

Protection of Vulnerable Adults / Safeguarding Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all staff members are clear about their responsibilities.

The characteristics of adult abuse can take a number of forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s).

Victims may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach. There may be some situations where victims are unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this information to others.

This policy recognises the following principles:

- It is every person's right to live in safety and to be free from abuse or fear of abuse from others.
- It is every person's right to live an independent life based on 'self-determination' and personal choice.

It is the responsibility of Sixty-One/MentorMe to actively work to help prevent the abuse of vulnerable adults. This will be achieved by raising awareness, empowering people to make their own decisions and putting appropriate safeguards in place.

No Sixty-One/MentorMe staff member or volunteer will be allowed to work with offenders until they have completed the relevant safeguarding training and passed the appropriate safety checks. On completion, safeguarding training will be reviewed and updated every 18 months for all members of staff and monitored by the Office Manager.

All staff members have to attend safeguarding training, annual updates, and any refresher training as directed by the CEO.

When a situation is discovered in which a vulnerable adult reports, or is thought to be at risk of abuse, Sixty-One/MentorMe will react quickly in a co-ordinated manner to help them to overcome these difficulties.

Sixty-One/MentorMe recognises that people can be discriminated against on the basis of race, culture, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation. We are committed to working with vulnerable adults in a positive manner that values them as individuals.

Definitions

The law recognises a vulnerable adult to be:

"A person aged 18 or over who is, or may be, in need of community care services or is resident in a continuing care facility by reason of mental or physical disability, age or illness, or who is, or may be, unable to care for him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation."

This may, for example, include a person who:

- Is a substance misuser
- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental illness including dementia
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is homeless

The Care Act 2014 now defines an adult at risk of abuse or neglect as ‘someone who has needs for care and support, who is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of their care needs – is unable to protect themselves.’

Prisoners and ex-prisoners may well be considered to be vulnerable by virtue of the above definitions.

Types of Abuse

Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take a number of forms:

- Physical abuse, e.g. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, neglect or abandonment
- Sexual abuse, e.g. involvement in any sexual activity, including exposure to pornography, against his/her will, voyeurism and exhibitionism.
- Psychological / Emotional abuse, e.g. intimidation or humiliation
- Financial abuse, e.g. theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money from pensions or savings etc.
- Neglect or acts of omission, e.g. being left in wet or soiled clothing, or experiencing malnutrition
- Discriminatory abuse, e.g. racial, sexual or religious harassment
- Personal exploitation – denying an individual his/her rights or forcing him/her unlawfully to perform tasks that are against his/her will
- Violation of rights, e.g. preventing an individual holding his/her thoughts and opinions
- Institutional abuse, e.g. failure to provide adequately for his / her dietary requirements or failure to ensure privacy or dignity
- Domestic abuse
- Modern slavery
- Self-neglect, e.g. when a person does not look after themselves fully. This may be a choice they make, or because they are ill or unable. It can also be a sign that something else is going wrong in their life. If the self-neglect makes the person unwell, or is impacting on the health and wellbeing of others, it is important to get help.

Reporting Procedures

In emergency situations (e.g. where there is the risk or occurrence of severe physical injury) where immediate action is needed to safeguard the health or safety of the individual or anyone else who may be at risk, you must contact the emergency services immediately

Where a crime is taking place, has just occurred, or is suspected, you must contact the police immediately.

If you discover or suspect that a person is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing abuse or neglect, you must inform the relevant person (see below) as soon as possible and follow this up with a written report. If the relevant person is not available for 24 hours, you should contact the next person down in the list.

Your written report should detail precise facts, not opinions, and give a clear account of what happened (or is happening). On completion, you should sign, date and time the report.

The relevant person at MentorMe/Sixty-One will carry out a risk assessment within 24 hours and, if appropriate, they will inform the social services. If the relevant person is in any doubt about whether or not to report an issue to social services, they should report it.

Relevant Person:

For MentorMe matters	For Sixty-One matters
MentorMe Project Manager (who will keep the CEO informed)	CEO (who will keep the Chair informed)
CEO	Chair of Trustees
Chair of Trustees	

Allegations against Sixty-One/MentorMe staff or volunteers

Volunteers and members of staff themselves may also be the subject of an allegation of abuse. While support will be offered, Sixty-One/MentorMe will ensure that the social services and the police are given full support in pursuing any investigation. Suspension and/or disciplinary action may be implemented.

In the event that you need to report a volunteer or a member of staff, please contact the relevant person listed against the subject of the report.

Subject of report	Relevant person
MentorMe Volunteer	MentorMe Project Manager
MentorMe Staff member	CEO
CEO	Chair of trustees
Chair of trustees	Board of trustees (whether or not social services need to be informed, an internal investigation should be carried out by a member of the Board of Trustees)
Board of Trustees	Charity Commission

All members of staff and volunteers have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions that they might have concerning adult abuse.

Responsibilities of staff and volunteers

- To be familiar with and to act in accordance with this policy and its procedures;
- To take appropriate action in line with the policies of Sixty-One/MentorMe.
- To raise any concerns as soon as they arise with the MentorMe Project manager/CEO. Sharing the right information, at the right time, with the right people is fundamental to good practice in safeguarding.
- In the case of severe concerns where delay could result in further harm, contact should be made with the relevant statutory authority immediately and the Manager/CEO should be informed as soon as possible afterwards. Ideally information should only be shared with other agencies where consent has been obtained, but this would not apply where obtaining consent would put someone at risk.

Local Safeguarding Team Contact details:

Bristol:

Online: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/social-care-and-health/adults-and-older-people/report-suspected-abuse>

Telephone: Care Direct on 0117 922 2700

South Glos: Online: <http://sites.southglos.gov.uk/safeguarding/>

Telephone: 01454 868007 Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm, 01454615165 Out of hours and at weekends

BANES: Online: <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/council-services/adult-social-care>

If you suspect an adult is being abused or neglected, call us on 01225 394200 (Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 5pm, Fridays, 8.30am to 4.30pm), or our Emergency Duty Social Work team on 01454 61 51 65 (evenings, weekends and bank holidays). This could be you or someone you know.