

# SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK POLICY

## CONTEXT

Age UK, Croydon is committed to ensuring a right to be safe in a supported environment to service users and carers. Age UK Croydon is committed to putting in place safeguards and measures to reduce the likelihood of abuse taking place within the services it offers and that all those involved within Age UK Croydon will be treated with respect

This Policy sets out how to monitor, record and escalate any concerns that staff may have or receive about the welfare and safety of service users, carers, volunteers, and staff.

We believe at Age UK, Croydon that safeguarding adults is everyone's responsibility.

**If a person is injured or in immediate physical danger, or if a crime has been committed, contact the police and other appropriate emergency services – dial 999.**

**The Adult Abuse Reporting line in Croydon is 020 8726 6500 or [referral.team2@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:referral.team2@croydon.gov.uk) Further information and advice is available at <https://www.croydonsab.co.uk/> or <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/sva/reporting-abuse>**

## AIM

The aim of this policy is to outline how as a member of staff or volunteer, you should alert both internal and external agencies and report what you have heard, seen, suspect or been told.

This Policy is an essential resource that all staff and volunteers need to be aware of and fully understand during day-to-day involvement with clients.

## PROTECTING ADULTS AT RISK:

The Policy Statement and Procedures have been drawn up in line with the London Multi Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and Croydon Council's safeguarding procedures which provide guidance to enable adults to be kept safe from abuse or neglect, in order to enable Age UK Croydon to:

- promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm, abuse and coercion occurring and ensure the right to be safe.
- ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported.
- stop that abuse occurring.

They relate to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. Vulnerable adults are defined as people aged 18 or over:

- Who are receiving or may need community care services because of learning, physical or mental disability, age, or illness
- Who are or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

No Secrets: Department of Health, 2000. (now replaced by statutory guidance issued under the Care Act 2014)

The policy applies to managers, staff, and volunteers, trustees of the organisation, sessional workers, agency staff, students and anyone working on behalf of Age UK Croydon.

Age UK, Croydon recognises that significant numbers of vulnerable adults are abused, and it is important that Age UK Croydon has a Safeguarding Adults Policy, a set of procedures to follow and puts in place preventative measures to try and reduce those numbers.

To implement the policy, Age UK, Croydon will work to:

- promote the freedom and dignity of the person who has or is experiencing abuse
- promote the rights of all people to live free from abuse and coercion, ensuring the right to be safe
- ensure the safety and wellbeing of people who do not have the capacity to decide how they want to respond to abuse that they are experiencing
- manage services in a way which promotes safety and prevents abuse
- recruit staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, and training

### Protecting adults at risk

*Protecting adults at risk* represents the commitment of organisations in Greater London to work together to safeguard adults at risk. The procedures aim to make sure that:

- the needs and interests of adults at risk are always respected and upheld
- the human rights of adults at risk are respected and upheld
- a proportionate, timely, professional, and ethical response is made to any adult at risk who may be experiencing abuse
- all decisions and actions are taken in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

## SUMMARY OF ADULT ABUSE

Abuse is a violation on an individual's human and civil rights by a person or persons. The following types of abuse that are listed are recognised within the Protecting adults at risk: London multi-agency policy and procedures –

**Physical Abuse:** includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication or inappropriate sanctions or restraint.

**Sexual Abuse:** includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.

**Psychological Abuse:** includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

**Domestic abuse** is defined by the Home Office (2013) as “Incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse... by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality”

It includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called ‘honour’ based violence; Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage.

(The law in relation to Domestic Abuse applies to people from age 16, children and young people who witness abuse are also defined in law. Details about the impact of Domestic Abuse on young people up to the age of 18 years are covered by the Child Safeguarding Guidance & Procedures.)

### *Possible indicators of domestic abuse:*

- Low self-esteem
- Feeling that the abuse is their fault when it is not
- Physical evidence of violence such as bruising, cuts, broken bones
- Verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others
- Fear of outside intervention
- Damage to home or property
- Isolation – not seeing friends and family
- Limited access to money

**Financial or material abuse** includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

**Neglect and acts of omission** includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating.

**Modern Slavery:** includes servitude, and forced or compulsory labour i.e., someone forced to work – through mental or physical threat; owned or controlled by an ‘employer’, usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse; dehumanised; treated as a commodity or bought and sold as ‘property; physically constrained or has restrictions placed on his/her freedom of movement.

**Discriminatory abuse:** includes racism, sexism, or those based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment

**Institutional abuse:** includes systemic abuse that goes beyond an individual's abusive practice and transcends a whole organisation.

**Neglect** is the failure of any person who has responsibility for the care of an adult who needs care and support to provide the amount and type of care that a reasonable person would be expected to provide. This includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating. Perpetrators of neglect can include both paid and unpaid carers working either in an institutional setting or the person's own home.

Neglect can take several forms and can be the result of an intentional or unintentional act(s) or omission(s).

Under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 wilful neglect and ill-treatment of a person lacking capacity is a criminal offence and can result in a fine or imprisonment.

Under the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 it is an offence for a care worker or care provider to ill-treat or wilfully neglect an individual in their care.

Examples of neglectful behaviour: failure to provide food, shelter, clothing, heating, medical care or access to medical care, hygiene, personal care, under- or over- use of medication; failure to provide an adequate or reasonable standard of support that could reasonably be expected to be provided; failure to adhere to relevant standards of care and professional codes of conduct; Lasting Power of Attorney (relating to welfare or finance) not being used in the best interests of the person.

*Possible indicators of neglect:*

- Unsanitary, verminous and/or very unclean conditions in environments where the adult should be receiving appropriate care and support.
- Poor skin condition related to poor skin hygiene and/or skin care.
- Dehydration and/or malnourishment unrelated to diagnosed illness.
- Rashes, sores, lice on the person.
- A lack of basic possessions, which the person might reasonably be expected to own.
- Untreated medical needs
- Lack of appropriate support with basic care, including personal care.
- The adult who needs care and support telling you that they are experiencing neglect.
- Inadequate physical environment, inadequate protection from the sun or heat, inadequate heating.
- Inconsistent or reluctant contact with health or social care agencies.
- Avoidable and unnecessary deterioration of health or well-being of the individual.
- Behavioural changes

In addition, the Care Act statutory guidance 2014 formally recognises self-neglect as a category of abuse and neglect. **Self-neglect** covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. An individual may be considered as self-neglecting and therefore at risk of harm where they are:

- either unable or unwilling to provide adequate care for themselves,
- unable or unwilling to obtain necessary care to meet their needs,
- declining essential support without which their health and safety needs cannot be met,
- lacking the mental capacity to understand the consequences of their actions or lack of actions.

*Possible indicators of Self-neglect:*

- Living in a very unclean environment, for example, rodent infested or living with a toilet completely blocked with faeces.
- Neglecting household maintenance and therefore creating hazards or fire risks, for example, rotten floorboards creating trip hazards or lack of boiler or electrical maintenance.
- Having eccentric behaviour or lifestyles such as obsessive hoarding.
- Poor diet and nutrition, for example, there is little or no fresh food in the fridge or food is mouldy and very out-of-date.
- Refusing necessary help from health and / or social care staff in relation to personal hygiene and care.
- Having poor personal hygiene, poor health, sores or long toenails.

**The above are only examples, for further examples, see the London Multi Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures from the Croydon Council website.** If you feel you have come across something which may be abuse but are not sure, you are required to discuss this with your line manager.

Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts.

People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be doctors, nurses, social workers, advocates, staff members, volunteers or others in a position of trust. They may also be relatives, friends, neighbours, or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse.

### **The Care Act**

The Care Act sets out the following principles that should underpin safeguarding of adults:

- [Empowerment](#)  
People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.

*“I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.”*

- [Prevention](#)

- It is better to act before harm occurs.

*“I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.”*

- [Proportionality](#)

The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

*“I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, as I see them, and they will only get involved as much as needed.”*

- [Protection](#)

Support and representation for those in greatest need.

*“I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want.”*

- [Partnership](#)

Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting neglect and abuse.

*“I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me.”*

- [Accountability](#)

Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

*“I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.”*

As further illustration of Age UK, Croydon's commitment to The Duty of Care including Safeguarding we pledge to live our Vision and Values in our everyday activities to ensure

**Croydon where everyone can love later life**  
**Integrity • Empowerment • Trust • Compassion • Collaboration**

### Age UK, Croydon will

- ensure that all management, trustees, staff, volunteers, service users, and carers/families are familiar with this policy and procedure
- act within its confidentiality policy and will usually gain permission from service users before sharing information about them with another agency
- inform service users that where a person is in danger, a child is at risk or a crime has been committed then a decision may be taken to pass information to another agency without the service user's consent
- make a referral to the Adult Social Care Direct team as appropriate
- Endeavor to keep up to date with national developments relating to preventing abuse and welfare of adults
- ensure that the Line manager in the first instance understands his/her responsibility to refer incidents of adult abuse to the relevant statutory agencies (Police/Adult Services)

### Anti-Racist Pledge

Age UK, Croydon has pledged to go further than just ensuring we are fair and inclusive as an employer, provider of services. This means recognising who does and does not have privilege and the impact of this, removing barriers and ensuring opportunities are open to all - recognising that everyone has the right to live a life free from discrimination and ensuring the right to feel safe.

### Safe Recruitment

Age UK Croydon's Recruitment Policy puts in place procedures to ensure that appropriate checks are made prior to appointment of staff, volunteers, and external/agency personnel, in order to prevent, as far as is possible, anyone from using their position to abuse adults who need care and support. There are 3 key elements to safe recruitment at Age UK.

1. We will strive to prevent unsuitable people from obtaining positions within Age UK Croydon. People may be unsuitable because of a lack of competence and required experience for a role, a previous dismissal due to harm to an adult who needs care and support (or a child) or because of (in certain circumstances) a relevant or unspent criminal conviction.
2. We will provide induction, supervision and continuous development of staff, trustees, and volunteers
3. We will provide procedures to be followed in the event of concerns about the conduct of an employee or volunteer.

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

AGE UK CROYDON acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and London Multi Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and Croydon Council's safeguarding procedures requirements.

### Responsibility

It is important to remember that as someone who works in a paid or voluntary capacity at Age UK in Croydon you may meet children in a wide range of situations in connection with any one of our services.

You are expected to:

- Respect the wishes of a child as you would an adult, you must not impose yourself on them
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of any child in contact with AUKC
- Remember that children regard adults as role models and ensure your behaviour, language, gestures etc. are appropriate and above reproach
- Be aware of Child Protection issues in relation to the work you do and do not become complacent and believe 'it could never happen to me'
- Prevent any other member of staff or volunteer from putting any child in a situation in which there is a significant risk to their health and safety
- Take appropriate action if you become aware of anyone physically, emotionally, or sexually abusing a child
- Report any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a child has been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused whether by an adult or another child to the Chief Executive or in his absence, the Programme Director
- Not physically, emotionally, or sexually abuse any child or young person

In most instances the children you encounter will be accompanied by a parent, grandparent, or guardian. However, if, due to illness or another unexpected event a member of staff or volunteer is left in charge of a child or children, they should act and make decisions in accordance with this Policy and Guidelines. Where it is safe to do so, staff and volunteers should avoid being in a position where they are left alone with any young person(s) This must underpin your main aim of providing an enjoyable and safe experience for the children.

Please refer to Safeguarding Procedures for information on how to report a concern relating to a child or young person.

### Media Interest

The Communications Team at Age UK Croydon is designated as the first point of contact for all enquiries from the media concerning Age UK Croydon, its staff, volunteers, policies, and business. Where it appears that media interest may result from any adult safeguarding issues connected to Age UK, Croydon, this should be raised in the first instance with the Communications Team. Heads of Department and above are responsible for contacting the Communications Team in such instances.

The Communications Team will assess the nature of the enquiry, identify any areas of concern and if necessary, prepare an appropriate response in conjunction with the Safeguarding Lead and Director HR & Governance. Age UK, Croydon will seek the assistance of Age UK and keep Age UK and Age UK Croydon Trustees aware of any potential media coverage.

## **TRAINING**

At Age UK, Croydon we are committed to accessing adult safeguarding training for all volunteers, staff, and where appropriate service users. E learning courses are available on Safeguarding, Duty of Care, and the Mental Capacity Act in addition to in-house safeguarding awareness training. Upon joining Age UK, Croydon all new employees and volunteers will be required to complete e learning Safeguarding followed by attendance in house on safeguarding awareness [within 6 months] and complete safeguard training annually. Specific volunteer roles, identified by the Volunteer Programme, with no client interaction, will only need to complete one of the two training courses upon joining, and need to complete training every 2 years.

## **Aftercare – Adults who need care and support**

Age UK Croydon has an important role to play in supporting adults who need care and support who have previously experienced abuse. Through its network of Partners and wide range of services it can play a part in helping people to regain their confidence and get the services and support that they need to aid their recovery.

Where an adult who needs care and support discloses abuse that is historical, rather than current, support should always be offered via signposting to adult social services, the police, the National Information & Advice Service and Age UK, Croydon Partners in their area.

## **Aftercare – Staff and volunteers**

Receiving a disclosure of abuse, or witnessing abuse, can be a troubling and stressful experience. Where staff are concerned about the impact of such events, they can seek support from their manager, the Director HR & Governance or Health Safety, and Wellbeing Committee Members and or our Mental Health First Aid members for their team.

## 17. Useful Contacts

The Adult Abuse Reporting line in Croydon is 020 8726 6500 or [referral.team2@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:referral.team2@croydon.gov.uk) Further information and advice is available at <https://www.croydonsab.co.uk/> or <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/sva/reporting-abuse>

- **Age UK Information & Advice Line:** This service can provide valuable information and put people in touch with a range of local and national resources: **0800 169 6565**
- **Emergency Services (Police, Fire, Ambulance):** For situations where an emergency response is required: **999**
- **Police – non-emergency:** To report concerns that do not require an emergency response: **101**
- **Care Quality Commission (CQC):** Concerns about the quality of registered health and social care services can be raised with the CQC: **03000 616161**

### For Child/Young Person Abuse Reporting in Croydon

**Contact Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** Telephone: 020 8726 6400 Out of Hours: 020 8726 6400 (ask for out of hours team) Email: [childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk).

Date this policy came into effect and approved by the Board of Trustees	Name: Signature: Date:
Next Review Date as agreed by the board of Trustees	Date
Name or position of person responsible for this policy	Signature: Name:

Other related policies	Confidentiality Data Protection Consent Safeguarding Children Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Volunteers Complaints Whistle Blowing Confidentiality Disciplinary and Grievance Recruitment and Selection
Relevant Legislation	Data Protection Act 1998 The Common Law Duty of Confidence Human Rights Act 1998 Mental Health Act 1983 Mental Capacity Act 2005 The Care Act 2014

AGE UK CROYDON is an equal opportunities employer and any discrimination or harassment on the grounds of colour, sex, race, nationality, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, domestic circumstances, trade union membership/non-membership, or age will not be tolerated.

Age UK CROYDON managers, staff, volunteers, and trustees are responsible and accountable for working within the framework of our policies and procedures.

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