responding: We will ensure that action is taken to support and protect people where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of members to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. There is however, a responsibility to act on any concerns and report them to the Vale of Glamorgan Council Safeguarding Team or the Police. It may also be necessary to advise

the Forum Chairperson and the relevant authorities will advise on this matter.

The Forum and the Council will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports their concerns that someone is, or may be, abusing a vulnerable person.

Where there is a complaint made, there may be three types of investigation (or a combination thereof):

- A criminal investigation by the Police.
- An official safeguarding investigation by the local authority in partnership with other bodies.
- A misconduct investigation by the Forum in line with the Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure.

The result of the police and safeguarding investigation may well influence the misconduct investigation, but not necessarily.

Every effort must be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. Information must be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection regulations.

Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) checks

The Independent Safeguarding Authority barring lists act as a workforce ban on those individuals who have harmed children, young people or vulnerable adults in their care. The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) define workforce as waged workers and volunteers. The only differential is that volunteers are entitled to a free safeguarding DBS check.

They add an extra layer of protection to pre-employment processes alongside Disclosure and Barring Scheme checks. Employers will be able to check applicants against the ISA lists. There is a list for working with children and young people and a separate list for working with adults.

As Members are not required in their current activities supporting and representing the Forum to undertake duties that would be defined to require DBS checks, members will not be required to undertake these checks. However this will be reviewed as when new activities are planned. It is the responsibility of the Executive Group (in consultation with the local authority) to determine if the need for any checks are then required. Where Members undertake relevant duties on behalf of another agency then it is a matter for that agency and the Member and is not the business of the Forum or Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Training Support and Advice

As part of our commitment to safeguarding the Forum will ensure that regular training opportunities are provided for Forum members and that safeguarding is a key element of the induction programme for new Executive Members.

Where necessary the Forum will seek advice and guidance from the Vale of Glamorgan Council and Glamorgan Voluntary Services on safeguarding matters.

Contacts for reporting safeguarding concerns:

- Adults - The Principal Officer, Protection and Policy on 01446 704862,
- Children - The Intake and Family Support during office hours on 01446 725202,
- The Emergency Duty Team outside of office hours on 029 20 788570
- Alternatively, you can contact the Police on 029 20 222111 and ask for your local Police Station

Note: The following appendices set out the definitions, guidelines and information contained in the Glamorgan Voluntary Services Safeguarding Policy as of July 2018. Some of the terminology maybe different to that contained in the Forum's draft Policy but they provide a useful resource and reference point.

Appendix A

DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE – Adults

- **Physical Abuse** – includes hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, undue restraint or inappropriate sanctions. Possible indicators include: multiple bruising, which is not consistent with the explanation given; cowering and flinching; unusually sleepy or docile.
- **Sexual Abuse** – includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not, or could not, consent and/or was pressured into consenting. Possible indicators include: unexplained and uncharacteristic changes in behaviour; excessive washing; deliberate self-harm.
- **Psychological Abuse** – includes threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Possible indicators include: anxiety, confusion or general resignation; loss of confidence; excessive or inappropriate craving for attention.
- **Financial Abuse** – includes theft, fraud, pressure around wills, property or inheritance, misuse or misappropriation of benefits. Possible indicators include: unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills; sudden withdrawal of money from accounts; personal possessions going missing.
- **Neglect and/or Acts of Omission** – includes failure to access medical care or services, failure to give prescribed medication, poor nutrition or lack of heating. Possible indicators include: poor hygiene and cleanliness; repeated infections; reluctant contact with health and social care agencies.

Whilst not classified as an individual category of abuse, racial and homophobia motivated abuse can take any of the above forms and needs to be noted. Domestic Abuse is a serious crime and must be treated as such. Victims of domestic abuse may also be vulnerable adults within the meaning of the Adult Protection procedures.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE – Children and Young People

The term child abuse is used to describe ways in which children and young people are harmed, usually by adults and often by those they know and trust.

There are four main types of abuse, though a child may experience more than one kind at any one time.

- **Physical Abuse** - Occasions when parents, carers, adults or other children deliberately inflict injuries on a child or knowingly do not prevent such injuries. It includes injury caused by hitting, shaking, biting, burning, giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison and attempts to drown or suffocate them.
- **Emotional abuse** – Occasions when adults fail to show children and young people due care and attention or threaten, use sarcasm, taunt or shout at a child / young person causing loss of self-confidence or self-esteem. These may also occur when an adult repeatedly ignores or fails to respond to a child's progress or places unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations constantly.
- **Neglect** – Occasions where adults fail to meet a child / young person's essential needs, such as adequate food, warmth, clothing and medical care. It also includes occasions where children and young people are left alone without proper supervision.
- **Sexual Abuse** – Occasions where males and females use children and young people to meeting their own sexual needs.

Good Practice Guidelines

All members should be actively encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are practical examples of how to create a positive, non-threatening culture and climate.

Promoting good practice

Abuse, particularly of a child, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand those feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate course of action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school, sports or arts environment or a social care setting. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with vulnerable people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, mentor or volunteer will have regular contact with vulnerable people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

Good practice in reality means:

- Always working in an open environment e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations.
- Being aware of personal space and keeping an appropriate distance.
- Treating all vulnerable people with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of vulnerable people first.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust, which empowers vulnerable people to share in the decision making process.
- Being an excellent role model e.g. not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children and young people.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act *in loco parentis*, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and / or other medical treatment to children or young people.

- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs or any extraordinary situation.
- Attaining written consent if required to transport children and young people in their cars.

To complement these guidelines the following is extracted from Glamorgan Voluntary Services code of conduct for working with vulnerable people and highlights their advice to what staff and volunteers must not do:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse vulnerable people.
- Develop physical, sexual relationships with vulnerable people.
- Develop relationships with vulnerable people, which could in any way be deemed inappropriate or exploitative.
- Act in ways that may be abusive or place vulnerable people at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice, which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Behave in an inappropriate or sexually provocative manner.
- Allow vulnerable people, with whom they are working, with to stay overnight at their home unsupervised.
- Sleep in the same room as vulnerable people on residential experiences.
- Do things of a personal nature that vulnerable people are able to do for themselves.
- Condone, or participate in the behaviour of vulnerable people, which is illegal, abusive or unsafe.
- Intentionally act in ways intended to shame, humiliate or degrade vulnerable people.
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular individuals to the exclusion of others.