

The Old Bath House and Community Centre

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Introduction

The Old Bath House and Community Centre (OBHCC) is committed to safeguarding vulnerable adults, engaged in the breadth of its activities.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility volunteers and trustees working on behalf of OBHCC in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse.

All adults have the right to be safe from harm and should be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To explain the responsibilities OBHCC staff, volunteers and trustees have in respect of vulnerable adult protection.
- To provide staff with an overview of vulnerable adult protection
- To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where vulnerable adult protection issues arise.

Context

For the purpose of this document 'adult' means a person aged 18 years or over.

Some adults are less able to protect themselves than others, and some have difficulty making their wishes and feelings known. This may make them vulnerable to abuse. The broad definition of a 'vulnerable adult' referred to in the 1997 Consultation Paper 'Who decides?' issued by the Lord Chancellor's Department, is a person:

"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".

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults. To this end it is the responsibility of all staff to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect (see the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person/agency.

For purposes of ensuring consistent and widely understood terminology, these policy and procedures will use the phrase 'Vulnerable Adults' to identify those eligible for interventions within the procedures.

Legal framework

This guidance reflects the principles contained within The Care Act 2014, Human Rights Act 1998, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

The Care Act 2014 details how Local Authorities should deal with people who can be at risk because of physical, learning or mental health difficulties, including a permanent disability, something that occurs occasionally or a one off event.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005, covering England and Wales, provides a statutory framework for people who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves, or who have capacity and want to make preparations for a time when they may lack capacity in the future. It sets out who can take decisions, in which situations, and how they should go about this.

The Human Rights Act 1998 gives legal effect in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) created a framework for whistle blowing across the private, public and voluntary sectors. The Act provides almost every individual in the workplace with protection from victimisation where they raise genuine concerns about malpractice in accordance with the Act's provisions.

The role of staff, volunteers and trustees

All staff, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of OBHCC have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults.

Staff, volunteers and trustees may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy will enable staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific adult protection issues.

What is abuse?

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

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.

Milton Keynes City Council Safeguarding Team have implemented a Decision Making Tool which sets out the types of abuse it covers.

- **Domestic Abuse** - Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or 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.
- **Discriminatory or Hate Crime** - Unequal or abusive treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- **Financial or Material Abuse** - The unauthorised and improper use of funds, property or any resources. This includes the use of theft, coercion or fraud to obtain or try to obtain an adult's money, possessions or property.
- **Modern Slavery** - This is holding an adult in a position of slavery, forced servitude, compulsory labour, or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after.
- **Neglect and Acts of Omission: General and Falls** - Ongoing failure to meet a person's basic physical or psychological needs. A fall does not automatically indicate neglect and each individual case should be examined in order to determine whether there is a safeguarding concern.
- **Neglect and Acts of Omission: Pressure Ulcers** - Pressure ulcers are primarily a clinical issue and should be referred to an appropriate health professional in the first instance. However, where there are obvious signs of neglect, this should be referred to adult safeguarding.
- **Neglect and Acts of Omission: Medication Errors** - Where an adult is given someone else's medication, given too much or too little of their own medication, given a medication that has been stopped, or given it at the wrong time.
- **Organisational Abuse** - This is neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation, resulting in ongoing neglect or poor care.
- **Self-Neglect** - A person living in a way that puts their health, safety, or well-being at risk.
- **Physical Abuse** - The act of causing physical harm to someone else.
- **Psychological Abuse** - This is the ongoing psychological/emotional maltreatment of an adult.

- **Sexual Abuse** - When an adult is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This doesn't have to be physical contact and it can happen online

Further information can be found on the Adult Safeguarding and Adults at Risk – Policies and Guidance (MK Together) webpage [Adult Safeguarding and Adults at Risk - Policies and Guidance \(MK Together\) | Milton Keynes City Council](#)

Procedure in the event of a disclosure

It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a vulnerable adult has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

This should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

Responding to an allegation

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the safeguarding lead who is Lee-Anne Styles and can be contacted on 07961 545537 / leea74@hotmail.com by a member of staff or volunteer as appropriate.

The nominated safeguarding lead shall telephone and report the matter to the **Milton Keynes Adult Social Care Access Team** who can be contacted on **01908 252835** during working hours **Monday - Friday 08:45am-5pm** (excluding bank holidays) or out of hours **01908 725005 from 5:00pm - 08:45am Monday-Friday, weekends and bank holidays 24 hours**. The Safeguarding Team can also be contacted by email safeguardingadults@milton-keynes.gov.uk

A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 24 hours.

Milton Keynes City Council require that professionals must complete the online [Safeguarding Adults Referral form](#) in all cases.

Milton Keynes City Council have introduced a [Decision Making Tool](#) which local organisations must use as part of their safeguarding policies and procedures. The tool aims to make it clearer and easier to understand what a safeguarding concern is and when to **RESOLVE**, **CONSULT** or **REPORT** a concern.

Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

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.

DONT

- 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.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Vulnerable adult protection raises issues of confidentiality that should be clearly understood by all. Staff, volunteers and trustees have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and adult social services.

Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

All personal information regarding a vulnerable adult will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only record details required in the initial contact form.

If an adult confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the adult sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.

Within that context, the adult should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent should be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority.

Where a disclosure has been made, staff should let the adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.

Staff should assure the adult that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The adults' involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

The role of key individual agencies

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.

Milton Keynes Safeguarding Adults Board are responsible for initiating Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure processes in Milton Keynes that are implemented by all organisations working with Vulnerable adults.

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.

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.

Reviewing the policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it is meeting its aims by the Safeguarding Lead. They will consult on any amendments with staff, volunteers and OBHCC Committee.

This is the current copy of this policy

Name: David Lovesy

Signature:  _____

Date: 6 January 2025

Next review date: 4 January 2026