



Owl Blue Safeguarding Adults Policy

Summary

Owl Blue recognises that the welfare of adults at risk is paramount and that Owl Blue will:

- Treat all adults using our services with respect
- Carefully recruit, select, and train all staff and volunteers
- Respond to concerns and allegations appropriately
- Be guided by Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Procedures and The Care Act 2014

When there are concerns about the welfare of any adult at risk all staff or volunteers in the organisation are expected to share those concerns with the Board of Directors immediately.

The Board of Directors are responsible for:

- Monitoring and recording concerns
- Concerns about the behaviour of staff or volunteers in Owl Blue will be referred without delay to the Board of Directors, and if appropriate, the police if a crime may have been committed

The legal definition of the term "adult at risk" refers to any person aged 18 years and over who:

- Has needs for care and support **and**
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect **and**
- As a result of those care needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

This 3-point test is used to ascertain if a safeguarding duty exists. The test can be applied to any adult, including people with learning disabilities, physical or sensory impairments, medical conditions, dementia, brain injury, elderly people, and family carers.

Care and Support Statutory Guidance Issued under the Care Act 2014

Government guidance is clear that all organisations working with adults at risk, families, parents, and carers have a duty of care. It is important to remember that adults at risk can also abuse and that such incidents fall into the remit of this policy.

The Care Act 2014 has six key principles which should inform the way in which all staff at SMG should work with adults at risk. They are:

1. **Empowerment:** People are asked what they want from a safeguarding process and this directly informs what happens.
2. **Prevention:** People receive clear and simple information about types of abuse and how to seek help.
3. **Proportionality:** Professionals will only get involved as much as is needed.
4. **Protection:** People get help to report abuse and to take part in any safeguarding process to the extent that they want or are able.
5. **Partnership:** People understand that personal and sensitive information is only shared where necessary and professionals work together to support them.
6. **Accountability:** People understand the role of professionals and others involved in their lives.

What constitutes abuse and neglect?

The term 'abuse' can be subject to wide interpretation. For the purpose of these procedures abuse is defined as '*a violation of individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons*'.

Abuse may be:

- A single act or repeated acts
- An act of neglect or a failure to act
- Multiple acts, for example, an Adult at Risk may be neglected and also financially abused

It is important to remember that at the point of deciding whether an act, or failure to act, constitutes abuse, the intent of an alleged abuser is not an issue for consideration.

Who abuses adults?

Anyone can be an abuser – relatives, partners, people paid to provide care and services, volunteers, neighbours, friends, and strangers.

Most abusers are people close to the adult who are loved and trusted by them. However, some people will deliberately abuse adults they see as an easy target.

Where does abuse take place?

Abuse can occur anywhere. People can be abused at home, in care/nursing homes, day centres, or any place where the adult should be safe.

Additionally, the Care Act 2014 outlines and expands the forms of abuse covered within the scope of Adult Safeguarding - these include:

- *Physical*
- *Sexual*
- *Psychological and Emotional, including online abuse*
- *Domestic Abuse, including honour-based violence*
- *Financial or material*
- *Modern Slavery, including Sexual Exploitation*
- *Discriminatory*
- *Organisational*
- *Neglect and acts of omission*
- *Self-neglect*

Definitions

Physical Abuse includes

- *Hitting*
- *Slapping*
- *Pushing*
- *Kicking*
- *Misuse of medication*
- *Inappropriate physical restraint*
- *Inappropriate physical sanctions*
- *Rough handling / inappropriate moving and handling techniques*

Sexual abuse includes:

- *Involvement in any sexual activity to which the adult at risk has not consented, could not consent or was pressured into consenting*
- *Rape*
- *Sexual Assault*
- *Other sexual acts*
- *Pornography*
- *Also includes preparatory acts....*

Psychological abuse can include:

- *Threats of harm or abandonment*
- *Emotional abuse*
- *Deprivation of contact / denial of contact with visitors*
- *Humiliation*
- *Blaming*
- *Control or coercion*

- *Intimidation*
- *Harassment*
- *Verbal abuse*
- *Isolation or unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks*

Domestic Abuse

- *Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse*
- *Between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members*
- *Irrespective of gender or sexuality*

Financial or material abuse includes:

- *Theft and fraud or exploitation*
- *Taking money or property*
- *Signing a deed, will , power of attorney*
- *Through deception*
- *Coercion*
- *Undue influence*
- *Using without permission*
- *Property*
- *Possessions*
- *Benefits*
- *Scams*

Modern Slavery

- *Slavery*
- *Human trafficking*
- *Forced labour*
- *Domestic servitude*

Discriminatory Abuse includes

- *Discrimination and harassment on grounds of:*
- *Culture*
- *Race*
- *Religion*
- *Gender*
- *Sexual orientation*
- *Age*
- *Physical/mental disability or impairment*
- *Mental ill health*

Organisational Abuse

- *Covers a spectrum of abuse from*
- *Isolated incidents of poor or unsatisfactory practice.....*
- *To widespread and persistent ill treatment or gross misconduct*
- *Organisational abuse is more likely when:*

- *Staff are working alone without adequate supervision*
- *There is an overcrowded working environment*
- *Staff morale is low*
- *Staff lack motivation*
- *There is no understanding about the needs of the service user group*
- *There is confusion about the overriding loyalty being to colleagues rather than residents and professional standards.*

Neglect (acts of omission) include

- *Ignoring medical/physical care needs*
- *Failure to provide access to appropriate:*
- *Health, social care or educational services*
- *Withholding the necessities of life:*
- *Medication*
- *Adequate nutrition / fluids*
- *Heating and shelter*

Self-Neglect

- *Can include:*
- *Neglecting to care for one's personal*
- *Hygiene*
- *Health*
- *Surroundings*
- *Hoarding*

Mental Capacity

Owl Blue fully recognises and upholds the 5 key principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 in all aspects of its work by:

- *Presuming each adult at risk has capacity*
- *Supporting individuals to make their own decisions*
- *Recognising the right for individuals to make their own informed decisions, even if they may make a poor decision*
- *Making sure that whatever Owl Blue does for adults at risk who lack capacity is in their best interests*
- *Making sure that anything Owl Blue is the least restrictive action for the individual*

In relation to safeguarding, we will use these principles to guide our response in how we work with adults at Owl Blue services, and work with the Local Authority to access specialist independent advocacy where this is required.

Recruitment, Selection, and Training

Owl Blue follows a selection policy of:

- Respect for diversity;
- Ethical decision making;
- **Selection** according to merit;
- Equal treatment for all; and.
- Procedural fairness.

Data Protection and Security of Information

Owl Blue has a Data Protection Policy in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 1998.

Whistle-Blowing

Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear or repercussion

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Board of Directors/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of vulnerable adults may be involved.

This means adults should

- Report any behaviour by colleagues that raise concern
- All adults working in regulated settings should know and follow relevant safeguarding policy and procedures. All staff have a duty to report any safeguarding concerns.
- **Disclosures**

Disclosure of abuse or suspected abuse may be communicated verbally or through behaviour by an adult at risk, or another adult and it is important for all staff and volunteers Owl Blue.

Let the person speak / communicate - do not interrupt or make comment

- *Remember as much as you can and make a physical record immediately afterwards*
- *Clarify the facts*
- *Assume the person is being truthful*

And where necessary

- *Ensure the safety of the person, with medical treatment or assistance as required*
- *Preserve evidence, including not removing any clothing, discouraging washing / bathing, and not alerting the alleged source of harm*

Remember:

- **Do not delay**
- **Make careful recording of anything you observe or are told**

When Recording notes remember to be.

- *Brief*
- *Relevant*
- *Factual*
- *Include all Details*

If you are aware of or suspect abuse it is your duty to take action to protect others

Record and report.