



## **Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy**

### **Purpose of the Policy**

This policy has been designed to provide guidance for Richmond Good Neighbours (RGN) staff and volunteers if they suspect abuse or are party to a disclosure of abuse from a client or from a friend, relative or carer of a client. As an organisation that works with vulnerable adults, predominantly older people we recognise that we have a duty of care.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure adults at risk are protected from abuse and we are committed to doing so ; both through education of our staff and volunteers and by taking appropriate and timely action when a concern or incident arises.

### **Summary of Policy**

Staff and volunteers at RGN will be assisting vulnerable clients with simple tasks such as - shopping on behalf of a client or indeed taking the client shopping, driving to and from medical or dental appointments, transportation to and from social clubs or to meet with friends and occasionally gardening. We also offer a visiting and befriending service. In short, we offer most of the tasks of a non-specific nature such as might be offered by a 'good neighbour'. In our trustworthy and compassionate roles, clients may disclose that they are not being treated well, that they are not receiving the care/help they need or that they are being taken advantage of.

### **Should any such disclosure take place, the simple rule is**

**In office hours - discuss the disclosure immediately or as soon as is practicable with the RGN organiser. (02035384060)**

**Email: [organiser@richmondgoodneighbours.org.uk](mailto:organiser@richmondgoodneighbours.org.uk)**

**Out of office hours – Notify Richmond Council's Adult Access Team**

**Tel No 02088917971 (Richmond Council Adult Access Team)**

**Tel No 02087442442 (Richmond Council Emergency Out of Hours Team)**

**(Email: [organiser@richmondgoodneighbours.org.uk](mailto:organiser@richmondgoodneighbours.org.uk))**

***(Immediate action - If there is immediate risk to the adult at risk, you, or anyone else, and emergency action needs to be taken dial 999 to call the police or ambulance service.)***



**Staff and volunteers at RGN cannot be sworn to secrecy. The client needs to be made aware that disclosures are shared with the organiser and any other relevant parties.**

**If you are concerned that any client is experiencing abuse or neglect whether by an employee, carer, family member, neighbour or other, it is your responsibility to report any concern immediately.**

## **Scope of Policy**

### **Who is an 'adult at risk'**

The term 'adult at risk' directly replaces 'vulnerable adult' and refers to: An adult aged 18 years or over 'who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental, or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation' .

An adult at risk could be someone who:

- is elderly and frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment.
- has a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment.
- has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder.
- has a long-term illness/condition.
- is a carer such as a family member/friend who provides personal assistance and care to adults and is subject to abuse.
- is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision and needs care and support.

This is not an exhaustive list.

It is important to bear in mind that just because a person is old or frail or has a disability, does not mean they are inevitably 'at risk'.



## What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights, by any person or persons that results in significant harm.

It could be:

- A single act or repeated acts.
- An act of neglect or failure to act.
- Multiple acts, for example, an adult at risk may be neglected, and financially abused.

## Definition of abuse

For the purpose of this Safeguarding Adults policy the term abuse is defined as: A violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons which results in significant harm.

Abuse can take various forms:

**Physical:** hitting, pushing, pinching, shaking, misusing medication, scalding, the misuse or illegal use of restraint, inappropriate sanctions, exposure to heat or cold and not giving adequate food or drink.

**Sexual:** Including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult at risk has not consented, could not consent or was pressured into consenting, including watching sexual activity.

**Psychological:** includes threats of harm or abandonment, being deprived of social or any other sort of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling behaviour or intimidation, coercion and bullying.

**Financial / material:** use of a person's property, assets, income, funds or any resources without their informed consent or authorisation.

**Neglect or acts of omission:** Ignoring medical or physical needs, failing to allow access to appropriate health, social care and educational services, and withholding the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition, hydration or heating.

**Discriminatory:** Including racist, sexist behaviour or harassment based on a person's ethnicity, race, culture, sexual orientation, age or disability, and any other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

**Institutional abuse:** Mistreatment or abuse or neglect of an adult at risk by a regime or individuals within settings and services that adults at risk live in or use, that violate the person's dignity, resulting in lack of respect for their human rights.



## **Procedure for staff and volunteers to follow if abuse is suspected or disclosed**

If you are concerned that any adult at risk is experiencing abuse or neglect, whether it is by an employee, carer, family member, neighbour or other you should gain the full facts and circumstances and decide on the best course of action. A decision should never be made unilaterally

- 1) Make every effort to ensure the person understands why a referral is advised and what it will entail.
- 2) Consider whether the adult at risk has capacity. This includes thinking about:
  - Awareness: Is the person aware of the choice he/she is making?
  - Consequences: Can the person say and understand what the consequences of their actions will be?
  - Communicate: Has that choice been communicated?
- 3) Is the person's ability to make an informed decision affected by the abuse that is occurring? If the person has capacity and agrees to a referral, then RGN should explain to the adult at risk what will be shared with other organisations.
- 4) If after discussion with the adult at risk, they refuse to consider any intervention; their wishes will be respected unless:
  - There is a public interest, for example, not acting will put other adults or children at risk
  - There is a duty of care to intervene, for example, a crime has been or may be committed. Please see 'Suspected crime' see below.

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If no referral is made in line with the person's wishes, then the situation should be monitored and reviewed later. In the meantime, all other avenues of support should be explored.

### **Suspected crime**

The police should be informed if a criminal activity is suspected. The police must be involved if:

- There is an allegation from an adult to another person of sexual abuse
- There is a suspicion that sexual abuse has occurred
- There has been an alleged or suspected case of physical injury that has caused harm to an adult constituting an assault, actual or grievous bodily harm
- An alleged or suspected case of cruelty, including where an adult is ill-treated or neglected
- There are allegations or suspicions that involve unusual circumstances e.g. organised or institutional abuse
- There is an alleged or suspected case of financial abuse

### **What RGN will do to reduce the risk of harm**

Safeguarding training is mandatory for all staff and for key volunteers. Staff may also access higher level safeguarding training when necessary to their role. Identified staff and volunteers will undergo a Disclosure and Barring Services check.

### **Logging and monitoring safeguarding**

The organiser will file a report of any reported incidents of alleged abuse. A review and follow up would be carried out and the situation monitored.

Safeguarding concerns are also recorded on the safeguarding register.

### **Further information**

For more information on Richmond upon Thames safeguarding policy and procedures

[www.richmond.gov.uk/services/adult\\_social\\_care/safeguarding\\_adults](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/adult_social_care/safeguarding_adults)