

Adult Protection Policy

Introduction

The safety and welfare of vulnerable adults is of the utmost importance. It is the duty of all our staff & volunteers to protect each vulnerable adult from abuse and to be alert to the possibility of abuse. Staff and volunteers should familiarise themselves with Croydon's Adult Protection procedures, in particular, the document "A Guide for Frontline Staff and Volunteers"

Definitions

Vulnerable adults are people over 18, who are in need of care and unable to protect themselves because of either a mental or learning disability; a physical disability; age or illness.

People who abuse are often well known to their victims but can be strangers.

They might be a relative, partner, son or daughter, friend or neighbour, a paid voluntary worker, or a health or social care worker. They could also be another vulnerable adult or service user.

Recognition

The most common types of abuse are:

Physical abuse: this is usually the use of force to cause pain and injury and signs might include burns, bruising, scratches, or accidents that cannot be explained.

Also included is misuse of medication or forcing someone, for example, to stay in a care home against their wishes.

Neglect: this is when a vulnerable adult does not have their basic needs met, such as adequate food or warmth or help with personal hygiene. Signs might include deteriorating health, appearance or mood.

Financial abuse: this is when a vulnerable adult is exploited for financial gain.

Often valuables will go missing or there may be a change in financial circumstances that cannot be explained.

Sexual abuse: this includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts which the vulnerable adult has not or could not consent to or was pressurised or manipulated into. Signs can include changes in behaviour or physical discomfort.

Psychological abuse: this might be emotional abuse such as threats of harm or abandonment, enforced isolation, blaming or controlling behaviour, or verbal and racial insults. Signs may be fear, confusion or disturbed sleep.

Discriminatory abuse: this includes any sort of abuse based on a vulnerable adult's race, gender or impairment such as their mental or physical health.

Institutional abuse: this is poor professional practice, including neglect, and can take the form of isolated incidents right through to ill treatment or gross misconduct

Action to be taken

It is responsibility of all staff to report abuse.

If the vulnerable adult is in danger, first ensure they are safe and if immediate help is needed, call the emergency services on 999.

If abuse is discovered or suspected, the abuse must in all cases be reported at the earliest opportunity to the local Social Services. Action will then be taken to ensure the vulnerable adult is protected in the future.

Care To Listen counsellors, student counsellors or volunteer counsellors who abuse will be subject to the BACP disciplinary procedures. Any such person will be immediately reported to the BACP by one of the Service Directors.

Where appropriate the police will always be informed.

Reporting procedures for cases of alleged/suspected abuse

Only ask the person sufficient questions to establish what has happened i.e. accidental or possible abuse.

Inform either of the Service Directors at the earliest opportunity

If danger exists, ensure the person and any other vulnerable adults are protected.

If the person is seriously injured seek immediate medical treatment. Immediately report the incident to either Service Director and adhere to existing policies e.g. Health and Safety and to local Adult Protection Procedures.

Be careful not to destroy or contaminate evidence.

As soon as possible detailed notes should be made including when and to whom in the local Social Services Department the abuse has been reported.

Documentation is vital as evidence might be required for criminal proceedings at a later date.

If the suspected abuser is a member of staff, the matter will be dealt with through Care To Listen's and the B.A.C.P's disciplinary procedures. The police could be involved and s/he could be suspended pending an investigation.

Safe Recruitment Procedures

Care To Listen's recruitment procedures require all counsellors; student counsellors and volunteer counsellors will have to provide detailed information, a current DBS disclosure and references.

Individuals are then interviewed and references requested. Only on receipt of satisfactory references will an offer of a position with Care To Listen be made.