

Vulnerable Persons Policy

Name of Organisation: _____

Appointed Officer: _____

The abuse of vulnerable adults constitutes a clear infringement of their rights and freedoms as citizens. This policy aims to protect vulnerable adults, who are at risk of all forms of abuse, receive a safe sound and supportive service, through the process of identifying, investigating, managing and preventing such abuse. As a service we are committed to promoting equality of opportunity to all members of our community.

- It is every adult's right to live in safety and to be free from abuse or fear of abuse from others.
- It is every adult's right to live an independent life based on 'self-determination' and personal choice.
- An independent life style may involve risk for vulnerable adults. The signatory agencies respect this choice and will support them in making such decisions.
- It is the responsibility of all the agencies and professionals to actively work together to help prevent abuse of vulnerable adults. This will be achieved by raising awareness, empowering people to make their own decisions and putting safeguards in place.
- When a situation is discovered in which a vulnerable adult reports, or is thought to be at risk of abuse, then the agencies will react quickly in a co-ordinated manner to help them to overcome these difficulties.
- The agencies recognise that people are discriminated against on the basis of race, culture, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation. We are committed to working with vulnerable adult's in a positive manner that values them as individuals.
- Carers have a right for their needs to be considered.
- Policies and procedures are used positively to enhance the overall quality of care-giving and thus aim to protect employees from accusations of poor work codes or misconduct.

Definitions

"Vulnerable adult" describes a person who is an adult (aged 18 or over), **and** who is, or may be in need of, community care services because of frailty, learning

or physical disability or mental health difficulty **and** who is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself or take steps to protect him or herself from significant harm or exploitation.

"Harm" – for vulnerable adults one refers to the concept of 'significant harm' introduced in the Children Act 1989. "Harm" should be taken to include not only ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical), but also the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

Abuse is a violation of individual human and civil rights by any other person(s). This definition of abuse includes singular and repeated acts or mistakes. Abuse may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction, to which he or she had not consented, never could consent to or whose consent was deemed invalid due to a real lack of understanding as to the issue they were consenting to.

1. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of the person subject to it.
2. Physical abuse includes hitting, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate touch or punishment.
3. Sexual abuse includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts of touching of intimate places to which the vulnerable adult has not or could not consent to and/or was pressured into consenting.
4. Psychological abuse includes emotional abuse, obvious or implied threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming controlling, intimidation, compulsion, inappropriate language, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive and/or spiritual networks, withdrawal or omission to provide opportunities and choice including choice of gender of carer.
5. Financial or Material abuse- including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills property or inheritance or financial transactions or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. Damage or threats of damage to property.
6. Discriminatory abuse includes racist, sexist opinions, or opinions based on an individual's disability, or other forms of harassment, taunts or similar treatment.

Neglect or acts of omission – Failing to act appropriately whether intentionally or negligently. This may include ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational and leisure services, the withholding of the necessities of life such as; medication, adequate and appropriate nutrition, information, clothing, comfort, relationships, safety and environment.

Signs of Neglect may include:

- An individual showing obvious signs, such as low weight and appearing hungry.
- Soreness, chafing to areas of skin owing to poor personal hygiene.
- Deterioration of condition of skin around pressure areas.
- Changes in behaviour/interaction with staff and other service users.
- Loss of interest in activities

If you have concerns about an individual's vulnerability at any point in time, please contact the appointed person within your organisation.