

SIGNPOST STOCKPORT FOR CARERS SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Introduction

Signpost Stockport works with adults, children & young people who care for friends and/or family who are disabled, frail, living with an addiction or long term illness and who may be vulnerable to abuse in the home or whilst in care. Signpost Stockport recognises that carers themselves can also be vulnerable to abuse from the person they care for.

Our policy statement is that Signpost Stockport employees, volunteers, students or sessional workers will never condone abuse of any kind. It is the duty of Signpost Stockport to report serious abuse to the appropriate authorities and to support adult and young carers who may be suffering from abuse themselves in an appropriate manner.

Aim

This policy, in line with the Care Act 2014 and the Children's & Families Act 2014, recognises that adults, children and young people at risk can suffer abuse, ill treatment and discrimination, and that this is an infringement of their human and civil rights.

This policy aims to make sure that:

- Practice is person led and outcome focused; ensuring the adult, child or young person at risk is supported to maintain choice and control
- the needs and interests of adults, children and young people at risk are always respected and upheld
- the human rights of adults, children and young people at risk are respected and upheld
- the dignity of adults, children and young people at risk is respected and upheld
- the prevention of abuse where possible is a key priority for all services
- a proportionate, timely, professional and ethical response is made to any adult, child or young person at risk who may be experiencing abuse
- all relevant decisions and actions comply with the Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The health and safety of the adult, child or young person at risk is paramount.
- Signpost Stockport employees, volunteers, students or sessional workers are confident in how to identify possible abuse and respond to disclosures appropriately, in accordance with this policy.

Definition

Safeguarding may be defined as protecting vulnerable adults or children from abuse or neglect. It means making sure people are supported to get good access to **health & social care** and stay well. It is wrong if vulnerable people are not treated by professionals with the same respect as others.

Signpost Stockport aims to promote a safe environment for adults, children and young people:

- All relevant Signpost staff are DBS checked – we undertake enhanced checks, which provide information on both spent and unspent convictions and states if an individual is banned from working with children or vulnerable adults. It also gives information from local police records which a chief of police feels is relevant.
- Young Carers Project Manager post requires Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector qualification (PTTLS) and holds responsibility for Safeguarding including delivery of training.
- Two suitable references are required for staff, prior to employment.
- The Signpost Deputy Director and Young Carers Project manager roles are designated safeguarding roles and are to be informed immediately of any concerns of abuse
- Staff are offered ongoing safeguarding training every 2 years from the Young Carers Project Manager and receive regular supervision and support.
- Activities are assessed for risk and the appropriate ratios always adhered to.
- Signpost activities planned and undertaken are safe and age appropriate. Accurate records are maintained to ensure regularity of attendance is monitored, to enable staff to pick up on non-attendance.

For the purpose of this Policy document, ‘abuse’ has been defined as follows:

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 being financially abused.

Abuse is about the misuse of power and control that one person has over another. Where there is dependency, there is a possibility of abuse or neglect unless adequate safeguards are put in place.

Intent is not an issue at the point of deciding whether an act or a failure to act is abuse; it is the impact of the act on the person and the harm or risk of harm to that individual. Abuse can take place in settings such as the person’s own home, day or residential centres, supported housing, educational establishments, or in nursing homes, clinics or hospitals. What constitutes abuse or neglect should not be considered in isolation. Abuse and neglect can take many forms and the circumstances of each individual must always be considered. A number of abusive acts are crimes and informing the police must be a key consideration.

Categories and indicators of abuse

There are ten categories of abuse which are listed below with possible indicators for each type of abuse. The presence of one or more indicators does not necessarily mean that a vulnerable person is being abused; however, they may reflect the potential for abuse in a given situation and suggest the need for further investigation.

Physical abuse - is any abuse which has a physical impact on that individual, this includes:

- Hitting, slapping, kicking, shaking, pinching, dragging, pulling or pushing

- Burning or scalding
- Force feeding or tampering with food
- Misuse or mal-administration of medication
- Inappropriate restraint or treatment*
- Inappropriate moving and handling/rough handling
- Inappropriate isolation or confinement
- Withdrawal of sensory or mobility aids.
- Honour based violence.

*Restraint - Inappropriate use of restraint or physical interventions and/or unlawful deprivation of liberty is physical abuse. In extreme circumstances unlawful or inappropriate use of restraint may constitute a criminal offence. Someone is using restraint if they use force, or threaten to use force, to make someone do something they are resisting, or where a person's freedom of movement is restricted, whether they are resisting or not. Restraint covers a wide range of actions. It includes the use of active or passive means to ensure that the person concerned does something, or does not do something they want to do. Appropriate use of restraint can be justified to prevent harm to a person who lacks capacity as long as it is a proportionate response to the likelihood and seriousness of the harm.

Possible Indicators of physical abuse:

- Injuries inconsistent with, or not fully explained by, the account given.
- Different accounts of the injuries given to different people.
- Injuries inconsistent with the person's lifestyle
- History of unexplained injuries or falls.
- Bruising on the torso, back, buttocks or thighs or in well protected areas such as the inside of the leg or upper arm or on each side on soft parts of the body.
- Bruising clustered from repeated striking.
- Injuries or bruising at different stages of healing.
- Marks on the body in the shape of an object.
- Finger mark bruising.
- Fractures, especially if these are in different stages of healing.
- Multiple or spinal injuries.
- Burns, including scald marks, rope burns, carpet burns, electrical appliance burns.
- Unexplained hair loss in clumps.
- Cuts or abrasions to the mouth, lips, gums, eyes or external genitalia.
- History of changes of GP or social care agencies.
- Signs of misuse of medication such as over or under medication.
- Lack of personal care, inadequate or inappropriate clothing, inadequate heating, left in wet clothing.
- Subdued behavior in presence of the carer.
- Urinary or fecal incontinence.
- Malnutrition – rapid or continuous weight loss, complaints of hunger.
- Use of furniture and other equipment to restrict movement.

Domestic Abuse - includes psychological, physical, sexual*, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence; Female Genital Mutilation; forced marriage. Domestic abuse is not only between intimate partners, other family members can be considered perpetrators of domestic abuse.

The Home Office 2013 defines domestic abuse as:

- Incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse.... By someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality, who is 16 years old and above.

Domestic abuse is multifaceted in its presentation. Please see all other categories of abuse for possible indicators of domestic abuse.

***Sexual abuse in Children & Young People**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect and Acts of Omission - Neglect is failing to provide an adequate standard of care. It may occur deliberately or by omission, and it includes:

- Failure to provide essential nutrition, clothing, medication and heating.
- Ignoring physical or medical care needs.
- Ignoring emotional care needs
- Denying access to medical, psychiatric, psychological or social care.
- Failure to assess risk or to intervene to avert or reduce danger.
- Failure to access assessments or technical aids (e.g. hearing test/aids).
- Failure to access educational services
- Failure to give privacy and dignity in delivery of care.

Self-neglect - The Care Act 2014 formally recognises self-neglect as a category of abuse. Adults who self-neglect can now be supported through intervention under safeguarding adults procedures. The term 'self-neglect' refers to an unwillingness or inability to care for oneself and/or one's environment. It encompasses a wide range of behaviours, including hoarding, living in squalor, and neglecting self-care and hygiene. Self-neglect is a difficult issue to address in practice, not least because people who self-neglect may not see that they are living with self-neglect. There are questions of personal choice and how to provide help and support to someone who may not want it. In addressing self-neglect under this policy and procedure the response must be proportionate to the risk of harm to the mentally capacitated individual.

Factors that may indicate neglect include:

- Malnutrition, rapid or continuous weight loss, complaints of hunger or thirst.
- Dehydration.
- Poor personal hygiene.
- Untreated pressure sores.
- Indications of untreated medical problems.
- Signs of mal-administration of medication.
- Failure to provide hearing aids, mobility aids, glasses and dentures.
- Clothing and bedding dirty, wet, soiled, inadequate or inappropriate.
- Accommodation in poor state, inadequate heating or lighting.
- Failure to adhere to agreed care plans and risk
- Pregnancy in a person who is unable to consent to sexual relations.

- Persistent unexplained removal of urinary catheters.
- Wetting or soiling when no history of incontinence.
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing or bedding.
- Overt sexual behaviour or language.
- Unexplained behaviour or mood change.
- Obsession with washing.
- Reluctance to be alone with an individual known to them.
- Fear of caregiver offering help with personal care.
- Signs of depression or stress.

Psychological or emotional abuse - is behaviour that has an adverse effect on an individual's mental well-being. It includes:

- Bullying and aggression.
- Inappropriate befriending
- Threats and intimidation of harm and or abandonment
- Derivation of contact
- Isolation
- Unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks
- The denial of basic human and civil rights such as self-expression, privacy and dignity.
- Humiliation, ridicule and name calling.
- Exclusion from group or marginalisation.
- Denial of access to social contact, cultural or religious observance or possessions.
- Disregard of choice and consent.
- Verbal abuse.
- Cyber bullying
- Grooming, recruiting and encouraging participation in acts of violence or violent extremism
- Forced Marriage – this is a violation of internationally recognised human rights and contrary to Matrimonial Causes Act 1973. This also comes under the category of domestic abuse

Psychological abuse –Factors that may indicate psychological or emotional abuse may include:

- Fear, watchfulness or agitation
- Deference, resignation and passivity
- Excessive loyalty and being over-anxious to please
- Oppressive atmosphere or tension in the presence of certain others
- Low self-esteem
- Loss of interest, emotional withdrawal or symptoms of depression
- Sleep disturbance
- Significant weight loss or gain
- Over controlling behaviour by third party
- Self-harm
- Denial of access to the vulnerable person
- Social isolation
- Lack of consideration for the vulnerable person
- Denial of privacy, choice, freedom of movement
- Denial of religious or cultural needs
- Restricting access to sensory, mobility or continence aids or equipment

- Decisions always made by others
- Person not allowed visitors/phone calls.

Financial or material abuse - In many instances financial abuse is a crime and the police should be involved at an early stage if appropriate. Financial abuse is the misuse of a person's property, assets, income, funds or any resources.

It includes:

- Theft, misappropriation or withholding of money, possessions or property.
- Mismanagement of finance and property.
- Pressure, by threat or persuasion, to influence wills, inheritance, property or financial transactions.
- The misuse of an enduring power of attorney, a lasting power of attorney, benefits agency appointeeship or court appointed deputyship.
- Denying access to care or accommodation for financial reasons.
- Manipulating or grooming an adult at risk in receipt of a personal budget direct payment.

Professional relationships - It is contrary to professional standards for staff to enter into any kind of financial arrangements with an individual for whom they provide care. This includes knowingly being named as a beneficiary in a will. Factors that may indicate financial or material abuse include:

- Unexplained or sudden debts or inability to pay bills.
- Unusual or inappropriate bank account activity.
- Unexplained disappearance of financial documents.
- Disparity between assets and living conditions.
- Extraordinary interest by certain others in person's assets.
- Financial dependency of others on the vulnerable adult.
- Person managing financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative.
- Enduring Power of Attorney or Lasting Power of Attorney obtained or wills signed when the person lacks mental capacity.
- Unexplained arrival of bills, credit card bills.
- Denial of access to funds or documentation.
- Changes to wills or deeds of title.
- Responsible person(s) fail(s) to account for expenses incurred on behalf of other(s).

Discriminatory abuse - exists when values, beliefs and culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to individuals or groups. A person may be exploited or targeted by others who have a negative view of the individual based on the following factors:

- Gender and gender identity
- Sexuality
- Culture
- Ethnicity
- Sexual orientation i.e. lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender
- Age
- Disability as a result of physical condition or cognitive impairment
- Religious observance
- Political affiliation.

Race Factors which may indicate discriminatory abuse may include:

- A failure to support the adult at risk to communicate in the language or medium most appropriate to them
- Loss of weight through lack of provision of culturally appropriate diet
- Anxiety/depression through lack of opportunities for religious observance
- Excluded from decision making
- Poor health as a consequence of poor care standards
- Failure to protect or provide redress through the criminal or civil justice system
- Denial of sexual expression
- Inappropriate use of language
- Delivery of personal care without reference to gender
- Harassment

Hate Crime - A specific manifestation of discriminatory abuse is recognised within the criminal justice system under the category Hate Crime. Hate Crime is defined as any incident that is perceived by the victim, or any other person to be targeting that individual on the grounds of sexual orientation, transgender identity, religion or belief, race or ethnicity and disability. This can include incidents of anti-social behaviour which do not always constitute a criminal offence. The police have special procedures to respond to reports of hate crime appropriately. In the event of a perceived hate crime against adults at risk, early contact with the police is vital to ensure an appropriate response is given.

A Hate Crime can manifest itself in the following ways

- Spitting
- Physical attack
- Verbal abuse
- Damage to property including graffiti
- Offensive letter, leaflets, email and texts including the use of social networking sites
- Bullying
- Abusive gestures
- Name calling/harassment.

Organisational/ Institutional Abuse - can be defined as abuse or mistreatment by a regime as well as by individuals within any health or care setting or person's own home. Organisational/ Institutional abuse violates the person's dignity, which results in lack of respect for their human rights. Organisational/Institutional abuse may range from a one off incident to ongoing ill treatment. It can be neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, process and practices within an organisation; which results in poor or inadequate standards of care. This poor practice which affects the whole setting and denies, restricts or curtails the dignity, privacy, choice, independence or fulfillment of adults at risk.

The risk of organisational/ institutional abuse increases in services:

- With poor management.
- With too few staff.
- Which use rigid routines and inflexible practices.
- Where there is a closed culture.
- Where there is poor training of staff.

- Where there is poor supervision of staff and inadequate guidance.
- Where there is a culture of failing to promote people's rights.
- Where there is a lack of or poor response to complaints.
- Where there is poor communication between staff, residents, managers, visitors and carers.
- Where there are inflexible services, based on the convenience of the provider rather than the person receiving the services.
- Where there is a lack of adherence to confidentiality.
- Where there is a lack of understanding regarding the importance of person centred planning.
- Where there are out of date/poor care plans, risk assessment and care reviews.

Indicators of institutional abuse:

- Lack of dignity, privacy or respect.
- Lack of opportunity for drinks or snacks outside of main meal times.
- Lack of choice regarding meals.
- Lack of flexibility and choice, excessively rigid routines.
- Lack of opportunity to personalise environment, lack of personal possessions.
- Use of restraint except where there has been clear multi agency risk assessment and planning.
- Lack of choice of same sex staff to undertake intimate personal care.
- Treating adults as children.
- Lack of choice in everyday activities.
- Changes in accommodation (within or between homes) without agreement.
- Denial of individual identity.
- Lack of privacy and personal care.
- Lack of personal clothing or possessions.
- Being left on toilet/commode for long periods.

Modern Slavery (encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude) - Signs of slavery in the UK and elsewhere are often hidden, making it even harder to recognise victims around us. There is no typical victim of slavery – victims can be men, women and children of socially excluded groups.

Factors that may indicate modern slavery:

- Physical Appearance – victims may show signs of physical or psychological abuse, look malnourished or unkempt, or appear withdrawn.
- Isolation- victims may rarely be allowed to travel on their own, seem under the control, influence of others, rarely interact or appear unfamiliar with their neighborhood or where they work.
- Poor living conditions- victims may be living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation, and/or living and working at the same address.
- Few or no personal effects- victims may have no identification documents, have few personal possessions and always wear the same clothes day in day out. What clothes they do wear may not be suitable of the season or their type of work.
- Restricted freedom of movement- victims have little opportunity to move freely and may have their travel documents retained e.g. passports

- Unusual travel times- may be dropped off and collected for work on a regular basis either very early or late at night.
- Reluctant to seek help- victims may avoid eye contact, appear frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers and fear law enforcers for many reasons, such as not knowing who to trust or where to get help, fear of deportation , fear of violence to them or their family.

Reporting Procedures

Managing allegations of abuse by Signpost employees

In the event of alleged abuse by a Signpost Stockport for Carers employee, volunteer, student or sessional worker, in the course of their duties, the Signpost Stockport Complaints Policy should be used to enable the allegation/complaint to be investigated.

1.All allegations of abuse must also be reported immediately to the Signpost Board of Trustees. Any such complaint about an employee made to the Signpost Board will be investigated thoroughly using the Signpost Stockport Disciplinary Procedure.

2.The **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** is to be notified within one working day.

LADO Contact – Gerard Sweeney email: gerard.sweeney@stockprt.gov.uk
Telephone - 0161 474 5657

Any employee, volunteer, student or sessional worker accused of alleged abuse will be suspended, at the discretion of the Director/Chairperson, until the Signpost Stockport Complaints or Disciplinary Procedure has been completed.

Allegations may relate to a staff member who works with carers who has

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a carer, or may have harmed a carer;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- Behaved towards a carer or child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm.

Such allegations will also be reported to the LADO at the Stockport safeguarding unit.

Working with Carers

1. A Carer confesses to abuse

Where a carer informs a Signpost Stockport employee, volunteer, student or sessional worker that they have **abused the person that they care for**, the following steps are to be followed:

Where a volunteer, student or sessional worker works with a carer who has **confessed to abuse** they must immediately bring this to the attention of their line manager.

Where a Signpost Stockport employee is **working with**, or **knows** that a carer has **confessed to abuse**, they must inform the **Deputy Director** or **Chairperson** of this fact at the earliest opportunity.

The **Director** or **Chairperson** will then authorise what action the employee may take, i.e. whether to apply the normal policy of confidentiality, or whether this may need to be breached.

In cases where there is considered to be an immediate risk to an adult or young carer, and a senior member of staff cannot be reached, the relevant safeguarding unit is to be contacted for advice and support.

Adult Safeguarding unit – 217 6029
Children’s Safeguarding unit – 474 5657

In cases where a criminal offence has been committed or where there is thought to be immediate danger Greater Manchester police should be contacted

Emergency – 999. Non-emergency - 101

Where a carer has confessed to abuse, employees, volunteers, students and sessional workers must keep **accurate and up to date records** of issues and any actions taken.

2. Likely or immediate serious risk to a Carer

Where a volunteer, student or sessional worker believes that there is an **immediate and serious risk** to a carer’s physical safety they must immediately bring this to the attention of a Signpost Stockport employee.

Where a Signpost Stockport employee believes there is an **immediate and serious risk** to an carer’s physical & emotional safety, they must bring this to the attention of the **Young Carers Project Manager** or if not available, to the **Deputy Director** or the Chairperson of the Signpost Board of Trustees at the earliest opportunity.

The **Young Carers Project Manager**, **Deputy Director** or **Chairperson** will then authorise what action the employee is to take.

Working with Children & Young People

If a child reports to Signpost Stockport that they are being abused by the person they care for, employees, volunteers, students or sessional workers may work with the child to provide them with practical information, advice, advocacy, counselling and emotional support as appropriate.

Signpost Stockport may work with the child to help them decide what support they need. For example, if they need additional services; if they need respite care; if they want to cease their caring responsibilities; whether they want to report the incident(s) to the Safeguarding Unit or proceed in another way.

A referral must be made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding & Support Hub (MASSH) on 0161 217 6028 for any suspected abuse, even if statutory services are involved with the family.

Good Practice

Listen to the Carer

- Do** - Be alert to signs of abuse and neglect. It can happen anywhere.
- Do** - Be prepared to respond calmly. Children especially are more likely to allow you to help them if you are prepared to listen and appear not to panic.
- Do** - Keep a clear record of your concerns and what action you took.
- Do** - Consult your Line Manager if you have any doubts, or need support.
- Do** - Where circumstances allow, be honest with parents/carers about your concerns and actions.
- DO NOT** - Directly question the carer, especially in the case of Young Carers
- DO NOT** - Prompt in any way.
- DO NOT** - Try and go it alone. Carers, particularly children are best protected when all agencies work together.

Recording

It is NOT your responsibility to interview the carer; however, his/her comments, appearance and behavior should be carefully noted and recorded. Make an accurate record of information you have been given including details of timing, setting and people present.

The carer should not be given an absolute guarantee of confidentiality, even if demanded as a precondition of telling. It should be explained that certain other people might need to be told to protect him/her. She/he should be reassured that any subsequent actions will be explained to her/him at each stage of the process.

For Young Carers, the family should be informed that the referral is being made to the local Safeguarding Unit, except in cases of sexual abuse or induced illness.

Useful Contact Numbers

- SMBC Childrens Social Care contact centre – 217 6028. Out of hours – 718 2118
- SMBC Adult Social Care contact centre – 217 6029. Out of Hours – 718 2118
- Greater Manchester police – Emergency 999. Non-emergency 101
- Safeguarding Children Unit – 474 5657
- SMBC Adult Safeguarding Board – 217 6029

Further information on Stockport’s Multi Agency Safeguarding & Support Hub (MASSH) can be found by using the links below.

Adults – Multi agency/link

[SMBC Multi Agency Safeguarding & Support Hub](#)

Children/link

<http://www.safeguardingchildreninstockport.org.uk/practitioners/policies-and-procedures/>

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Change Description	Signed off by
0.4	18/07/18	Katy Frankland	Amalgamation of Vulnerable Adults & Children policies. Addition of contact details. Addition of related docs information	Signpost Board

			Addition of safeguarding definition Addition of LA procedures	
1.0		Katy Frankland	New policy – supersedes Vulnerable Adults & Vulnerable Children's policies	Signpost Board 1/8/2018

Related Documents

- Stockport MBC Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Stockport MBC Multi-Agency Operational Procedures for responding to and investigating abuse
- Signpost Stockport Recruitment & Selection Policy & Procedure
- Signpost Stockport Complaints policy and Procedure
- Signpost Stockport Disciplinary & Grievance Procedure
- Signpost IT & Internet Policy