



Torbay Parent Carer Forum (PCF)

Safeguarding Policy

(Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults)

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Ratified: AGM June 2018

Torbay PCF Designated Safeguarding Lead: Carole Brierley

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide advice for Volunteers and Staff working with us on helping us to meet our commitment of ensuring that any child or vulnerable adult receiving any form of support, training, advice or guidance through us is protected from all forms of exploitation and abuse.

We have interpreted and acted on substantial guidance to take preventative measures to protect children and vulnerable adults from:

- Abuse (Physical; Sexual; Psychological/Emotional; Financial or Material; or Discriminatory)
- Neglect (Deliberate acts or Omissions)

We believe that our current arrangements reflect the level of risk associated with our service. All staff and volunteers are asked to subscribe to our Code of Behaviour to help embed the delivery of our policy commitment. We recognise that no guidance can be exhaustive. Our policy is to ensure so far as is possible that all who work with us maintain a proper focus on safeguarding.

Legislation and guidance

- The legislative framework for the child protection system in England is the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004 and the current guidance is Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter- agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (PDF) (HM Government, 2013), and in the new Children and Families Act 2014
- The legislative framework for protection of vulnerable adults is the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and its supporting regulations and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 Part 5, and in the new Care Act 2014 and the



guidance we have chosen to use is No Secrets: guidance on protecting vulnerable adults in care (2000)

Our commitment

- Torbay Parents Carer Forum Is committed to practices that protect children and vulnerable adults from harm and which creates a 'safer' environment that promotes well-being and security.
- Abuse is often hidden in our society and can be overlooked. Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults therefore is an overriding duty for us all. This guidance will help you to be vigilant, able to recognize and report abuse, and to help keep children and vulnerable adults safe.

• We will ensure that all our staff and volunteers:

1. Recognise and accept our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues that may cause harm to vulnerable adults and promote the concept of the individual's right to be treated with respect and dignity and live in safety.
2. Are familiar with the contents within this policy and will have accessed appropriate training.
3. Know what to do if they have significant reasons to suspect and/or observe signs of suspected abuse or neglect.

Definitions

- It is important to consider the following definitions of who should be considered to be a child or vulnerable adult.
- A Child = anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Article 1, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 and HM Government (2013) Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter- agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. London: Department for Education (DfE). (See footnote on p.7).

- A Vulnerable Adult = a person aged 18 or over, who receives or may need community care services because of a disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.



For the purposes of this policy we have chosen to use the he broader definition contained within No Secrets: guidance on protecting vulnerable adults in care (2000) (sections 2.2 & 2.3), rather than the more restricted legal definition contained within Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, which replaced the definition within Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Our responsibilities

• We will:

1. Promote the health and welfare of children and vulnerable adults
2. Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children and vulnerable adults
3. Minimise risks by making sure all recruited staff and volunteers have DBS checks and adopt and abide by this Safeguarding Policy
4. Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults and protect them from abuse
5. Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of vulnerable adults in line with this policy

Principles

This policy is based on the following principles:

1. The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount and everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting them from abuse and neglect.
2. All children and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse and neglect.
3. That all of our staff and volunteers understand what constitutes abuse.
4. It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse and the Police to conduct, where appropriate, a joint investigation.
5. All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct, abuse and neglect will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
6. All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.
7. Reviewing our policy annually in line with national legislation and guidance is essential

What to look out for – common signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect

Physical abuse

This may include 'hitting, shaking, slapping, pushing, kicking, punching, scalding, suffocating, any other ways of inflicting pain or injury, misuse of medication, giving harmful substances (drugs, alcohol or poison etc.), restraint or inappropriate sanction'.

Some of the recognised signs of physical abuse are:

1. Unexplained injuries (burns, scratches, bruising and abrasions);
2. Wearing inappropriate clothes or excessive make-up to cover up unexplained injuries (e.g. long sleeves even in hot weather);
3. Unexplained sickness, drowsiness or similar symptoms that may arise from misuse of medications or being given harmful substances;
4. Fear of physical contact (e.g. shrinking back from any possible touching)
5. Anxiety and/or aggression in the presence of an abuser.

Sexual abuse

This may include 'being pressurised, forced or tricked into taking part in any kind of sexual activity which has/could not have been consented to (e.g. kissing, touching the young person's genitals or breasts, intercourse or oral sex) or being pressurised, forced or tricked to look at pornographic magazines, videos or sexual acts.

Some of the recognised signs of sexual abuse are:

1. Age-inappropriate or other inappropriate behaviour (e.g. regressive, overly affectionate, withdrawn or unable to concentrate)
2. Significant changes in behaviour
3. Unexplained bruising
4. Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well
5. Sexually transmitted diseases
6. Sexualised behaviour

Psychological/Emotional Abuse

There is a strong similarity between the descriptions of these. Emotional abuse is generally described as an element of psychological abuse. Psychological abuse may



include emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, rejection or deprivation of attention or contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, criticising, intimidation, coercion, harassment, terrorisation, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Some of the recognised signs of psychological or emotional abuse are:

1. Age-inappropriate or other inappropriate behaviour (e.g. body-rocking, continual self-deprecation (I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc), neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair-twisting), self-harming, extremes of passivity or aggression)
2. Significant changes in emotions or behaviour (e.g overreaction to mistakes, extreme fear in new situations, or runaway behaviour)
3. Fearfulness
4. Passivity
5. Confusion
6. Apathy
7. Lack of eye contact
8. Low self-esteem
9. Disturbed sleep patterns
10. Reluctance to talk openly

Finance or Material Abuse – This is more likely to be classified as bullying amongst children

This may include 'theft, fraud, exploitation or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits'.

Some of the recognised signs of financial or material abuse are:

1. Loss of jewellery and personal property
2. Lack of money to purchase basic items
3. A bill not being paid when money is entrusted to a third party
4. Inadequate clothing
5. Unexplained withdrawal of cash
6. Loss of money from a wallet or purse

Discriminatory Abuse

This may include abuse, bullying and harassment based on the individual's age, sex, disability, religion, race or ethnicity or sexual orientation.

Some of the recognised signs of discriminatory abuse might be very similar to psychological and emotional abuse. Although all these forms of abuse are now better analysed and documented not all have been fully recognised by education and training provision in the past. These guidelines recommend that education and training providers should formally recognise all six areas of abuse (including neglect) as identified by the Department of Health 'No Secrets: guidance' (2000)

Neglect by deliberate acts or omission

Neglect is the persistent lack of appropriate care of children or vulnerable adults, including love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, warmth, education and medical attention. For babies and very young children or very vulnerable adults, it can be life-threatening. This may include 'ignoring medical or physical care needs, treatment / or advice, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such a medication, adequate heating and nutrition'.

Some of the recognised signs or neglect are:

1. Dirty or unkempt or inadequate presentation (e.g. dirty or inappropriate clothing, head lice, persistent infestations, scabies, sunburn, tooth decay)
2. Dehydration
3. Infections
4. Malnutrition
5. Hypothermia

Abuser characteristics

Abusers can come from any professional, racial or religious background, and can be male or female. They are not always adults - children and young people can also behave in abusive ways. Usually the abuser is a family member or someone known to the child or vulnerable adult, such as a family friend. Abusers may act alone or as



part of an organised group. They sometimes prefer to abuse a child or vulnerable adult of a particular age, sex, physical type or ethnic background. After the abuse, they are likely to put the child or vulnerable adult under great pressure not to tell anyone about it.

They will go to great lengths to get close to children and vulnerable adults to win their trust (e.g. by choosing employment that brings them into contact with children or vulnerable adults, or by pretending to be something they are not in internet chat rooms). Be aware of the heightened risks to children and vulnerable adults from carers who have themselves been victims of abuse and be alert to any signs of more widespread abuse (e.g. siblings or friends)

What to do - if you have significant reasons to suspect and/or observe signs of suspected abuse or neglect

Record Suspected or Actual Incidents

1. Make a written record of all the important information.
2. Important information must include the date and time of disclosure, suspicion, allegation or actual abuse incident and may also include the following details given to you about the above (e.g. date and time of when things occurred; who disclosed the information; any information you may think relevant; any other observations you made; an indication of the parties involved; details of what action you or anyone else have taken; details of reporting including who to, who by and when).
3. All recording should be factual and be kept completely confidential and secure and only shared on a need to know basis.
4. Remember that any allegation may eventually lead to criminal proceedings so do not question, just take notes from anyone who may disclose abuse to you, or write down factual observations not your opinions.

Report any suspicions immediately

1. You must do this together with your written findings to your line manager, designated volunteer co-ordinator or other person designated for Safeguarding.



2. Your line manager designated volunteer co-ordinator or other person designated for Safeguarding, will then contact the appropriate agency with all the relevant information as and when appropriate.

Share information

1. Whilst, as a general rule, all information given to Torbay Parents Carer Forum staff or volunteers by service users is deemed confidential by the service and only to be disclosed to other agencies with their agreement, in cases of safeguarding it is sometimes necessary to disclose this information without the permission to a designated person or appropriate agency.
2. You must always inform the service user of the action you will be taking as a result of safeguarding concerns if you feel it is appropriate and safe to do so. You should inform them that the service has a policy of reporting all suspicions of child abuse and that you must discuss your concerns with your line manager or designated volunteer co-ordinator.

Referrals for children

Referrals must be made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in one of the following ways:

- In writing, using the referral form above which can be emailed to torbay.safeguardinghub@torbay.gov.uk.

[Training](#) is available to help you complete the form.

Referral Form

- By telephone, to Children's Social Care on 01803 208100;
- In an emergency outside office hours, by contacting the **Emergency Duty Team** or the Police;
- If the child is known to have an allocated social worker, referrals should be made directly to the allocated worker or, in her/his absence, the manager or a duty officer in that team.



Referrals for Adults

Anyone who is concerned that a vulnerable adult may be at risk of abuse can speak in confidence to one of the Safeguarding Adults Teams.

- For Torbay call 01803 219700 or email [Safeguarding Alerts](#),
- For Devon contact Care Direct on 0845 155 1007 (Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 8:00pm and Saturdays, 9am to 1pm)

Email csc.caredirect@devon.gov.uk.

Sources of further Information and Support

Below are a range of agencies and publications that you might find particularly helpful:

- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2003)
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190604/DFES-04320-2006-ChildAbuse.pdf
- Have you got what it takes: safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
- (Home office)
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/117496/safeguarding-children.pdf
- Working together to safeguard children (2013): a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-secure-childrens-future>
- No Secrets: guidance on protecting vulnerable adults in care (2000) Department of Health: a guide that Sets out how commissioners and providers of care services should protect vulnerable adults.
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-secrets-guidance-on-protecting-vulnerable-adults-in-care>
- Care Act 2014 – Fact sheets
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-part-1-factsheets>