

Adult Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Some individuals who use Crawley Community Action (CCA) services may be classified as "vulnerable adults." CCA firmly believes that abuse of any kind against vulnerable adults is completely unacceptable. We recognise our responsibility to protect the welfare of all vulnerable adults using our services.

Aim of the Policy

This policy aims to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults by providing clear procedures and outlining the responsibilities of all staff members, volunteers, and trustees.

Who is a Vulnerable Adult?

A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or over who:

Has care and support needs (regardless of whether those needs are being met)

Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect.

Due to their care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from the risk or experience of abuse and neglect. (Chapter 14, Care Act 2014)

Note: Individuals under the age of 18 are covered by the CCA Child Safeguarding Policy.

What is Abuse?

Abuse can take many forms and occur in various environments and situations.

Types of abuse include physical abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse and financial abuse.

(See Appendix 2 for detailed definitions of each type of abuse.)

Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff members and volunteers must remain vigilant and alert to any signs that a vulnerable adult may be at risk. If there is any suspicion that a vulnerable adult is being abused or neglected, staff and volunteers must follow the outlined procedures immediately. All concerns must be documented using the Reporting Form (Appendix 1).

Designated Safeguarding Lead for Adults

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Adults (DSL/A) at CCA is The Charity Chief Executive Officer.

The DSL/A is responsible for:

- Receiving and managing safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are followed.
- Liaising with external safeguarding authorities when necessary.
- Providing support and guidance to staff and volunteers.

Reporting and Responding to Concerns

1. **If you suspect abuse or neglect:**
 - Report your concern immediately to the DSL/A.
 - If the DSL/A is unavailable, report to your line manager or another senior manager.
 - In cases of immediate danger, contact the police right away.
2. **Recording Concerns:**
 - Document all concerns using the Reporting Form (Appendix 1).
 - Include details such as the individual's name, description of the concern, and any evidence.
3. **Confidentiality:**
 - Maintain confidentiality of all safeguarding concerns.
 - Information should only be shared with those who need to know, such as safeguarding authorities or relevant internal staff.
 - Information will be shared appropriately and securely in accordance with our Confidentiality and Information Security Policy and the Pan Sussex safeguarding procedures.

Underpinning the reporting procedure

Always talk to the vulnerable adult in the first instance about what they want to happen. At each stage of the process, keep them informed of any developments and ensure that they have access to any support they may need. Wherever possible, informed consent should be obtained. However, if a crime has been committed, reporting this is the first priority in line with the *Principles of Adult Safeguarding* on page 3 of this policy.

Guidance when responding

It is important for the staff member/volunteer to:

- Remain calm and try not to show shock or disbelief
- Listen carefully
- Reassure the person
- Explain that you will need to share the information and who with

Do not:

- Press the person for further details
- Promise to keep secrets
- Make promises you can't keep
- Be judgemental
- Break the confidentiality shared between the vulnerable adult, yourself and the manager
- Ask leading questions

Training and DBS Checks

The CCA Chief Executive Officer will ensure that all staff and volunteers working with vulnerable adults have a DBS check at the appropriate level in place before they start working with clients. All staff members and volunteers should be aware of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy.

Staff and volunteers will also receive regular refresher training appropriate to their roles to ensure continued awareness and compliance with safeguarding best practices.

Principles of Adult Safeguarding

This policy is based on the following guiding principles:

PRINCIPLE	IN PRACTICE
Empowerment – People are supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent.	<i>“I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.”</i>
Prevention – It is better to take action before harm occurs.	<i>“I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.”</i>
Proportionality – The least intrusive response to the risk presented.	<i>“I am sure that the professionals will work in my interests as I see them, and will only get involved as much as needed.”</i>
Protection – Support and representation for those in greatest need.	<i>“I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want.”</i>
Partnership – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.	<i>“I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me.”</i>
Accountability – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.	<i>“I understand the role of everyone involved in my life, and so do they.”</i>

Legal framework

This policy is aligned with the Pan Sussex Multi-Agency Policy & Procedures for Safeguarding Adults, which provides the local safeguarding framework for all agencies operating across Sussex.

This policy is informed by, and adheres to:

Mental Capacity Act (2005)

Human Rights Act (1998)

Equality Act (2010)

Care Act (2014)

Linked Policies

- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Lone Worker Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Information Security Policy

Monitoring information

Revision No.	Date	Summary of Change
1	August 2016	Policy created
2	August 2017	Review date added; volunteers included; enhanced DBS check to be in place before work with clients starts
3.	July 2021	Name changes, including Protection Officer. Review to be annual.
4.	October 2022	CEO Name updated. Clarification of Principles listed on pg. 3. Reporting Form updated include details about type of abuse or neglect.
5.	July 2023	Reference to Child Protection Policy amended to Safeguarding Children Policy.
6.	Sept 2024	Named changed to Adult Safeguarding Policy. Role changed to 'Designated Safeguarding Lead for Adults'. Reporting and Responding to Concerns amended for clarity.
7	July 2025	References to Pan Sussex Multi-Agency Policy & Procedures included. Commitment to ongoing regular safeguarding refresher training for staff and volunteers added.

Policy owner
CEO

Review Date
November 2026

Appendix 1

Reporting Form

This form should be used in all allegations and/or suspicions of abuse. It is important that all details are accurate, therefore it is essential that this form is filled in within an hour of the incident and that the form be lodged with the line manager within 24 to 36 hours of the incident.

Case Number	
Name of person making the report (If they wish, this person may remain anonymous – see CCA's Whistleblower policy)	
Position, ie job title/ volunteer role (If they wish, this person may remain anonymous – see CCA's Whistleblower policy)	
Date and time of incident	
Name of person at risk of / being abused	
What makes the person vulnerable, eg what are their care and support needs are.	
What type of abuse or neglect the person is thought to have experienced?	
Has the person consented to a referral being made to adult safeguarding services? Seeking consent for such a referral is considered best practice. However, a referral will always be made regardless of consent when we have concerns that a vulnerably person is at risk of neglect or abuse.	
Age of person at risk of / being abused	
Name of alleged abuser	
Record here, in as much detail as you can, what was said and by whom using each individual's own words. If nothing was said, but is based on something you observed, please describe exactly what you observed.	

(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.)	
Date and time record completed	
Signature <i>(If they wish, this person may remain anonymous – see CCA's Whistleblower policy)</i>	

For line manager's use

Name of line manager	
Date and time report received	
Action taken at time of incident	
Were police/authorities/social workers informed?	Yes/no (Delete as necessary)
Follow up action taken	
Outcome of any enquiries by police etc	
Signature of line manager	
Date of signature	
Review date(s)	
Case reference number	VA
Case closed (give date)	

Any papers, supporting evidence, police/social or any other authority reports pertaining to the case should be noted with the case reference number and be attached or filed with this form. Case will be deemed to be spent five years after the case is closed, unless further action becomes necessary at which time the spent date will be extended by three yearly intervals. A case can only be closed when the line manager and the CEO are satisfied with the outcome.

APPENDIX 2 – DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

(This list is not exhaustive.)

Physical abuse including:

- assault
- hitting
- slapping
- pushing
- misuse of medication
- restraint
- inappropriate physical sanctions
- spitting

Domestic violence including:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional abuse
- so called 'honour' based violence

Sexual abuse including:

- rape
- indecent exposure
- sexual harassment
- inappropriate looking or touching
- sexual teasing or innuendo
- sexual photography
- subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts
- indecent exposure
- sexual assault
- any sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting

Psychological abuse including:

- emotional abuse
- threats of harm or abandonment
- deprivation of contact
- humiliation
- blaming
- controlling
- intimidation
- coercion
- harassment
- verbal abuse
- cyber bullying
- isolation
- unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks

Financial or material abuse including:

- theft
- fraud
- internet scamming
- coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions
- the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

Modern slavery encompasses:

- slavery
- human trafficking
- forced labour and domestic servitude.
- traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment
- grooming

Read Modern slavery: how the UK is leading the fight for further information.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/328096/Modern_slavery_booklet_v12_WEB_2_.pdf

Find more information about Modern Slavery at <https://modernslavery.co.uk/>

Discriminatory abuse including forms of:

- harassment
- slurs or similar treatment:
- because of race
- gender and gender identity
- age
- disability
- sexual orientation
- religion

Read Discrimination: your rights for further information.

<https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights/types-of-discrimination>

Organisational abuse

Including neglect and poor care 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.

Neglect and acts of omission including:

- ignoring medical emotional or physical care needs

- failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services
- the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

Self-neglect

This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. It should be noted that self-neglect may not prompt a section 42 enquiry. An assessment should be made on a case by case basis. A decision on whether a response is required under safeguarding will depend on the adult's ability to protect themselves by controlling their own behaviour. There may come a point when they are no longer able to do this, without external support.

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more. Professionals and others should look beyond single incidents or individuals to identify patterns of harm, just as the CQC, as the regulator of service quality, does when it looks at the quality of care in health and care services. Repeated instances of poor care may be an indication of more serious problems and of what we now describe as organisational abuse. In order to see these patterns it is important that information is recorded and appropriately shared.

Patterns of abuse vary and include:

- serial abuse, in which the perpetrator seeks out and 'grooms' individuals. Sexual abuse sometimes falls into this pattern as do some forms of financial abuse
- long-term abuse, in the context of an ongoing family relationship such as domestic violence between spouses or generations or persistent psychological abuse
- opportunistic abuse, such as theft occurring because money or jewellery has been left lying around

Domestic abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

A new offence of coercive and controlling behaviour in intimate and familial relationships was introduced into the Serious Crime Act 2015. The offence will impose a maximum 5 years imprisonment, a fine or both.

The offence closes a gap in the law around patterns of coercive and controlling behaviour during a relationship between intimate partners, former partners who still live together, or family members, sending a clear message that it is wrong to violate the trust of those closest to you, providing better protection to victims experiencing continuous abuse and allowing for earlier identification, intervention and prevention.

The offence criminalising coercive or controlling behaviour was commenced on 29 December 2015. Read the accompanying statutory guidance for further information.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-guidance-framework-controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-in-an-intimate-or-family-relationship>

Financial abuse

Financial abuse is the main form of abuse investigated by the Office of the Public Guardian both amongst adults and children at risk. Financial recorded abuse can occur in isolation, but as research has shown, where there are other forms of abuse, there is likely to be financial abuse occurring. Although this is not always the case, everyone should also be aware of this possibility.

Potential indicators of financial abuse include:

- change in living conditions
- lack of heating, clothing or food
- inability to pay bills/unexplained shortage of money
- unexplained withdrawals from an account
- unexplained loss/misplacement of financial documents
- the recent addition of authorised signers on a client or donor's signature card
- sudden or unexpected changes in a will or other financial documents

This is not an exhaustive list, nor do these examples prove that there is actual abuse occurring. However, they do indicate that a closer look and possible investigation may be needed. Read report on The Financial Abuse of Older People

<http://www.cpa.org.uk/information/reviews/financialabuse240408%5B1%5D.pdf>

- See more at:

<http://sussexsafeguardingadults.procedures.org.uk/pkyhq/empowerment-prevention-and-achieving-the-adult-s-desired-outcomes/what-constitutes-abuse-and-neglect#sthash.tIMclS6E.dpuf>