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Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

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1. Rationale

Manchester Settlement is committed to preventing the abuse of adults and responding promptly when abuse is suspected.

We are concentrated on better outcomes for individuals by balancing protection from harm with the need for individuals to exercise choice and control over how they live.

We aim to prevent and reduce the risk of significant harm to adults from abuse or other types of exploitation, whilst supporting individuals in maintaining control over their lives and in making informed choices without coercion.

Manchester Settlement's policy follows guidelines set out in Manchester Adults Safeguarding Adults guidance

We think that:

Safeguarding is everyone's business - Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. We will work together to prevent and minimise abuse. If we have concerns that someone is being abused our loyalty to the vulnerable person comes before anything else – our group, other service users, our colleagues and the person's friends and family.

Doing nothing is not an option - If we know or suspect that a vulnerable adult is being abused, we will do something about it and ensure our work is properly recorded. We will work within the boundaries of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Procedures.

2. Supported Housing Rationale

The adults we support that are most likely to need safeguarding are those in our supported housing projects.

Housing staff are well placed to identify people with care and support needs at risk of abuse, share information and work with social care, health and the police.

People who live in sheltered, supported or extra care housing may be particularly vulnerable to abuse but a high, and increasing, proportion of people with care and support needs live in general needs housing. We commit to having safeguarding systems in place and workers at all levels that are able to prevent abuse where possible and respond appropriately and proportionately when it occurs or is suspected.

Our housing staff have a key safeguarding role to play, alongside their colleagues in social care, health and the police. They are well placed to identify people with care and support needs at risk of abuse, share information and work in partnership to coordinate responses.

Our work often involves working with young adults who are vulnerable to exploitation including Modern Day Slavery. Our work with young adults who are or have been asylum seekers raises risk that we have to be aware of risks regarding MDS, as such we explicitly recognise it within this policy

Prevention is better than cure, so a joint, proactive approach to preventing abuse and reducing risk makes good sense both in terms of the human and operational costs. If housing staff and contractors are aware of the issues relating to abuse and included as safeguarding partners, it is likely that residents with care and support needs will be safer.

Why are housing staff important partners?

Housing staff and contractors may:

- have local knowledge of anti-social behaviour or crime patterns such as distraction burglary
- be the first to become aware of an individual developing care and support needs as a result of age, disability or illness
- be aware of people with care and support needs who are not known to social services
- be in a position to pick up signs of abuse and neglect when visiting residents

3. The Care Act 2014

Safeguarding duties apply under the Care Act 2014. The Care and support statutory guidance states that 'all workers need to be vigilant about adult safeguarding concerns' and that safeguarding practice should be underpinned by the six safeguarding principles:

4. Safeguarding Principles:

The General Principles we safeguard adults under:

Empowerment -Presumption of person led decisions and informed consent.

Prevention -It is better to take action before harm occurs.

Proportionality – Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

Protection -Support and representation for those in greatest need.

Partnership -Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.

Accountability -Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

5. Who may have care and support needs?

People with care and support needs are not all vulnerable to abuse but may become so at any point due to physical or mental ill health, acquired disability, old age or environmental factors, such as poverty and anti-social behaviour. A person with care and support needs may:

- be a young adult living independently
- be a care leaver
- be or have been an asylum seeker
- be elderly, with poor health, a physical disability or cognitive impairment
- have learning disabilities
- have a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment
- have mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder
- have a long-term illness/condition
- be dependent on substances or alcohol to an extent that it has a serious impact on their ability to cope with day-to-day living.

People may be at greater risk because they are:

- socially isolated which may provide an opportunity for exploitation
- unsure of who to trust
- dependent on others to manage their finances or to withdraw or collect money for them
- unable to escape abuse or they tolerate it due to their reliance on the abuser, adapted accommodation or the lack of suitable alternative accommodation and care provision.

6. Preventing abuse and neglect

It is important for our staff to respond promptly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns, but it is always better to try to prevent people from being abused in the first place. People who are informed, in control of their lives and empowered to assert their views are less likely to be victims of abuse and neglect, and will be in a better position to speak out should it happen.

The Care Act requires the local authority and partners to promote individual wellbeing and to prevent, reduce and delay future need. This means that it is important to intervene early to prevent escalation of problems that may result in crisis and a higher level of need. There are several ways in which our staff can contribute to a preventative approach on safeguarding:

- Raising general public awareness of what constitutes abuse and how to report it
- Educate service users on how to recognise abuse and protect themselves from it
- Ensuring individuals have access to support from social services, voluntary support agencies and health
- Working with perpetrators of anti-social behaviour to try to reduce their behaviour and minimise risk
- Working with social care to ensure adequate support for carers.
- Ensuring staff training includes prevention and Making Safeguarding Personal
- Have systems in place to facilitate the identification of people with care and support needs and possible risks
- Have mechanisms in place to identify people who may pose a risk
- Making strategic links with the Safeguarding Adults Board and other multi- agency public protection forums
- Ensuring that staff understand and follow multi-agency policies and procedures
- Seeking to address social exclusion and isolation through local joint strategies
- Promoting inter-agency collaboration
- Ensuring that allocations policies consider risk to our service users

7. What are the signs staff should look for?

Signs of abuse can often be difficult to detect. People with communication difficulties can be particularly at risk because they may not be able to alert others. Sometimes people may not even be aware that they are being abused, and this is especially likely if they have a cognitive impairment. Abusers may try to prevent access to the person they abuse. It is vital that people who come into contact with people with care and support needs are able to identify abuse and recognise possible indicators.

8. Making Safeguarding Personal

Making Safeguarding Personal refers to the culture shift taking place in safeguarding practice to ensure that people who are being abused or neglected, or who may be at risk, are supported to make choices and, wherever possible, remain in control of decision-making. The emphasis is on empowering people and finding the right balance between individual choice and control and safety.

Empowering people means respecting their rights. An individual may want to move to get away from an abuser or an abusive situation. If possible this should be facilitated. However, the person may not want to move and they should never be forced to do so to avoid abuse. The person may fear less security of tenure and moving from adapted or suitable accommodation may reduce their independence. In addition, the person would face the disruption of moving and may lose essential support and ties within the community.

9. Training and raising awareness

Manchester Settlement will ensure that staff and others we work with understand their essential roles in safeguarding adults. We will

- raise awareness of abuse for everyone (staff, contractors, tenants)
- ensure appropriate safeguarding training is provided to all workers at all levels
- tap into joint training with other safeguarding partners
- ensure housing staff have an adequate understanding of the Mental Capacity Act 2005
- work with social care to provide training for people with care and support needs to enable them to better protect themselves.

10. Definitions

Who is a vulnerable to abuse?

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may be because they have a mental health problem, a disability, a sensory impairment, are old and frail, or have some form of illness.

11. What is adult abuse?

Abuse is mistreatment by any other person or persons that violates a person's human and civil rights. The abuse can vary from treating someone with disrespect in a way which significantly affects the person's quality of life, to causing actual physical suffering.

Abuse can happen anywhere - in a residential or nursing home, a hospital, in the workplace, at a day centre or educational establishment, in supported housing or in the street.

Forms of abuse include:

- **Physical Abuse** such as hitting, pushing, pinching, shaking, misusing medication, scalding, restraint, hair pulling.
- **Sexual Abuse** such as rape, sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not or could not have consented, or to which they were pressurised into consenting.
- **Psychological or Emotional Abuse** such as threats of harm or abandonment, being deprived of social or any other form of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, being prevented from receiving services or support
- **Financial or Material Abuse** such as theft, fraud or exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, or inheritance, misuse of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect** such as ignoring medical or physical care needs and preventing access to health, social care or educational services or withholding the necessities of life such as food, drink and heating.
- **Discriminatory Abuse** such as that based on race or sexuality or a person's disability and other forms of harassment or slurs.
- **Institutional abuse** can sometimes happen in residential homes, nursing homes or hospitals when people are mistreated because of poor or inadequate care, neglect and poor practice that affects the whole of that service.

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 one way they are also being abused in other ways.

12.Radicalisation and Extremism

Our staff are trained to spot signs of radicalisation and extremism, we will work within the guidelines of the relevant Safeguarding Adults Board to report concerns.

13.Modern Day Slavery

Our staff are trained to spot signs of Modern day Slavery, we will work within the guidelines of the relevant Safeguarding Adults Board to report concerns.

14.Allegations Against People in Positions of Trust (PIPOT)

Where allegations are made against staff volunteers or other people in positions of trust regarding the potential abuse of a vulnerable adult, our processes will follow the detailed North West Authorities guidance, summarised by the flow chart at appendix 1.

15.Delivery

What do you do if you are being abused or you suspect that someone you know may be the victim of abuse?

- Staff must ensure that the alleged victim is safe and supported
- Do not have discussions about the alleged abuse with the individuals involved or other staff
- Contact your line manager, or the organisation safeguarding lead as soon as the alleged victim is safe. In the absence of either of these contact Manchester Children, Families and Social Care on 0161 234 5001
- If your manager or MS DSL is unavailable (or is the alleged perpetrator) you may contact your local Children, Families and Social Care office for advice or ring 0161 234 5001
- Record exactly what your concerns are on a Safeguarding Concern Sheet, and why you have them. Be clear, factual and concise. Date and sign your recording. Details of alleged abuse will be stored in a locked cabinet away from the person's general file.
- If the alleged perpetrator is in your vicinity, do not confront them about the incident
- If you suspect that physical or sexual abuse has taken place, DO NOT assist the alleged victim to wash, bathe, change clothing or access food or drink. To do so could contaminate any evidence that the police would require. Greater Manchester Police must be contacted at the earliest possible moment in such instances and your manager will advise on this
- Your line manager will inform you of any further requirements from yourself regarding the allegation any further actions that will be required of you
- You must ensure that you seek effective support from your manager following your report
- It is the responsibility of MS DSL to
 - Collate information regarding alleged victims and perpetrators in a confidential manner
 - Collate outcomes of investigations
 - Provide advice and information relevant to the investigation team where applicable

16. Reporting and Escalating concerns

Sharing information without consent may be justified, if, for example:

- The person lacks the mental capacity to make that decision, and sharing the information is judged to be in their best interests – this must be properly explored and recorded in line with the Mental Capacity Act.
- Other people are, or may be, at risk, including children.
- Sharing the information could prevent a crime.
- A serious crime has been committed.
- The person has the mental capacity to make that decision but they may be under duress or being coerced.
- The risk is unreasonably high and meets the criteria for a multi-agency risk assessment conference referral.
- A court order or other legal authority has requested the information.

If the decision is made to share information with external partners without consent, the person should still be informed. Any risk to the person in doing so should be considered. Advice can be sought from the local authority or police in the first instance without disclosing any personal details.

If an adult or child is in immediate danger you should ring the emergency services or contact the police on 999

If the situation does not require emergency assistance you should report your concerns to:

Manchester Contact Centre

Telephone: 0161 234 5001 (open 24 hours a day, seven days a week)

Email: mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk

Secure email: socialcare@manchester.gcsx.gov.uk if you are sending sensitive information

SMS Text: 07860 003160

Online through: Sign-Video

If staff members or the Manchester Settlement Designated Safeguarding Lead remain concerned that a vulnerable Adult is at risk and are dissatisfied with the response of statutory agencies, safeguarding boards have escalating concerns guidance that should be followed.

17. Appendix 1 – Managing Concerns and allegations against people who work with adults with care and support needs flow chart

