



# The Shrewsbury Ark

## Safeguarding Policy & Procedure

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### Introduction

This policy is underpinned by international and national legislation, guidance and policies that seek to protect adults at risk in England. It clarifies The Shrewsbury Arks' commitment to safeguarding adults who access our services, whilst promoting awareness and understanding of what constitutes abuse for all staff and volunteers.

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

**Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**

Our aim is to ensure that every staff member and volunteer is aware that safeguarding underpins our service to the community. Our focus will always be on safety.

### Policy Statement

We believe that:

- Adults should not suffer abuse of any kind.
- Our duty is to protect adults from harm and to practice in ways that promote their safety and well-being.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all individuals we engage with.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of adults is paramount in the work that we do and in all the decisions that we make.
- All adults regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of abuse.
- Some adults are additionally at risk because of the impact of past experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- We have a responsibility to assess capacity for adults at risk and always work to maintain competent decision making and advocacy for adults at risk.
- Working in partnership with adults at risk, and their carers; and other agencies is essential in promoting people's welfare.

We will seek to keep adults safe by:

- Keeping our primary focus as the safety of every single individual.
- Taking action to identify and prevent abuse from happening.
- Responding appropriately when abuse has or is suspected to have occurred.
- Ensuring that the agreed Safeguarding Adult procedures are understood and always followed.
- Providing support, advice and resources to staff and volunteers in responding to safeguarding adults' concerns.
- Informing staff and volunteers of any local or national issues relating to safeguarding adults.
- Ensuring staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities to attend training and to support them in accessing these events.
- Ensuring that the Shrewsbury Ark has a dedicated staff member with responsibility for safeguarding.
- Understanding how diversity, beliefs and values of people who use The Shrewsbury Ark may influence the identification, prevention and response to safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers who have direct contact with vulnerable adults have an Enhanced DBS Disclosure check.
- Always remaining active in sharing learning from safeguarding incidents.
- Promoting a safeguarding culture where staff, volunteers and clients treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing any concerns.

### **Scope**

This Procedure applies when there is a potential for harm to an adult at risk who is over the age of 18.

Abuse can take place in any setting and these procedures apply to wherever staff and volunteers carry out their duties. This is not restricted to the immediate environment of The Shrewsbury Ark.

All staff or volunteers have a duty to report any incident of alleged, suspected or witnessed abuse or harm to the Operations Manager or his deputy. This includes incidents where they may have concerns over the behaviour of another member of staff.

### **Staff and volunteers do not have the option of not acting.**

If staff or volunteers believe that the Operations Manager or his Deputy may be implicated with the abuse or not taking it seriously, they should escalate to a member of The Board of Trustees.

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect; while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted. This includes where appropriate, considering the adult's wishes, feelings, views and beliefs in deciding on any actions.

### **Contact Details for Shrewsbury Ark Safeguarding Leads**

- Operations Manager     Gerry Crow ([Gerry@shrewsburyark.co.uk](mailto:Gerry@shrewsburyark.co.uk)) Mobile: 07940 020582
- Deputy Manager         Rose Greenslade ([Rose@shrewsburyark.co.uk](mailto:Rose@shrewsburyark.co.uk)) Mobile: 07598 795160

## **Responsibilities of Staff and Volunteers**

- Always follow the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures particularly if concerns arise about the safety or welfare of an adult at risk.
- Participate in safeguarding adults training and maintain current working knowledge.
- Discuss any concerns about the welfare of an adult at risk with the Operations Manager or his Deputy.
- Contribute to actions required, including information sharing and attending meetings.
- Work collaboratively with other agencies to safeguard and protect the welfare of people who use our services.
- Always remain alert to the possibility of abuse.

## **Definition of Abuse**

Abuse is harm caused to a person by an act or failure to act on the part of another person and:

- Abuse is ill treatment which causes significant harm and can result in the deterioration of a person's physical, emotional or social well-being.
- Abuse reflects a lack of respect and is an infringement of legal and civil rights. It may be an abuse of power and may constitute a criminal act.
- Abuse may be a single incident but is more likely to be part of a systematic pattern.
- Abuse can take place in a variety of settings. These can include a person's own home, a relative or friend's home, the day centre, a hospital or a residential or nursing home.
- Abuse can take place within both personal and professional relationships. It can be carried out by other clients or people who deliberately form a relationship with an adult at risk in order to exploit them.

Criminal acts carried out by strangers are not usually included within a definition of abuse, but in some situations it may be appropriate to use the procedure to ensure that the person receives the services and support they need.

## **Recognising Abuse**

All staff have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with the different types of abuse that adults can be subjected to. It may not always be obvious that someone is being abused and everyone must remain vigilant.

The most commonly recognised types of abuse are as follows:

- **Physical abuse** – such as hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, the misuse of medication, the misuse of restraint or inappropriate sanctions, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to an adult.
- **Psychological abuse** – such as verbal abuse, psychological abuse, threats, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks, telling or making an adult feel worthless, unloved, or inadequate.
- **Sexual abuse** – such as rape and sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented, or could not consent, or where pressure was applied to secure their consent through force or enticement. This includes prostitution, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.
- **Neglect (including acts of omission)** – such as ignoring medical or physical care needs, failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services. Plus, withholding the necessities of life, such as medication, food and drink and heating and clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- **Domestic violence or abuse** - including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members. Including honour based violence and FGM.

- Financial or Material Abuse – such as theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- Organisation or Institutional abuse - It will include the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to any at risk adult. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping. It includes a failure to ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to protect adults and maintain good standards of care in accordance with individual needs including training of staff, supervision and management, record keeping and liaising with other providers of care.
- Discriminatory Abuse - such as racist or sexist remarks or comments based on a person's impairment, disability, age or illness, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- Self-neglect – wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.
- Modern Slavery – includes very little or no pay, excessively long and/or unusually long working hours, poor physical health, not in control of own money, no financial records or ID documents. Any of these types of abuse may take place as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

### **The 7 Essential Adult Safeguarding Questions**

Where you are concerned that an adult is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect your first priority is with them, to make them safe. You should be thinking about options for supporting them and if needed, raising an adult safeguarding concern.

Raising a safeguarding concern is a possibility when you can answer 'yes' to questions one to three:

1. Does the person have care and support needs, regardless of who is meeting those needs?
2. Is the person experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect?
3. Are they unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect because of their care and support needs?

Next, explain your concerns to the person affected (unless this increases the risk to them or to others), ask:

4. Do they want to raise the safeguarding concern themselves? If not,
5. Do they want you to support them to raise the concern? If not,
6. Do they want you to raise the concern on their behalf?

This one is the 7th essential question:

7. Is there a public or vital interest (please consider whether the person is subject to coercion and control) that means you need to override their choice and report the concern anyway?

Public interest includes:

- Risk to other adults or children
- Situations where a person in a position of trust is implicated (such as staff or volunteers)
- Preventing a crime from being committed
- The potential source of risk has care and support needs and may also be at risk

Vital interests includes where the risk is unreasonably high and there could be serious harm to someone's life.

### **Reporting Abuse**

If a staff member or volunteer suspects a person is being abused or is at risk of abuse, they are expected to report their concerns to The Operations Manager or his Deputy immediately.

In the event that neither the Operations Manager or his Deputy are not available, the report should be passed to a member of the Board of Trustees. If none can be contacted, reporting should not be delayed and the reporting process for Shropshire Council should be followed; this is:

Phone First Point of Contact **0345 678 9044** and follow any instructions given.

Anyone making a call to First Point of contact, must be prepared to discuss:

- What are your concerns?
- What was the incident?
- Why do you think the adult is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect?
- What are your concerns based on?
- What happened or why do you think they are at risk of abuse?
- What type of abuse are you supporting the adult to report (or reporting on their behalf)?

The individual should be involved in discussions regarding the above where it is safe to do so.

It is essential that there is an expectation that the individual should be involved in raising a safeguarding concern, they should know about a safeguarding concern being raised if they are not raising it. The individual should be supported to raise the concern where possible. This should be discussed with them (unless it is not safe to do so). Consider the questions below:

- Does the person have capacity to consent to this referral?
- Have you discussed raising the concern with the adult and explored their view?
- What are the adults' expectations regarding the concern being raised?
- Do they know you are contacting the local authority about safeguarding concerns (if they are not raising the concern)?

If at any time a staff member or volunteer views the person as in need of urgent medical assistance, they have a duty to call for an ambulance or arrange for a doctor to see the person at the earliest opportunity.

If at the time a staff member or volunteer has reason to believe the person is in immediate and serious risk of harm or that a crime has been committed, the police must be called.

### **Alleged Abuser and Victims who are Both Clients**

It is important that consideration be given to a coordinated approach and partnership working where it is identified that both the alleged abuser and alleged victim are clients of The Shrewsbury Ark.

Where both parties are receiving support, staff should discuss cases and work together in order to protect both parties. Consideration should also be given to what support and action is required to help alleged abusers. However, meetings with both the alleged abuser and alleged victim in attendance, are not considered appropriate.

### **If Someone Discloses To You**

People have the right to expect that information shared with a member of staff should be treated as confidential. However, it should be made clear that where the staff member has a reason to be concerned for the welfare of a person and/or others they may have to share the information with someone who is in a position to take action or responsibility.

The individual should be told with whom the information will be shared, and that their views and wishes will be considered. Any views or wishes expressed by the individual should be recorded and reported with their concerns by the staff member.

Concerns should be reported at the earliest possible opportunity. Ensuring the safety of the individual and any other people at risk is the primary responsibility of staff when they become aware of a serious incident. All concerns must be documented.

If someone discloses to you then:

- Stay Calm.
- Ensure that any immediate needs are addressed.
- Remember that this is an important conversation with someone, and they will probably be more anxious than you. Keep conversation flowing by use of nonverbal prompts, verbal prompts, and echoing by repeating the last one or two words spoken.
- Show empathy when listening.
- Let them speak – do not interrupt them.
- Reassure the person, e.g. tell them that they have done the right thing in speaking to you and that you believe them.
- Become an active listener -concentrate, try to comprehend what it is they are saying, sustain the conversation by verbal and non-verbal prompts and summarise.
- Do not question except to clarify and ensure that you understand what is being said.
- Ascertain the wishes of the alleged victim/witness about what they want to do or what they would like to happen.
- Do not make promises that you cannot keep.
- Do not promise confidentiality, as you cannot keep the information to yourself.
- Explain that you will need to pass this information on to the Operations Manager and/or his Deputy.
- If it is a matter that you must report, inform them that you are duty bound to do so.

### **Preserving Evidence and Recording**

In most circumstances when preserving evidence, you may not need to do anything except record the events that have given rise for concern. However, there may be occasions when it is important to follow certain rules:

- Ensure written records (notes, letters, bank statements, medication records etc.) are kept in a safe place,
- Make a written record of messages (e.g. answer-phone) to ensure they are not lost. Include the date and time and sign them,
- In cases of physical or sexual assault encourage the person not to wash bathe or shower where you think they might need a medical examination,
- Don't tidy up, wash clothes, bedding or other items,
- Try and ensure that others around do not interfere with any items that maybe important for the police,
- If there is any suspicion that there may be forensic evidence, inform the police and preserve the evidence. The person may not tell you all the facts on the initial disclosure – do all you can to anticipate what may be needed as evidence and do all you can to preserve it,
- It is important that you write down why you are concerned about a person as simply and clearly as you can, and as soon as you can after an event. All original notes must be retained,
- It is important that you record all relevant information including what you saw, what you heard, and why you acted as you did,
- Sign and date your records and make sure they are kept in a safe place,

- Write down what is said to you, who said it including their relationship to the adult or role and how they can be contacted, if appropriate. Include any questions you have asked, make sure you sign and date it,
- Include any details about what the person wants to be done at this stage.

### **Record Keeping**

Record Keeping is an integral part of safeguarding procedures, not just for the individual concerned in detailing events or injuries, but also for staff and volunteers to record their decisions and actions.

When recording statements of disclosure always use the exact wording as described to you and only document facts. Avoid assumptions or general statements.

### **Confidentiality**

Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is preserved, this will be governed by what may be an overriding need to protect a person who has been or is at risk of harm.

All those working with adults at risk, in any capacity, must be clear that it is not possible to keep information about suspected or actual abuse confidential.

The needs of the person and the potential risk to others requires you to share the information with the Operations Manager or his Deputy.