



Protection of Vulnerable Adults

- 1 Code of Practice
 - 1.1 The interests and the wishes of the vulnerable adult should be central to the use of the Multi-agency Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Vulnerable adults from abuse.
 - 1.2 Any action taken to protect a vulnerable adult from abuse using this Policy and its Procedures should ensure the participation of the vulnerable person throughout the process.
 - 1.3 These Policies and Procedures respect an adult's right to live free from abuse in accordance with the principles of respect, dignity, autonomy, privacy, beliefs and equality. Services will be provided in a manner which does not discriminate on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, gender, age or sexual orientation.
 - 1.4 All agencies and individuals who are involved with vulnerable adults have a duty to protect them from abuse.
 - 1.5 Agencies recognise the complexity of the work in the protection of vulnerable adults and the benefits to be gained from good multi-disciplinary and inter-agency working.
 - 1.6 Agencies will actively work together on the prevention, identification, investigation and treatment of alleged, suspected or confirmed abuse.
 - 1.7 Where an investigation is indicated, managers will co-operate to co-ordinate their response and will decide which agency should investigate.
 - 1.8 Agencies will respond to actual or suspected cases of abuse with prompt, timely and appropriate action in line with the Procedures.
 - 1.9 Agencies will respect the right of the vulnerable adult who is able to make informed choices, to make their own decisions regarding their present and future circumstances, including remaining in situations perceived by professionals or others to be risky or dangerous. In such cases the vulnerable adult should be given information about the Greenways Aces: Club Officials' Code of Conduct (September 2019)

options available to them that could protect them from abuse. However, an individual's wishes cannot undermine an individual agency's responsibility to act.

- 1.10 In circumstances where the vulnerable adult does not have the mental capacity to be able to make an informed choice, any decisions and actions will be taken by those conducting the investigation and planning their protection. This will be based on a judgement of what is in the best interests of the vulnerable adult, informed, where appropriate, by discussion with relatives and carers. Any action taken will respect the right of the vulnerable adult to confidentiality and will involve the least number of people necessary to secure the protection of the vulnerable adult. Action taken will be proportionate to the assessed level of risk.
- 1.11 Any investigation or action should be carried out in a setting and manner appropriate to the levels of understanding, degree of disability and cultural background of the person or persons involved.
- 1.12 Agencies will ensure that provision is made where the vulnerable adult has a need for an interpreter, communication aids or other facilitation, including meeting the communication needs of deaf/blind people or where there are communication problems due to difficulties in understanding e.g. the person has a learning disability or dementia.
- 1.13 A person's physical access needs must be addressed if this would prevent them attending meetings.
- 1.14 Agencies will ensure that vulnerable adults have equal rights to protection under the law and access to legal advice including support to pursue prosecution of criminal offences.
- 1.15 Agencies will ensure the safety of vulnerable adults by integrating strategies, policies and services relevant to prevention and protection from abuse within the framework of:
 - The NHS and the Community Care Act 1990
 - The Mental Health Act 1983
 - The Care Programme Approach
 - The Public Interest and Disclosure Act 1998
 - The Care Standards Act 2000
 - The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999
 - The Human Rights Act 1998
 - The National Care Standards for Older People
 - The National Standards for Domiciliary Care Agencies
 - Local strategies arising from the National Service Frameworks for Mental Health (1999) and for Older People (2000) and the aims set out in Valuing People, for People with Learning Disabilities (2000).

- 1.16 Agencies will ensure that all staff and volunteers know about the Multi-agency Policy and Procedures and have access to appropriate training and support
- 1.17 Agencies will make information available to service users and carers that explains what abuse is and how and to whom to express concern and make a complaint.
- 1.18 Agencies will ensure that vulnerable adults are enabled to access an independent advocate or appoint another person to represent their interest.

2 Definitions

For the purpose of the Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures, the following definitions apply.

2.1 A Vulnerable Adult

Is a person aged 18 years or over

“who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness;

and

who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation”.

Ref Who Decides Lord Chancellors Department (1997)

Thus a vulnerable adult may be a person who:

- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental disorder including dementia or a personality disorder
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser
- Is an unpaid carer
- Is homeless

The presence of a disability or age alone does not signify that an adult is necessarily vulnerable i.e. unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves from abuse or exploitation.