



Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Contact Details:

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FOREWORD

The Friends of Barnes Common (FoBC) is committed to ensuring peoples individual rights and freedoms are protected and promoted through eliminating: neglect, abuse, exploitation, harassment and discrimination. We believe a safe organisation is one whose governing body, its employees and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard vulnerable adults. FoBC is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who participate in our services are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of such abuse.

A vulnerable adult as described by the Care Standards Act 2000 is a person aged 18 or over who has a condition of the following type

- A learning or physical disability
- A physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise including addiction to alcohol or drugs
- A reduction in physical or mental capacity

The Care Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as a person who is 18 years+

- who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs
- is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect
- Who as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk or the experience of abuse or neglect

Abuse can include physical, financial, material, sexual, psychological, discriminatory, emotional abuse and neglect. Abuse can take place in any setting and can be perpetuated by anyone.

FoBC Mission Statement

Barnes Common is designated as a local nature reserve (LNR) and a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). FoBC works with a range of partners to protect and enhance Barnes Common for local residents, visitors and for the enjoyment of future generations.

Links to other policies

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect vulnerable adults and should be read in conjunction with the FoBC Health and Safety Policy, FoBC Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy, FoBC Code of Conduct, FoBC Equal Opportunities Policy and FoBC Recruitment Policy.

Definitions

Vulnerable Adult: An Adult (a person aged 18 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'. (*Definition from 'No Secrets' March 2000 Department of Health*)

This could include people with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people and people with a physical disability or impairment. It is important to include people whose condition and subsequent vulnerability fluctuates. It may include an individual who may be vulnerable as a consequence of their role as a carer in relation to any of the above.

It may also include victims of domestic abuse, hate crime and anti-social abuse. The persons' need for additional support to protect themselves may be increased when complicated by additional factors, such as, physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, drug or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, poverty or homelessness.

Abuse: Abuse of a vulnerable adult may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may occur as a result of a failure to undertake action or appropriate care tasks. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur where a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not, or cannot, consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the individual.

Vulnerable Adult Protection: this is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to actions undertaken to protect vulnerable adults who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

DBS: The Disclosure and Barring Service is the government agency which replaced the Criminal Records Bureau and Independent Safeguarding Agency. It processes requests for criminal record checks to prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable adults.

Adult Social Services: The Department of Health's recent 'No secrets' guidance document requires that authorities develop a local framework within which all responsible agencies work together to ensure a coherent policy for the protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse.

Safeguarding Adults Board: All local authorities have a Safeguarding Adults Board, which oversees multi-agency work aimed at protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults. It is normal practice for the board to comprise of people from partner organisations who have the ability to influence decision making and resource allocation within their organisation. As an example the details for the local Lambeth Safeguarding Adults Board is in the 'Further Help and Resources' section of this pack. You will need to research the contact details for your local Boards.

The Police: The Police play a vital role in Safeguarding Adults with cases involving alleged criminal acts. It becomes the responsibility of the police to investigate allegations of crime by preserving and gathering evidence. Where a crime is identified, the police will be the lead agency and they will direct investigations in line with legal and other procedural protocols.

Safeguarding Policy: This is the statement of intent setting out the principles the group will use to guide its decisions and plan of action.

Safeguarding Procedures: The particular courses of action that the group will use.

Safeguarding practices: The actual performance and carrying out of the procedures.

Staff: All references to staff cover paid staff, whether permanent, full time, part time or temporary along with interns, trustees and volunteer post-holders, including assistant posts, as well as other volunteers who may in the course of FoBC activities have exposure to vulnerable adults.

FoBC VULNERABLE ADULT & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

FoBC undertake to ensure:

- Staff are aware of indicators of abuse and know how to share their concerns appropriately
- Staff where applicable are subject to thorough recruitment procedures
- Staff are given appropriate support and training
- All allegations and suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately

All staff play a crucial role in helping to identify welfare concerns and indicators of possible abuse or neglect at an early stage. FoBC is committed to referring these concerns via the Nominated Safeguarding Person (NSP) to the

Richmond Council Adult Access Team 0208 891 7971
Emergency Outside Office Hours 0208 744 2442

ALWAYS PHONE 999 IF THE VULNERABLE ADULT IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

In order to ensure vulnerable adults are adequately protected we will ensure

- We have a Nominated Safeguarding Person (NSP) and a nominated Safeguarding trustee who attends multiagency training at least once a year.
- Staff involved in delivering activities to adults receive training in basic vulnerable adults protection awareness every three years.
- We take all reasonable steps to recruit staff safely, using thorough recruitment procedures and once in post managing and supervising staff regularly.
- All staff to read and understand the vulnerable adults policy and be aware of the indicators of abuse and how to respond to concerns or disclosures of abuse by vulnerable adults (*Appendix A & B*)
- All staff comply with the FoBC code of conduct
- Contact details for the NSP and nominated trustee and how to raise a concern are clearly visible on site and on the FoBC website
- The vulnerable adults policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the NSP and board of trustees

The Role of the Nominated Safeguarding Person (NSP)

The NSP takes the lead responsibility for protection of vulnerable adults including support for other staff and information sharing with other agencies, developing policies and staff training.

The NSP will

- Refer suspected abuse/neglect of vulnerable adults to the Richmond Adult Access team. Urgent concerns must be reported directly even if the NSP is not available
- Report allegations made against members of staff to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO). This is known as the duty to refer.
- Develop and update vulnerable adult and other safeguarding policies ensuring staff are made aware of their responsibilities, and participants in FoBC activities know how to make a complaint or raise a concern
- Ensure that confidential records are kept of any concerns about a vulnerable adult and of any conversation or referrals to statutory agencies.
- Provide support and advice to all members of staff within the setting regarding safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure all staff have appropriate vulnerable adult protection and safeguarding training
- Develop an e-safety policy and clear rules regarding the use of the internet, social media, mobile phones and any other modern technology tools within the workplace

Recruitment Induction and Supervision of Staff and Volunteers

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable individuals are prevented from having any involvement with FoBC

- FoBC commitment to safeguarding vulnerable adults will be stated in all job adverts/volunteer recruitment
- A written application form is to be completed for applicants to all posts. The application form will include a question on any past convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings as well as any pending cases. Applicants will be asked if they have ever had any complaints of abuse against them
- An awareness of safeguarding vulnerable adults will be part of all job and role descriptions and the interview
- Prior to appointment two references will be taken and proof of ID required
- If the role involves caring for, being in sole charge of, or supervising vulnerable adults, a DBS check will be required.
- All new staff to read and understand this policy as part of their induction process. We will ensure all staff have a clear understanding of their role and responsibility with regard to confidentiality and safeguarding issues.
- Staff will be able to identify the signs of abuse and will be confident about the steps to take and to report any concerns (*see Appendix A & B*)
- All staff where applicable will receive vulnerable adult protection basic awareness training
- Supervision and support of all staff will include monitoring of safeguarding practice.

Creating a Safe Environment / Organisation

- A risk assessment will be completed, with mitigating actions, for all indoor and outdoor activities delivered by FoBC
- Staff supporting activities for adults will be appropriately trained and qualified to ensure the safe provision of services, use of equipment and activities undertaken.
- We will ensure our insurance policy is up to date, relevant to the activities we are delivering and has adequate cover
- Where possible we will request that a vulnerable adult is accompanied by their carer or friend during our activities. We will assess health and safety risk based on the capabilities of the individual and reserve the right to restrict access if we deem it not safe for a vulnerable adult to take part – for example using heavy machinery.
- Emergency contact details are required for everyone who takes part in our activities. Hard copies of records and any portable electronic equipment that holds or provides access to personal information will be stored securely and appropriate encryption used
- We will maintain an accident book for recording incidents or accidents

What to do if you suspect abuse

Every member of staff is responsible for recognizing and reporting an allegation of abuse (*see Appendix C*). FoBC recognizes that volunteers and staff may also be the subject of an allegation of abuse. In both cases the process to follow is:

Listen

- Assure the person making the complaint that they will be taken seriously
- Listen to what is being said
- Stay calm
- Do not probe for detail
- Empathise but do not jump to conclusions

- Do not promise complete confidentiality. Explain that you have a duty to report the concern to your manager
- Do not attempt to question the alleged abuser

Observe

- Psychological abuse includes emotional abuse, intimidation, inappropriate language, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services
- Discriminatory abuse includes racist, sexist opinions, or opinions based on an individual's disability or other forms of harassment, taunts or similar treatment
- Neglect or acts of omission. Failing to act appropriately whether intentionally or negligently. This may include ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational and leisure services, the withholding of the necessities of life such as; medication, adequate and appropriate nutrition, information, clothing, comfort, relationships, safety and environment.

Inform

- The NSP, or the Nominated Safeguarding Trustee if for any reason you cannot tell the NSP You must do this as soon as is practically possible.
- Failing this contact LBRUT Council Adult Access team on 0208 891 7971
- Tell the facts that you have been told or observed. Try not to give your interpretation but do share your instincts. Note the role of FOBC is to refer the concern or complaint to Adult Social Care and not to investigate,

Record

- Details of the allegation or the grounds for suspecting abuse. Include the date and time of the incident, the people involved and details of any observed injuries.
- The appearance and behaviour and what they have said
- FOBC will co-operate, as requested in any activities relating to an adult protection enquiry.

Confidentiality

The FoBC confidentiality policy will be adhered to except when the welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount and takes precedence over it. Confidentiality may NOT be maintained if the withholding of information will prejudice the welfare of the adult.

Appendix A

Definitions of Abuse

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets' 2000 report suggests the following as the main types of abuse:

Physical abuse - including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual abuse - including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, could not consent 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, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Financial or material abuse - including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect and acts of omission - including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Discriminatory abuse - including race, sex, culture, religion, politics, that is based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment and hate crime.

Institutional abuse - requires specific mention simply to highlight that adults placed in any kind of care home or day care establishment are potentially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. This can be especially so when care standards and practices fall below an acceptable level.

Multiple forms of abuse - Multiple forms of abuse may occur in an ongoing relationship or an abusive service setting to one person, or to more than one person at a time, making it important to look beyond single incidents or breaches in standards, to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence or ignorance.

Domestic abuse Home Office Definition 2004 'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are, or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.' Women's Aid Definition 'Domestic violence is physical, sexual, psychological or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and that forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. This can also include forced marriage and so-called "honour crimes". Domestic violence may include a range of abusive behaviours, not all of which are in themselves inherently "violent". Most research suggests that domestic violence occurs in all sections of society irrespective of race, culture, nationality, religion, sexuality, disability, age, class or

educational level. Both definitions would therefore also include incidents where extended family members may condone or share in the pattern of abuse e.g. forced marriage, female genital mutilation and crimes rationalized as punishing women for bringing 'dishonour' to the family. It is important to recognise that Vulnerable Adults may be the victims of Domestic Abuse themselves or be affected by it occurring within their household. This is likely to have a serious effect on their physical and mental wellbeing.

Where Vulnerable Adults are victims of Domestic Abuse, they may need extra support to plan their future. The violence or threat of violence may continue after a victim has separated from the abuser. It is important to ensure that all the vulnerable people in this situation have appropriate support to enable them to maintain their personal safety.

A separate Domestic Abuse Protocol is in place between Police, Social Services and Health. Incidents reported by the police through the domestic abuse protocols will be addressed under the adult protection processes if it is considered that a vulnerable adult may be at risk of abuse. (See your local authorities joint Police, Social Services and Health protocol for dealing with cases of domestic abuse where vulnerable adults are involved).

APPENDIX B

Possible signs of abuse - Note: Some ageing processes can cause changes which are hard to distinguish from some aspects of physical assault e.g. skin bruising can occur very easily due to blood vessels becoming fragile.

Physical abuse signs

- A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries
- Bruising in well protected areas, or clustered from repeated striking
- Finger marks
- Burns of unusual location or type
- Injuries found at different states of healing
- Injury shape similar to an object
- Injuries to head/face/scalp
- History of GP or agency hopping, or reluctance to seek help
- Accounts which vary with time or are inconsistent with physical evidence
- Weight loss due to malnutrition, or rapid weight gain
- Ulcers, bed sores and being left in wet clothing
- Drowsiness due to too much medication, or lack of medication causing recurring crises/hospital admissions

Sexual abuse signs

- Disclosure or partial disclosure (use of phrases such as 'It's a secret')
- Medical problems, e.g. Genital infections, pregnancy, difficulty walking or sitting
- Disturbed behaviour e.g. depression, sudden withdrawal from activities
- Loss of previous skills, sleeplessness or nightmares, self-injury
- Showing fear or aggression to one particular person
- Inappropriately seductive behaviour
- Loss of appetite or difficulty in keeping food down
- Behaviour of others towards the vulnerable adult
- Circumstances – e.g. two service users found in a toilet area, one in a distressed state

Psychological/emotional signs

- Isolation
- Unkempt, unwashed, smell
- Over meticulous
- Inappropriately dressed
- Withdrawn, agitated, anxious or not wanting to be touched
- Tearfulness
- Unexplained paranoia, or excessive fears
- Low self-esteem
- Untreated injuries or medical problems
- Poor personal hygiene

Discriminatory signs

- Lack of respect shown to an individual
- Signs of substandard service offered to an individual
- Exclusion from rights afforded to others, such as health, education, criminal justice

Appendix C

Guidance on how to respond to a person disclosing abuse

DO

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to your manager for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

DON'T

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic. It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional adult protection agencies, following a referral from the designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer.