

HOME-START WIRRAL

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy

Policy

Home-Start Wirral is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of all who use its service. It recognises that it has a responsibility, through its support for families, to protect the welfare of adults who may be in vulnerable situations and to ensure that such adults are protected from harm.

Home-Start Wirral is committed to high standards of practice in safeguarding the welfare of adults. It has no statutory remit or role to investigate abuse of adults but acknowledges a responsibility to pass on to the appropriate statutory agency concerns in relation to the safety or welfare of an adult so that these concerns can be assessed.

Definition

Who is an adult in a vulnerable situation?

An adult in a vulnerable situation is a person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be in need of community care services and is, or may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from significant harm or serious exploitation.

This may include a person who –

- Is elderly or frail;
- Has a mental illness including dementia;
- Has a physical or sensory disability;
- Has a learning disability;
- Has a severe physical illness;
- Is a substance abuser;
- Is homeless;
- Is a victim of domestic violence

In this context community care services includes all care services provided in any setting by any agency whether statutory, voluntary or community and therefore includes the services provided by Home-Start schemes.

Principles

The policy and these procedures are based on the following principles:-

All adults in Home-Start, irrespective of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, political opinion, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to –

- Have their money, goods and possessions treated with respect and to receive equal protection for themselves and their property.
- Guidance and help in seeking assistance as a consequence of abuse.

- Be supported in making their own decisions about how they wish to proceed in the event of abuse and to know their wishes will only be overridden if it is considered necessary for their own safety or the safety of others.
- Be supported in bringing a complaint under any existing complaint procedure.
- Be supported in reporting the circumstances of any abuse to independent bodies.
- Have alleged, suspected or confirmed cases of abuse that come to light through Home-start support dealt with as a priority.
- Receive appropriate support following abuse.

The strategic lead will ensure that s/he and all designated persons within the scheme are familiar with the current local reporting procedures.

All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

It is the responsibility of all within Home-Start to report any concerns about abuse through locally determined protection of adults/safeguarding adult's procedures or directly to the police.

All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998

Procedure

Where there are concerns about the safety or welfare of an adult this policy and these procedures will be followed and information will be shared with the relevant agencies.

Home-Start will take all possible steps to ensure that adults with whom it works are kept safe through:-

- A clear procedure for the raising of concerns about an adult in a vulnerable situation;
- Safe recruitment processes for all trustees, staff and volunteers including the obtaining of DBS checks for staff and volunteers as appropriate, and for trustees who are also home visiting or group volunteers
- Procedures to structure the management of an allegation of abuse against trustees, staff or volunteers;
- Effective induction, training and support for trustees, staff and volunteers to ensure they are aware of and understand the importance of implementing this policy and the related procedures;
- Identified personnel holding the strategic lead (senior staff member) and designated safeguarding responsibilities (staff working directly with families and volunteers) for the safeguarding of adults within Home-Start;
- Clear expectations of all trustees, staff and volunteers for sharing information about adults in vulnerable situations.

Disclosure of Information

- Home-Start recognises the importance of sharing information to protect an adult and normally any disclosure of confidential information to any other person may only be undertaken with the expressed permission of the person.
- Where it is considered necessary for the welfare and protection of an adult, the person will be kept informed, unless to do so would put his or her welfare and safety at risk of harm.
- In recognition of its commitment to pass on concerns, Home-Start will maintain effective working partnerships with organisations working with adults within the community and will maintain current information on, and work within, the requirements of the local procedures followed by statutory and voluntary agencies.

Procedure when there are concerns

- If anyone within Home-Start has concerns about the welfare of an adult they must raise those concerns and inform the designated person or strategic lead without delay.
- If an adult discloses that they are being, or have been abused this information must be taken seriously and the information must be passed to the designated person without delay and in any event within 48 hours of the information coming to light.
- If an adult is at risk of immediate harm the designated person should inform Social Care or the police without delay.
- The information regarding the concerns and the action taken will be recorded and passed to the relevant agencies, using appropriate procedures. Written information will be passed to the respective agencies within 7 working days
- Failure to report concerns may lead to suspension pending investigation and for staff, disciplinary action.
- If a member of staff, volunteer or trustee is alleged to have put the welfare or safety of an adult at risk, the designated person will inform the appropriate agency and co-operate fully with the authority in the manner in which the matter is dealt with. This may include suspension without prejudice pending an investigation.

- **Allegations against staff, trustees or volunteers**

It is important that any concerns for the welfare of an adult arising from abuse or harassment by a member of staff, a trustee or volunteer should be reported immediately to the designated person or, if they are implicated in the concerns, the strategic lead or a named trustee, and an incident form completed. Concerns about poor practice should also be reported to the designated person.

Where there are allegations of abuse or concerns about poor practice of staff, trustee or volunteers there may be three strands of investigation as follows:-

1. Adult protection investigation (externally led)
2. Criminal investigation (externally led by the Police Authority)
3. A disciplinary investigation (internally led)

It may be that the employee will be suspended with pay during an investigation or a volunteer asked to cease volunteering pending the outcome of the investigation.

Home-Start values differences and will ensure that adults who act in the capacity of trustee, employee or volunteer will be supported in their role and appropriate measures will be taken to protect them from harm.

Retention of Records

A factual, dated record of concerns about an adult in a family supported will be kept in line with Home-Start record keeping and procedures policy.

Records kept by employees about adults should include contacts made and referral of safeguarding concern including date, time, and reason and referral agency.

This policy will be reviewed annually and more regularly if appropriate

Additional guidance is available on the Intranet and will be read alongside this policy. Please see –

- Definitions of or adult abuse
- Recognising adult abuse
- Scheme safeguarding roles
- Responding to disclosure of adult abuse
- Legislation
- Associated policies
- Dealing with an accusation of adult abuse against a member of staff, trustee or volunteer.
- Preparing for an Adult Case Conference

Designated Safeguarding Personnel

Home-Start has appointed
Bev Morgan, Chief Executive Officer, to take the strategic lead responsibility and

The Co-ordinators to act as the designated persons

Hazel Thompaon to act as named trustee