

Policy and Procedure

Adult Safeguarding

Introduction

Safeguarding is everyone's business and Redbourn Community Group (RCG) will comply with its responsibilities under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Care Act 2014 and will work together with other organisations to protect our clients and volunteers who need help and support.

Redbourn Community Group is committed to ensuring:

- The welfare of adults they work with and support, is always paramount.
- Adults at risk should never experience abuse of any kind.
- All adults at risk have the right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse. As such we will give equal priority to keeping all vulnerable adults safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (Please also refer to our Fairness and Equality Policy).
- That we safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live.
- That we work in partnership with others to safeguard adults at risk.
- That safe and effective working practices are in place.

This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities for Adult Safeguarding that apply to all Volunteers, Clients (if applicable), Trustees and Others (permanent, seconded, temporary or voluntary) working with RCG. Our work involves volunteers and others being in contact with adults who may have care and support needs. The objectives of this policy are to ensure that RCG volunteers:

- Have a clear overview of adult safeguarding.
- Are clear about their responsibility to safeguard adults.
- Can ensure the necessary actions are taken where an adult with care and support needs is either at risk, or is considered to be at risk, and is unable to protect themselves.
- Help to stop abuse or neglect, or the risk of abuse or neglect, of adults with care and support needs.

RCG will adhere to following the six key principles that underpin safeguarding work, and volunteers should ensure that their work reflects these principles:

- **Empowerment:** We will support and encourage clients to make their own decisions and to give informed consent.
- **Prevention:** We will take action where possible before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality:** We will ensure the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection:** We will support and represent those in need.
- **Partnership:** We will involve partners from the community as necessary in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability:** We will be accountable and transparent in delivering safeguarding actions.

Further information and guidance are available from Hertfordshire County Council Adult Safeguarding Board including posters, leaflets and guidance.

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/adult-social-services/report-a-concern-about-an-adult/hertfordshire-safeguarding-adults-board/hsab-and-hscp-training-and-resources.aspx#resources>

Protecting adults at risk from abuse

Who are adults at risk?

Adults at risk are adults in need of care and support who may be at risk of abuse or neglect. This may be because they are older or have a mental health problem, a learning or physical disability.

What is abuse?

Abuse is where someone in a position of trust hurts, harms, or causes distress to an adult at risk. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated actions directly or indirectly and can happen anywhere. Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person(s) and can be committed by one or more people. Abuse may be intentional or unintentional i.e., poor practice.

Abuse can be:

- **Physical abuse** – such as hitting, pushing, kicking, shaking, restraint.
- **Domestic violence** – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, 'honour based' violence. There is often a cycle of violence and the abuse gets worse over time. Domestic violence can occur in opposite or same-sex relationships.
- **Sexual abuse** – such as inappropriate touching, rape, sexual assault, or sexual acts of any kind to which the adult at risk has not consented, or could not consent, or which they were pressurised into consenting.
- **Sexual exploitation** - involves exploitative situations and relationships where people receive 'something' (e.g., accommodation, alcohol, affection, money) as a result of them performing, or others performing on them, sexual activities.
- **Psychological abuse** – including emotional abuse, being shouted at, ridiculed, or bullied, as well as being made to feel frightened or pressured into decisions.
- **Financial or material abuse** – is theft, fraud, internet scamming, misusing, or withholding someone's money or belongings. It also includes coercion in relation to someone's financial affairs or arrangements, including wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.
- **Modern slavery** – includes slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.
- **Discriminatory abuse** – poor treatment or harassment based on age, gender, sexuality, disability, race, or religious belief.
- **Organisational abuse** – includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in someone's own home. When any of these types of abuse are caused by an organisation it might be called 'Organisational abuse'.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** – include ignoring medical, emotional, or physical care needs, failure to provide access to health, care and support or educational services, the withholding essentials, such as sufficient nutrition and heating.
- **Self-neglect** – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for own personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviours such as hoarding.
- **Other types of abuse** can include FGM, forced marriage, radicalisation, hate crime (including racial, sexual, or other prejudice, usually involves violence), mate crime (fake 'friend/s' befriending a vulnerable person with the aim of exploiting them) and cyber abuse (any form of bullying which takes place online/ social networking sites/ chat rooms).

Abuse or neglect can happen anywhere - at home, at work or an organisation like a hospital or a care home.

Who might be an abuser:

Adults at risk can be abused by a wide range of people – anyone, in fact, who has contact with them. This includes family, friends, neighbours, paid staff, carers, volunteers, other service users, strangers. Factors increasing the risk of abuse include social isolation, dependency, poor communication, poor quality of long-term relationships, patterns of family abuse/violence, alcohol, drug, or mental health problems.

How do we know if someone is being abused?

You may notice a number of signs if someone is being abused, for example:

- **Behaviour** – they may become withdrawn, depressed or tearful. They may also be angry or aggressive for little reason.
- **Personal hygiene** – they may not take as much care as normal with their appearance, such as not bathing, shaving or washing their hair.
- **Lifestyle** – they may stop going out, not have any money to access leisure services or buy food, not welcome visitors, not want to be left alone with certain people or lose their appetite.
- **Injuries** – they may have unexplained or frequent injuries.

If, as part of your involvement with RCG, you are worried about someone who is showing any of the above signs, you must tell someone in RCG (see **Reporting Abuse** below). Adults at risk can be silent victims of abuse. People should not suffer in silence, as help is available. Even if you're not sure that it is abuse, there are people who you can talk to about your concerns so that the person concerned can be protected and made safe.

Responsibilities of Redbourn Community Group

- Take action to identify and prevent abuse from happening.
- Respond appropriately when abuse has or is suspected to have occurred.
- Ensure volunteers, Trustees and others who work with RCG are appropriately trained and support them in accessing these events.
- Ensuring that the organisation has a dedicated member with an expertise in safeguarding.
- Ensure that all volunteers and staff who come into contact with adults with care and support needs have a DBS check in line with the requirements of this service.
- Whilst it is unlikely that RCG would work directly with children, in the event that this were to happen, our policy is to always have a 2-adult presence i.e., whenever we work with children it will always be in the presence of a parent or guardian, or a responsible adult nominated by them.

Responsibilities of all Volunteers, Trustees and others who work with RCG

All are expected to understand and apply this policy and procedure in their RCG activities and:

- Act appropriately, remain alert of the possibility of abuse and be able to recognise harm or abuse
- Always follow the safeguarding policy and guidance, particularly if concerns arise about abuse of an adult at risk.
- **Complete Safeguarding Adults at Risk Training to level 1 within first year of volunteering and at regular intervals thereafter.**
- Discuss any concerns in a timely and appropriate way with the office and/or the Trustee who is the designated Safeguarding Lead, and/or the Chair. Contribute to actions required including information sharing and attending meetings where required.
- Work collaboratively with other agencies to safeguard and protect the welfare of those in RCG.
- Ensure that the adult with care and support needs is involved at all stages of their safeguarding enquiry, ensuring it is both person-centred and outcome-focused. It should not be a process imposed upon a person.

RCG volunteers will be vigilant about adult safeguarding and recognise that we are often well placed to notice changes in people and their behaviour that may indicate they are being abused or neglected. It may be difficult for adults at risk to protect themselves and to report abuse, and they may rely on volunteers for help.

We should be alert to:

- Changes in an individual's disposition or demeanour.
- Overhearing indications of abuse or exploitation from an individual.
- Being informed directly or indirectly by other adults, member of the public, carer, or another volunteer.

PROCEDURE

Volunteer Guidelines for Responding

RCG recognises that it has a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse and believes that the safety of the Adult at Risk should override any doubts, hesitations, or other considerations (such as the potential to have a negative impact on professional relationships with others).

If an Adult at Risk confides in you:

- Stay calm, approachable, and open to what they have to say.
- Speak to them in a private and safe place.

If you observe worrying changes in an Adult at Risk's behaviour, physical condition, or appearance:

- Take emergency action if someone is at immediate risk of harm/in need of urgent medical attention. Dial 999 for emergency services. You may need to contact their GP if non-life-threatening medical assistance is required.
- Otherwise, initially talk to the person about what you are observing. It is okay to ask questions, for example: "I've noticed that you don't appear yourself today, is everything okay?"

In all circumstances:

DO

- listen carefully to what the person has to say without interrupting.
- make it clear that you are taking what they are telling you seriously.
- ask the adult what they would like to happen next.
- let them know that you will do everything you can to help them.
- reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling someone.
- seek consent from the adult to take action and to report the concern, explaining you have a duty to report, but only to those who need to know.
- re-assure them they will be involved in any decisions that may be taken.
- acknowledge that you understand how difficult this might be for them to say what they are saying.

DO NOT

- show any shock or disgust.
- probe further.
- ask leading questions that might suggest the answer.
- make assumptions.
- make any comments about the alleged abuser.
- make promises you cannot keep, particularly about keeping the information 'secret'.
- investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a person talks about matters that may be indicative of abuse.

Consider whether the adult may lack the capacity to make decisions about their own and other people's safety and wellbeing. A person is deemed to have mental capacity unless proven otherwise. If you decide to act against their wishes or without their consent, you must record your decision and the reasons for this.

Volunteer Guidelines for Reporting and Recording

- The Referrer (volunteer who is reporting the potential abuse concerns) should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Chair, without delay, of the potential safeguarding concern, and of any action taken so far.
- The DSL or Chair will arrange to speak to the Referrer. The Referrer may be given a Safeguarding Log to complete with the details of their concern (see example in Appendix).
- The Safeguarding information should be completed as soon as possible, ideally within 24 hours and shared to the DSL.
- Safeguarding concerns will be kept confidentially on a secure database, and in accordance with GDPR requirements.
- The DSL will undertake a risk assessment for the client, based on the information and situation as it presents itself, and act upon this, to protect the client from further, or potential further, harm.

Volunteer Guidelines for Referral

Concerns about safeguarding should be reported as described above. The DSL or DDSL (or if unavailable the Chair) will be responsible for making the decision to notify Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board if required, and to consider alternative actions, where necessary. Information from HCC on 'how to make a 'good' Safeguarding Adults referral' is available [here](#).

In making a decision whether or not to refer the concern to appropriate people, the DSL, in discussion with the Referrer, will take into account:

- The adult's wishes and preferred outcome.
- Whether the adult has mental capacity to make an informed decision about their own and others' safety.
- The safety or wellbeing of any children or other adults involved, with care and support needs.
- Whether there is a person in a position of trust involved.
- Whether a crime has been committed.

This will inform the decision whether to notify the concern to the following people:

- The police, if a crime has been committed, and/or
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) for a possible safeguarding situation
- Family/relatives as appropriate (with advice from HSAB as appropriate)
- Other partner agencies such as the GP practice

Safeguarding Responsibilities (DSL, Chair)

- The DSL/Chair will be responsible for ensuring all safeguarding incidents are recorded on the RCG confidential database and that this information is kept safely.
- The DSL will ensure that the Adult Safeguarding Policy and related procedures are in place and up to date.
- The DSL will ensure volunteers (those who undertake roles as car and/or minibus drivers, couriers, friendly talkers, administrators) and Trustees/Chair are up to date with their safeguarding adults training on a regular basis (every 2 years is recommended), and may either cascade down the initial training to any new volunteers in all regulated activities or arrange for external training courses.
- The Chair of RCG has strategic responsibility for safeguarding adults in connection with the charity and within its volunteer work remit.
- If a safeguarding incident involves an RCG volunteer or the DSL, the Referrer should take the concern directly to the Chair.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

RCG expects all volunteers and trustees to maintain confidentiality at all times. In line with GDPR, RCG does not share information if not required. It should, however, be noted, that information will be shared with the relevant professionals/ authorities if an adult is deemed to be at risk of harm or abuse.

Mental Capacity

If an adult has mental capacity, then volunteers and professionals cannot get involved or make decisions about their safety without his/her permission. Wherever possible, an adult should be given support to reach a decision for themselves about their own safety and wellbeing. However, in certain circumstances, responsibility for decision making can be taken by the volunteer (or professional) where:

- The adult lacks capacity, for example the person has an impairment of, or disturbance, in the functioning of the mind or brain, at that time.
- The adult poses a risk to other adults with care and support needs or children, regardless of the mental capacity of the adult or victim.
- A serious crime has been committed.
- The adult is under the undue influence of another adult and being coerced.

Training

All volunteers, Trustees and others who work with RCG should receive basic safeguarding adults' awareness training at a level according to their role. The following volunteer roles are required to complete Safeguarding Adults at Risk training to Level 1 - car and minibus drivers, couriers, friendly talkers, friendly walkers, administrators and trustees.

Reporting Abuse

What to do if you think an adult at risk may be subject to abuse or neglect

- Consult **urgently** with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on 0754 998 9441
- They will make a referral to HCC Adult Safeguarding: **0300 123 4042**. You may be asked to provide further details directly to HCC, if applicable.

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Ailsa Hulme 07899 995863	ailsa@redbourncg.org
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This Policy will be subject to annual review or in the following circumstances: -

- Changes in legislation and/ or government guidance
- As required by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board
- As required by the Charity Commission

Policy approved and adopted by Trustees March 2025, subject to annual review.

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Redbourn Community Group

Charity No 297955

APPENDIX

ADULT SAFEGUARDING CONCERN LOG (an example)

Can be used as a guide to capture relevant information if a Safeguarding concern is reported to HCC Adult Safeguarding Board. Note: Information needs to be captured as near as possible to the time of the incident.

Your name:	Contact details:
Area of volunteering (e.g., Driving, Friendly talks, Outings etc):	
Name of client:	
Date, time, and place of concern:	
Did the client divulge something to you that concerned you? If so, please give factual details, recording actual words if possible, remembering who, what, where, when: (Please continue on a separate sheet of paper if necessary)	
Or were you alerted to something that concerned you? If so, please give details, remembering who, what, where, when: (Please continue on a separate sheet of paper if necessary)	
Were any actions taken by you immediately? If so, please give details:	
Did you gain the consent of the client to take action and report the concern? If not, please give your reasons for not doing so:	
Do you have an opinion (if relevant)? (How and why, this may have happened):	
Signed..... Date.....	

RCG Safeguarding concern log	RCG is a registered Charity (No. 297955) E-mail: info@redbourncg.org ; Website: www.redbourncg.org	Version 2023
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