Fihankra meaning a safe house, safety, security and peace

Nottingham Central Women's Aid
Safeguarding Adults Policy

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Related Documents

NCWA Safeguarding Children's Policy
NCWA Whistle Blowing Policy
NCWA Disciplinary Policy
NCWA Grievance Policy
NCWA Capability Policy
NCWA Record Keeping Policy
NCWA Confidentiality Policy
NCWA Data Protection Policy (GDPR).

Contents

Purpose of the policy 2
Definitions 3
Safeguarding adults at risk procedures 5
Suspicions or allegations of abuse 5
Alerting 5
Reporting 6
Investigating 8
Record Keeping 9
Supporting an adult at risk who remains in an abusive situation 11
Safeguarding Contacts 12
Advice & Support 12
Adult Safeguarding Flow Chart 13

Purpose of the Policy

NCWA believes that all adults including staff and volunteers have a duty to create a safe environment and to protect adults from harm. This policy sets out our response to the Safeguarding of Adults at Risk. NCWA seeks to develop a culture in which day to day practice promotes the protection of adults at risk and the understanding that everyone has the right to live free from violence and abuse in any form and the responsibility for the abuse lies with the perpetrator.

All professionals working for NCWA have a duty to report any instance where they observe someone who is being abused or suspect someone is being abused or when someone says they are being abused.

We encourage staff, volunteers, and service users to report concerns and/or incidents of violent, abuse and neglect of adults covered under adult safeguarding duties (as defined below) either as victims, witnesses or as a result of information received from a third party. We will respect and maintain confidentiality, privacy, security of personal information for anyone experiencing abuse, within NCWA Policy and legal boundaries.

We consider violent, intimidating, threatening, neglect or abusive behaviour towards an adult at risk (as defined below) by a member of staff as gross misconduct. Any member of staff who commits or threatens to commit an act of violence will be in breach of the NCWA Code of Conduct and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary, Capability and Grievance Policy and Procedure.

This policy applies to all NCWA staff, volunteers and Trustees.

The Board of Trustees retains strategic accountability for safeguarding oversight. This includes receiving regular safeguarding assurance reports, reviewing incident trends, ensuring safeguarding training compliance and confirming annual policy review**.**

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed regularly, after each major incident or change in legislation and at least annually, which will include analysis to ensure there is no detrimental impact on any particular group of women or children during its' implementation.

Definitions

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse and neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted. (Section 14.7 The Care Act 2014)

Adults at Risk

(a) A person 18 years or over **and**

(b) Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting those needs) **and**

(c) Is experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect **and**

As a result of those care and support needs, are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse and neglect or exploitation.

Forms of abuse include (as defined in the Care Act 2014)

(d) Physical abuse including hitting, slapping, and pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions

(e) Domestic Violence including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse and honour-based violence and coercive control*

(f) Sexual abuse including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the Vu has not consented or is incapable of giving informed consent or was pressured into consenting. This may involve contact or non-contact abuse (e.g. touch, masturbation, being photographed, teasing and inappropriate touching)

(g) 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

(h) 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

(i) Modern Slavery encompasses slavery, human trafficking; forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment

(j) Discriminatory abuse including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, culture and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment

(k) Organisational abuse (also known as institutional abuse) neglect and poor professional practice in care settings also need to be taken into account. It may take the form of isolated incidents of poor practice at one end of the spectrum, through to pervasive ill treatment or gross misconduct at the other. It can occur when the routines, systems, communications and norms of an institution compel individuals to sacrifice their preferred lifestyle and cultural identity to the needs of that institution. Repeated instances of poor care may be an indication of more serious problems

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

(m) 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.

(n) Technology - Facilitated abuse (online Safety Act 2023): Including online harassment, cyberstalking, image-based sexual abuse, use of spyware or tracking devices, deepfake imagery, digital coercion and online grooming. This includes being perpetrated via social media platforms, messaging applications or digital monitoring.

Coercive control: a new offence of coercive and controlling behaviours in intimate and familial relationships was introduced into the Serious Crimes Act 2015.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 sets out a legal definition of domestic abuse.

In accordance with Section 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Children who see, hear or experience domestic abuse are recognised as victims of their own right. Where safeguarding concerns involve both an adult and a child, due referral to Adult and Children's Services must be considered.

Any of these forms of abuse can be either deliberate or be the result of ignorance, or lack of training, knowledge or understanding. Often if a person is being abused in other ways.

Grooming in the context of adult safeguarding refers to the process by which someone builds a relationship with an adult - often someone with care and support needs or who is vulnerable - to manipulate, exploit, or abuse them. This can include sexual exploitation, financial abuse, radicalisation, or criminal exploitation such as involvement in county lines.

Grooming may involve flattery, gifts, promises of support, emotional dependency, or threats. It often occurs in the context of coercive and controlling behaviour.

Grooming can affect adults who:

- Experience isolation or loneliness
- Have mental health conditions or learning disabilities
- Are dependent on others for care or support
- Have experienced prior abuse or trauma

Safeguarding adults at risk procedures

NCWA supports the rights of individuals to make choices and to take risks. Any decision to take action about suspected or alleged abuse will take into account the assessment of the individual's mental capacity to understand the nature and extent of the abuse that is taking place and the choices and outcomes open to them.

Suspicions or allegations of abuse

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults at Risk Guidance must be followed in all cases of adult abuse.

https://nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-for-residents/health-and-social-care/adult-social-care/adult-safeguarding/adult-safeguarding-procedures/

If abuse is suspected or discovered, the response to a suspicion or allegation of abuse follows four stages

Alerting

NCWA expects that all staff and volunteers will alert the services manager to suspicion or disclosure of abuse. NCWA has also developed a Whistle Blowing Policy to provide reassurance to staff that they will be supported in making an allegation of abuse if that allegation is made in good faith. NCWA's Designated Safeguarding Lead is Sam B, the Designated Safeguarding Lead on the board is Brenda Serrant.

If an adult discloses abuse:

- Stay calm, listen carefully and believe what you are told
- Take allegations seriously
- Do not pass any comments except to be comforting and empathic
- Ensure the immediate safety and welfare of the alleged victim
- Include consideration of urgent medical attention
- Consider any children that are affected and review/assess alongside the NCWA Safeguarding Children Policy
- Discuss concerns with another staff member and where possible, the Safeguarding Adults Lead and agree a course of action

- If the disclosure is from a member of staff and the alleged abuser is the manager, this must be reported directly to the management committee
- Record your concerns and agreed action, including the reasons for any decisions in the case file in On-Track, Embed all forms relating to the concerns and referrals in the on-Track case file
- Inform the Safeguarding Adults Lead

Where a third party discloses abuse about a current service user, staff should assess the situation, and then follow the relevant procedure as above. If it is not safe or appropriate to speak to the service user this should be discussed and an appropriate course of action agreed.

Where a disclosure is made by a service user about abuse of a third party not known to us, this must be discussed within the team and a course of action agreed.

In all cases a referral to the relevant LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) must be considered and where appropriate a referral should be made.

Individual and staff volunteers must NOT

- Confront the person they suspect of perpetrating the abuse themselves
- Start an investigation themselves
- Destroy or interfere with any evidence that may be used if there is an investigation.
- Transport a resident alone, without informing a manager or colleague before, informing of expected destination return times, ensuring Lone working Policy and procedures are followed.
- Individuals and staff volunteers should take care to not disclose confidential refuge or safe accommodation addresses when transporting residents.

Reporting

Getting the consent of the adult at risk

Where you have made a decision that a safeguarding referral is required, efforts to obtain consent from the adult at risk must always be made, wherever possible, prior to a referral being made to the relevant local authority. However, this must not unnecessarily delay a safeguarding referral being made where consent is not or cannot be obtained as outlined below.

Making a decision to refer without consent

The mental capacity of the adult at risk to give their informed consent to a referral being made and information being shared is significant, but not the only factor, in deciding what action to take.

Referral to MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

All women will have a completed DASH RIC risk assessment on file (completed within 48 hours of coming into refuge or shared with us) and a decision made based on the assessment and professional judgement used to consider whether they should be referred to MARAC.

If survivor is assessed as high risk you must make a referral to MARAC and DART

A referral to DART does not remove the requirement to consider statutory safeguarding referrals where Care Act or Children Act thresholds are met.. The DART will contact you to discuss the outcome and your on-going contact.

Where we are working with a survivor with children, who is pregnant or is an adult at risk in Nottingham City any risk level can warrant a referral to MARAC.

MARAC referrals should be sent using our secure CJSM email or other secure method with a completed Risk Identification Checklist to:

Nottingham City: dart@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

South MARAC: maracadmin.south@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk

North MARAC: maracadmin.north@nottswa.cjsm.net

Or maracadmin.north@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk

Person lacking Capacity

NCWA will work using the following PRINCIPLES within the Mental Capacity Act 2005

- Presumed capacity
- Support to make a decision
- The right to make unwise or eccentric decisions
- Any decisions made on behalf of the individual are made in the person's best interest
- Any intervention is the least restrictive of their basic rights and freedoms.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and Liberty Protection Safeguards:
NCWA recognises the current Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) framework and the forthcoming implementation of Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) under the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019. Where accommodation arrangements, supervision levels or safety measures may amount to a deprivation of liberty, advice must be sought from the relevant Local Authority. Any restrictions must be necessary, proportionate and the least restrictive option available.

However, if there is a concern in relation to the adult at risk having capacity about giving consent to a referral being made, an assessment must be considered and a course of action agreed.

Article 8 of the Human Rights Act relates to an individual's rights to autonomy. However, the requirement to respect the rights of individuals to make decisions for themselves is not an excuse for inaction where an adult at risk is at risk of abuse or neglect.

Therefore, whilst consent should always be sought, if there is an overriding public interest, or if gaining consent would put the adult at further risk, a referral to the relevant local authority must be made. This would include situations where:

- It is necessary to prevent crime
- Other people, including other adults at risk and or children, could be at risk from the perpetrator/s. In this situation please refer to the relevant Policy e.g. Safeguarding Children Policy.

The adult at risk should be informed of the decision for the referral and the reasons, unless telling them would jeopardise their safety or the safety of others.

Once a referral is agreed as needed within the team, staff should complete the relevant referral form. This should be checked by another team member before submitting.

Keep all records of all information received and actions taken on the case file in On-Track.

Send the Referral form to the Local Authority Safeguarding Adults team within 1 working day of a decision to referral being made.

Anyone who suspects or discovers abuse is expected to consider:

- Is there a need for immediate medical attention?
- Is there a need to move the alleged adult at risk to a place of safety?
- Is a referral to the Police required?
- Is there a need to report the abuse to an inspection or registering body? E.g. in the case of someone living in a registered care home.

AND

Keep/update all information received and actions taken in the case file in On-Track database.

Investigating

If the alleged incident is of a criminal nature, the Police will carry out the investigation.

If the alleged perpetrator of the abuse is a member of staff, volunteer or Trustee of NCWA, an investigation will be carried out under the terms of NCWA Disciplinary, capability and Grievance policy. This may involve the member of staff, volunteer or Trustee being suspended while the investigation is carried out.

Where the alleged abuser is someone other than a NCWA staff member, volunteer or Trustee, and the Police are not investigating, the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Adults team will undertake the investigation.

In both the above cases a referral to the relevant LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) must be made.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Referrals
Where a staff member, volunteer or trustee is removed from regulated activity due to risk of harm (or would have been removed had they not resigned), NCWA has a statutory duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service in accordance with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This duty applies irrespective of whether the individual resigns before disciplinary action is concluded. If you need help to refer someone you can contact DBS on 03000 200 190. Or find guidance https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-referrals-form-and-guidance

In all cases, where possible the manager should:

Consider the immediate health or welfare needs of the alleged victim or any other adults who might be affected. Where the alleged perpetrator is a member of NCWA staff or volunteer, you must inform the management committee and agree on a course of action. Complete the relevant form/s.

In the case of a referral being agreed, ensure the Referral form is sent to the Local Authority Safeguarding Adults team and if relevant to the Police as soon as possible, but no later than one working day.

If someone is at risk of immediate abuse, then call the Police on 999. If it is a historic incident(s) then call the Police on 101. Check records and other data for additional information.

Keep full records of all information received, decisions made and their reason and actions taken in a confidential file.

If the alleged abuser is a member of staff or volunteer the Manager /management committee should consider whether the member of staff or volunteer should be suspended as part of the NCWA Disciplinary, capability and grievance procedures.

Investigation under the NCWA Disciplinary Policy

The manager who takes on the role of investigator in the Disciplinary procedure should consider the following points:

The adult at risk should be visited within 3 working days of the concerns being raised. The wishes of the adult at risk should be determined and they should be kept informed of the progress of the investigation and offered support from an individual or organisation outside NCWA as necessary

Acknowledge to the alerted that their concerns are being responded to and that they will receive feedback on completion of the procedure

Fairness to the person/people against whom the allegations were made.

In addition, if the adult at risk is a staff member:

- The staff member will be offered immediate support from a manager or committee member
- A risk assessment will be carried out and a safety plan put in place including the possibility to take time off work, in order to reduce the risk of any further incidents. This will be reviewed on a weekly/monthly basis (as appropriate to the situation) until the staff member and manager are satisfied that there are no further identifiable risks
- The staff member will be informed about the availability of external support.

The guidance of the Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Team should be sought during the course of the investigation.

The outcome of the investigation should be a conclusion about whether there is a case to answer and this will inform the Disciplinary Hearing. See NCWA Disciplinary, Capability and Grievance Policy for further details.

The outcome should be reported to the Local Authority Safeguarding Adults team.

Record Keeping

Good record keeping is a fundamental part of good practice. It is particularly important to make clear, factual and the details written and/or electronic records when you are told about or witness significant harm, abuse or neglect against an adult at risk.

The words and phrases used by the person making the allegation should be recorded as far as possible.

Records of alleged abuse and any investigation should not be recorded in a service user's case notes on the NCWA electronic case management system although reference should be made in the case notes to the confidential file. The confidential file should be kept in a separate folder and should not be generally accessible to all members of staff.

Security and storage or records

Only authorised NCWA staff will have access to confidential files which will be password protected. Records should be retained as specified in the Data Protection Policy (GDPR).

Access to records

Confidential safeguarding files should only be accessed by staff who work directly with the adult or by those directly involved in safeguarding decisions. Volunteers should not have access to the records. Staff and volunteers will be made aware of ongoing safeguarding issues as needed.

Where an individual makes a data subject access request for information held on them, this should be responded to in accordance with the NCWA General Data Protection Regulations Policy.

An adult at risk has a right to see all written reports about them unless this might endanger the safety of a staff member or volunteer. Under the NCWA Data Protection policy All Individuals/Service Users have the right to access the information that NCWA holds about them. Individuals need only make a verbal request to see their complete files providing 5 days' notice is given (this is to ensure any third-party information is removed.)

Staff and volunteers should be aware that safeguarding records might be requested for use in criminal and/or civil court proceedings.

Data Protection and Safeguarding Breaches (GDPR)

Nottingham Central Women's Aid is committed to ensuring that all personal data relating to safeguarding is collected, stored, and shared in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Safeguarding information is considered special category data, and breaches involving such data are treated with the highest level of seriousness due to the potential impact on individuals' safety, privacy, and wellbeing.

What Constitutes a Breach

A data breach is defined as any incident that results in the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data. In the context of safeguarding, this could include:

- Disclosure of safeguarding records to an unauthorised person
- Misplacing or losing safeguarding documentation
- Unauthorised access to confidential case notes or databases
- Inappropriate sharing of information about individuals at risk

Action in the Event of a Breach

If a data breach involving safeguarding information occurs:

1. **Immediate Reporting**:
   All staff, volunteers, or trustees must report the breach immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Data Protection Officer (DPO) (if different people).

2. **Containment and Assessment**:
   The DSL and DPO will take immediate steps to contain the breach and assess:

   - The nature of the data involved
   - Who has been affected
   - Any risks to the safety or wellbeing of individuals
   - Whether the breach poses a safeguarding risk that requires escalation

3. **Safeguarding Risk Assessment**:
   Where a breach may impact a child or adult at risk, a safeguarding risk assessment will be undertaken. This may involve consultation with relevant professionals or statutory services if there is potential harm or exploitation resulting from the breach.

4. **Notification Requirements**:

   - If the breach is likely to result in a risk to individuals' rights and freedoms, it will be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) as soon as possible and within 72 hours.
   - Where there is a safeguarding concern, the breach may also be reported to relevant safeguarding partners (e.g., local authority, police).
   - Affected individuals will be informed where appropriate and safe to do so.

5. **Documentation and Review**:
   All breaches will be documented, investigated, and followed up. Lessons learned will inform future staff training, system improvements, and safeguarding practice. Safeguarding information may be shared under Article 6(1)(e) (public task) and Article 9(2)(g) (substantial public interest) of UK GDPR, and Schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018 where necessary to protect individuals at risk.

Confidentiality and Protection of Individuals

We recognise that data breaches involving safeguarding information can place individuals at further risk. In all cases, we will act swiftly and proportionately to minimise harm, support those affected, and ensure accountability.

Supporting an adult at risk who remains in an abusive situation

It may be that a service user does not wish to leave the situation or for action to be taken about the abuse they are experiencing.

As long as it is clear that they have the capacity to make this decision, support should continue to be offered subject to a risk assessment being carried out.

Continuing to support someone in an abusive situation can be very difficult for the supporting worker and the situation will be reviewed regularly with the worker through supervision.

Safeguarding Contacts

Nottingham City Council Adult Social Care Assessment Service

T: 0300 131 0300 Monday to Friday: 09:00 - 17.00

All enquiries outside these hours use the Emergency Duty Team Number:

17.00 - 20.00 - 0115 876 1000 (calls picked up by duty staff),

20.00 - 09:00 - 0115 876 1000 (Voice mail)

Advice & Support

NCWA provides regular internal management supervision and regular clinical supervision through an independent external BACP registered and qualified clinical supervisor. Either of your supervisors can be contacted for advice, case discussion and support.

Relevant Legislation

- The Care Act 2014
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Human Rights Act 1998 (esp. Articles 2, 3, 8)
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Serious Crime Act 2015 (coercive control)
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Procedures (Nottingham City/County)
- Making Safeguarding Personal framework
- Online safety Act 2023
- Police, Crime, sentencing and Courts act 2022 (Serious Violence Duty)
- Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Adult Safeguarding Flow Chart

