

Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Policy statement

- The welfare of the vulnerable adult is paramount.
- All adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to quickly and appropriately.
- All members of Lifeline K9's has a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate persons.

Policy aims

The aim of this Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy is to promote good practice and to ensure all staff make an informed and confident response to specific children and vulnerable adult protection issues. The following information aims to help all staff to recognise abuse and know what to do should they be concerned that a child or vulnerable adult known to them is being or has been abused.

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons.

- It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be planned or unplanned.
- It may be the result of deliberate intent, negligence, or ignorance.
- It may happen when a vulnerable adult is persuaded to enter into a transaction to which they have not consented or cannot consent.

Abuse can take many forms:

- Physical abuse – for example, hitting, pushing, shaking, over medicating or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual abuse – for example, unwanted touching, kissing or sexual activity. Or where the vulnerable adult cannot or does not give their consent.
- Psychological / emotional abuse - including verbal abuse, intimidation, isolation, humiliation, bullying or the use of threats.
- Financial abuse – theft, exploitation, the illegal or improper use of a person's money, property, pension book, bank account or other belongings.
- Neglect - the repeated deprivation of help that a child or vulnerable adult needs which, if withdrawn, will cause him or her to suffer.
- Discriminatory abuse - Including racist or sexist abuse, and abuse based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Where can abuse happen?

Abuse can take place in any setting:

- In their own home In someone else's home
- In a residential or nursing home In a day centre, adult education centre or other establishment
- In a hospital or GP surgery
- At work
- In a public place
- In an education setting

Who abuses?

The person responsible for the abuse is often well known to the person being abused. They may be:

- A relative, friend or neighbour
- A paid or volunteer carer
- A professional worker
- Another resident or service user
- An occasional visitor or service provider
- A person online

What should you do?

- It is not the responsibility of anyone working for Lifeline K9s to decide whether or not a child or vulnerable adult is being abused or that abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns.
- Talk to the person in a safe and private place.
- Listen sensitively but be careful not to ask leading questions.
- Try not to show you are shocked.
- Find out what the person wants and explain that you will discuss the situation with the relevant person.
- Refer the allegation to the safeguarding lead or social services department, who may involve the police.

What you should not do

- Do not confront the person you think is responsible for the abuse.
- Do not destroy any evidence.
- Do not start to investigate the situation.
- Do not be judgmental.
- Do not make any promises you cannot keep.
- Do not take the allegations lightly or dismiss them.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled on a need to know basis only. Information

should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure). To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern.