



Alsager Community Support



Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Section 1 Aims and scope of the policy

Section 2 Definitions

Section 3 Standards

Section 4 Procedures

Section 5 Associated policies

Section 6 Declaration and Approval

Introduction

People seeking advice or other help should feel safe and be able to trust the ACS service. Anyone who works with ACS in any capacity has a responsibility to protect the ACS service by safeguarding clients and the wider community, particularly children and vulnerable adults, from harm and abuse of all kinds.

Judgments relating to client protection will err on the side of protecting clients from possible risks or perceptions of risk which may deter someone in need from using the service. All staff, volunteers and trustees must be aware of this policy and how to raise a safeguarding concern if they become aware of signs of abuse.

This policy must be followed by all staff and volunteers, including senior managers and trustees. It also applies to anyone working on behalf of our organisation.

This policy focuses on safeguarding concerns about adults that stem from interactions with clients and other people who access our service; however, the legal duties and principles outlined in this document apply to people who are not our clients. For example, our staff, volunteers, beneficiaries or other connections who meet the definition of adults at risk.

No one should ignore allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect.

Alsager Community Support [ACS] is committed to ensuring that all employees, volunteers, trustees and all service users are safeguarded in line with the provisions of the Working Together Act 2014 of the Care Act 2014 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Adult 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 or neglect, whilst at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

It must be recognised that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances. People have complex lives and being safe is only one of the things they want for themselves.

Safeguarding Principles

Local authorities and other statutory bodies use six principles to guide their safeguarding activity:

- Empowerment – actions or decisions must be based on the presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent.
- Prevention – it is better to take action before harm occurs.
- Proportionality – the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- Protection – support and representation for those in greatest need.
- Partnerships – local solutions through services working with their communities.
- Accountability – accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

These principles echo the ACS approach to service delivery overall.

Section 1

Aims of this Policy

Alsager Community Support is committed to ensuring that safeguarding practices within our charity reflect statutory responsibilities, government guidance, comply with best practice and also Cheshire East Safeguarding Board/Partnership requirements.

This policy aims to prevent harm and provide a speedy and effective response for dealing with concerns about the safety of a vulnerable adult. In summary to:

- Stop abuse and neglect where possible
- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect
- Provide staff and volunteers with overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding

It is important we have a policy because ACS provide services to a range of adults, and we may suspect or be told about current or historic abuse or neglect.

ACS safeguarding guidelines and procedures will ensure that staff and volunteers are able to deal appropriately with these situations. This will include:

- having sound recruitment practices
- ensuring all staff and volunteers have an understanding and awareness of adult safeguarding
- ensuring all staff and volunteers know how to raise safeguarding concerns and feel confident doing so

The aim of this policy is to prevent harm and respond effectively if anyone has concerns about the safety of a vulnerable adult. The service is open to all and vulnerable adults, their friends, family, children and carers will use the service.

ACS recognises that the welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount, that all vulnerable adults, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or beliefs have the right to be protected from abuse. ACS will take all allegations of abuse and neglect seriously.

Scope of the Policy and Procedure

The aim of this policy and procedure is to ensure-

- the safety of adults at risk by outlining clear procedures and
- that all staff, Trustees and volunteers within ACS are clear about their responsibilities and are trained adequately
- service plans consider the need to safeguard adults at risk

Section 2

Definition of Adult at risk

An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over; who

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs), and

- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

This may include a person who:

- is an older person who is frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment;
- has a learning disability;
- has a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment /or communication difficulty e.g. autism
- has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder;
- has a long-term illness/condition;
- misuses substances or alcohol;
- lacks capacity to make specific decisions.

Within the services provided by ACS, adults at risk could be present, in any group or session at any time so this safeguarding policy statement is applicable throughout all of ACS activities and provision. In the case of suspected abuse initially staff, trustees or volunteers should raise an alert and submit this to the named Safeguarding lead who will contact the Cheshire East Adult Social Care Team and other authorities as applicable.

What is abuse?

Abuse of an adult can take many forms. Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take a variety of forms and can be both overt and covert. The following list is not exhaustive, but is illustrative of the kinds of abuse that might be experienced.

- Domestic abuse
- Psychological
- Sexual abuse
- Physical (including Female Genital Mutilation and Honour Based Violence)
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
- Neglect & Acts of Omission
- Discrimination abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Self-Neglect
- Deprivation Of Liberty

Section 3

Safeguarding Lead

The Safeguard Lead for ACS is Melisa Dickinson. In cases where the lead person is not available or there is an allegation against the lead person then the Chair of Trustees, Lynne Gammon should be contacted.

In the event that none of these are available another member of the Operational team (Volunteer Coordinator or Project Development Officer) must be contacted.

Safeguarding Responsibilities: All Trustees have responsibility for the oversight of safeguarding and understand that those responsibilities include protecting clients, volunteers and staff. Safeguarding issues will be dealt with by the relevant staff and reported to the Trustees on a regular basis.

The named person will have full awareness of the policy and procedures guidelines and have attended training on safeguarding.

The named contact will be a single point of contact for the organisation in relation to:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Female genital Mutilation
- Prevent
- Domestic Abuse
- Honour Based Violence
- Forced Marriage
- Mental Capacity Act
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
- Trafficking / Modern Slavery

Standards

(a) ACS staff and volunteers are required to:

- Where appropriate and required by regulations, have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check when they commence employment. Where this has not been undertaken staff will not be allowed to work with adults unless supervised by a member of staff who has had a clear DBS check.
- Demonstrate respect for all service users as individuals in all matters.
- Reflect on their own approach and style, recognising the inherent power their position bestows.
- Undertake relevant training in safeguarding, disclosure and diversity matters.
- Ask a senior member of staff if they have any uncertainties about how to deal with a specific service user.

- Ensure that all service users experience a suitable and supportive environment to encourage service user disclosure of any issues which might affect the way in which they should be treated.
- Ensure all service users are aware of our Equality and Diversity policy and that they know how to complain if they become victims of harassment bullying, unfair treatment or harassment.
- Ensure a diverse range of services and training that is sensitive to difference.
- Invite and encourage constructive feedback from service users about standards and styles of behaviour and promote an open and honest culture of respect for diversity.
- Deal with complaints of abuse, unfair treatment or harassment and bullying promptly, sensitively, confidentially and in accordance with procedures
- Ensure that all persons working for or providing services to ACS are provided with a briefing on these safeguarding policies and procedures before any work is undertaken or any services delivered.
- Report any incidents immediately to any relevant partners or commissioners.
- Keep all safeguarding training logs, safer recruitment documentation (incl DBS information) and safeguarding reports/concerns, up to date and securely stored.

(b) Service users are required to:

- Help prevent inappropriate behaviour by challenging and reporting behaviour that appears to be causing distress to others.
- Support an open, constructive environment within which diversity is valued positively.

(c) Dealing with claims of abuse perpetrated by internal members of staff

This Policy makes it clear how staff are expected to perform when dealing with all service users including adults at risk. It specifically ensures that claims of abuse made by internal staff will be investigated and dealt with.

Section 4

Safeguarding Procedure

1. First steps

In accordance with the principle of empowerment, the decision on whether to report a safeguarding concern should normally be discussed with the person the concern is about and where possible their permission should be gained to report the concern.

However, there will be situations when confidentiality between ACS and the client needs to be breached without their permission. This includes situations where the person we are concerned about is in serious and immediate danger and there is no time to get permission, it is not possible to get permission or the person is not able to give permission (abuser is always present). ACS will not try to get permission if this might put the person in more danger. In these situations the wellbeing of the client or others who may be at risk takes precedence over the principle of confidentiality.

If you think abuse has or may have occurred act immediately. It is the responsibility of the person first becoming aware of a situation where there may be an adult subject to, or at risk of, abuse to make safe and deal with the immediate needs of the person. This may mean taking reasonable steps to ensure the adult is in no immediate danger and seeking medical treatment if required as a matter of urgency.

Do NOT discuss the allegation of abuse with the alleged perpetrator.

Do NOT disturb or destroy articles that could be used in evidence. Where an assault of some kind is suspected do not wash or bathe the person unless this is associated with first aid treatment necessary to prevent further harm.

Do NOT discuss concerns or disclosures with other members of staff other than the safeguarding lead.

If the allegation is about a staff member or volunteer of any organisation, ensure that the allegation is properly managed. Tell your safeguarding lead (or manager if your safeguarding lead is unavailable or is implicated in the allegation) immediately.

Contact the police if it is thought a crime has just been committed. Telephone 101 or 999 if an emergency

Record details of the allegation as soon as possible somewhere that can be kept secure.

Include:

- a) the allegation or concerns, including the date and time of the incident,
- b) what the adult at risk said about the abuse and how it occurred or what has been reported to you.
- c) The appearance and behaviour of the victim.
- d) Any injuries observed.
- e) Whether any dependants are also at risk

2. If the allegation is against a member of staff or a volunteer of ACS

ACS will ensure that any allegations made against a member of staff will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures:

- The worker must ensure that the vulnerable adult is safe and away from the person against whom the allegation is made.
- The named person for safeguarding should be informed immediately.
- In the case of an allegation involving the named person, alternative arrangements should be sought to ensure that the matter is dealt with by an independent person. (Note: this could be a Trustee or anyone within the organisation that is in a senior position within the organisation and believed to be independent of the allegations being made).
- The named person should contact the local authority social services team for advice on how to proceed with the immediate situation. Outside of working hours the Emergency Duty Team can give advice and/or in the event of an emergency situation arising, the police.
- The individual who first received/witnessed the concern should make a full written record of what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible after observing the incident/receiving the report. It is important that the report is an accurate description. The named person (if appropriate) can support the worker during this process but must not complete the report for the worker. This report must be made available on request from either the police and/or social services.
- Regardless of whether a policy and/or social services investigation follows, ACS will ensure that an internal investigation takes place and consideration is given to the operation of disciplinary procedures. This may involve an immediate suspension and/or ultimate dismissal dependant on the nature of the incident.
- ACS will also inform the Charity Commission and report this as a serious incident even if this is an allegation or suspicion as soon as is reasonably possible. This report will outline how the trustees will investigate this and actions taken to prevent this from reoccurring.
- Whistle blowing will not prejudice the position or prospects of ACS staff or volunteers

3. Bring the concern to the attention of your Safeguarding Lead

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead to:

1. Decide without delay on the most appropriate course of action once the allegation or suspicion of abuse has been raised.
2. Deal with any immediate needs:
 - a) Ensure that the victim of the alleged abuse is safe
 - b) Ensure that any necessary emergency medical treatment is arranged
 - c) Ensure that no forensic evidence is lost
 - d) If the alleged perpetrator is also an adult at risk, ensure that another member of staff/manager is allocated to attend to their needs and ensure that other service users are not put at risk.
3. Clarify the facts stated by the member of staff but do NOT in any circumstances discuss the allegation of abuse with the alleged perpetrator.
4. Check that the circumstances fall within the safeguarding adults procedure i.e. meeting the definition of abuse as defined in this Policy and Procedure.
5. Address issues of consent and confidentiality, taking care to not promise confidentiality
6. A formal referral must be made on the same day as the alert is raised when:
 - a crime has been, could have been, or yet could be committed.
 - There is a suspicion that an abuse has taken place.
 - The allegation involves a child
 - The alleged perpetrator is themselves an adult at risk.
 - They are unsure if abuse has taken place
7. Where a decision is made NOT to refer, the alert must be recorded, with the reasons for the decision not to refer.
8. All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints must be recorded, monitored and available for internal and external audit.

4. The referral stage

This involves bringing the concern regarding alleged abuse or potential abuse formally to the attention of the following authorities as appropriate:

- All referrals should be made to: **Cheshire East Adult Social care**
The following number should be called **0300 123 5010**
- The police if you think a crime may have been committed - Tel: 101 and specify it is a safeguarding issue (999 in an emergency).
- If a child is also at risk contact Children's Services Tel: 0300 123 5012
- Outside normal office hours, or on weekends or Bank Holidays, contact should be made for children and adults on the **out of hours** number **0300 123 5022**.

The person making the referral should ideally have the following information available; however, the lack of any of this information should not delay the referral:

- The name of the adult
- Date of birth and age
- Address and telephone number
- Why the adult is considered to be at risk
- Whether consent has been obtained for the referral, and if not the reasons e.g. the adult lacks mental capacity or there is an over-riding public interest (e.g. where other adults or children are at risk)
- What the person involved has said they want to happen next (the referral needs to be made, with details of those involved even if the person has not given consent, but this needs to be included in the information given)
- Whether there are any concerns or doubts about the mental capacity of the adult at risk
- Whether the police are aware of the allegation, and whether a police investigation is underway

What happens next?

The Safeguard Lead should receive acknowledgement of the referral from the relevant agency, and be given feedback about what happens next. This will not always be appropriate to pass on to the person completing the first account report.

Section 5

This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with the following relevant policies:

- Boundaries and Behaviours incl. code of conducts and Whistleblowing
- Safer Recruitment incl. role responsibilities
- GDPR policy
- Equality and Diversity

Section 6

POLICY APPROVED BY TRUSTEES ON: 01/02/2024

Signed by: Daivd Black

Safeguard Lead: Melisa Dickinson

REVIEW DATE : 01/02/2025