Good practice guidelines for safeguarding

General information for all those who come into contact with children, young people or adults at risk.

All staff and volunteers have a duty of care towards the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, and are responsible for health & safety and general wellbeing.

What is abuse?
Abuse happens when someone harms a child or adult. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, or involve neglect. Those who experience abuse may struggle to speak out, so it is vital that anyone working with children, young people or adults are able to recognise signs of abuse. It is estimated that 1 in 10 children experience sexual abuse; some research suggests this figure is higher, particularly for children with physical or learning disabilities. It is also estimated that 15% of adults at risk experience abuse.

Abuse in adults

The Care and Support statutory guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 outlines how abuse may take many forms and how individual circumstances should be considered.

Types of abuse

- Discriminatory
- Domestic abuse (including 'honour' based abuse)
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Self-harm or suicide ideation
- Organisational
- Psychological
- Physical
- Self-neglect
- Sexual

Exploitation can be a particular theme in the following types of abuse:

Some example signs of abuse might be a vulnerable adult who has:

- Aggressive, violent, withdrawn or odd behaviour
- Physical Injuries

And you may be concerned about the behaviour and attitude of other people towards an adult in their care.

You may also be concerned if you find the following, especially in or near adult at-risk's settings:

- Smearing or vandalism/fire setting in toilets
- Discarded needles, alcohol bottles, condoms, etc., in inappropriate places

You also need to be aware of online safety issues, as adults may be at risk when using the internet, mobile phones or games consoles with internet access.

Abuse of children

The four main categories are:

Physical: A child's body is deliberately hurt or injured.
Sexual: Adults use children, or their images, to satisfy sexual desires; other children can also be abusers.
Emotional: Children may be deprived of love, continually shamed and taunted, given responsibility beyond their years or witness the ill treatment of another.
Neglect: A persistent failure to meet a child's physical and/or psychological needs.

These are the four main categories, but some forms of abuse may span multiple categories, for example use of children in county lines.

Some example signs of abuse might be:

- Aggressive or violent behaviour of adults towards children
- Very young, unsupervised children
- Bullying behaviour or fighting
- Physical signs
- Smearing or vandalism/fire setting in toilets
- Discarded needles, alcohol bottles, and condoms in inappropriate places
- Meals/food discarded regularly
- Becoming very withdrawn and having poor self-care

You also need to be aware of online safety issues, when children may be at risk when using computers, mobile phones, games consoles or anything else with internet access.

Responsible adults can help to keep children and adults at risk safe by always acting professionally:

- Always follow the organisation's ID security procedures as appropriate
- Avoid being alone in any situation with a child or adult at risk – you may both be vulnerable, and this will reduce the chance of an allegation against you
- Be polite and friendly, but do not forge relationships with children or adults at risk or have favourites
- Avoid physical contact unless absolutely necessary when a child or adult at risk is injured and there is an emergency

Monitor the areas you work in by:

- Being observant of colleagues and other adults who have a 'duty of care' when working with adults at risk, as well as being observant of children and adults together
- Being aware of children or adults at risk who may be alone and in an area a long while unsupervised, particularly if the child is very young
- Observing health and safety regulations
- Not accepting swearing, bullying or other behaviours from the public when children or adults at risk are either involved or in proximity
- Being alert to members of the public/staff approaching, videoing or taking photographs of children or adults at risk who are either alone or not seemingly related to them
- Reporting any such behaviours/incidents to the lead person (or deputy) for safeguarding
- Seeking help from management or dialling 999 without delay if such behaviours are criminal or dangerous
- Being aware of visitors seemingly having no business on the premises

A child or adult at risk may choose to talk to you about something which concerns them. It is important to:

- Always take seriously what a child or adult at risk tells you
- Listen but do not investigate
- Encourage the child or adult at risk to speak to their parents or carers (if appropriate)
- Report factually, record, date, time and sign any concerns you may have and speak to the lead or deputy for safeguarding: so s/he takes the responsibility to inform the relevant agencies without delay.
- Observe confidentiality with colleagues, family and friends. Always let the child know that you are not able to keep secrets and you have a duty to share any information if there may be a risk of harm.

In the rare cases of an organisation not responding appropriately, anyone can refer to local Children's Social Care Services, Adult Social Care Services or the police directly.

In exceptional circumstances, you may have concerns about the conduct of a colleague. It is important that you observe the points in this leaflet and inform the lead person (or deputy) for safeguarding immediately. He/she will refer to Children's Social Care Services, the LADO/DO (Local Authority Designated Officer—England and Wales only) or Adult Social Care Services, who will liaise directly with the police (if a crime may have been committed) and also co-ordinate any future actions. You can do this yourself under the organisation's 'whistleblowing' procedure if you are concerned the issue is not being dealt with appropriately in the organisation.

Remember, your organisation has child and adult safeguarding policies to deal with such occasions, and it is not helpful to anyone involved if you delay or ignore the situation, however difficult it may be.

Training

All staff will receive the safeguarding policy and this leaflet upon appointment and will receive safeguarding training at a level appropriate to their role, within three months of appointment. Safeguarding training needs updating every three years (or two years for online training).

Safeguarding contacts

Safeguarding Lead
Sue Rogers susanr@meningitisnow.org

Safeguarding Deputy
Claire Donovan claired@meningitisnow.org

Safeguarding Group
Laura Smith, Kathy Tasker, Megan Thompson, Isobel Black and Claire Ellis.
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If someone is at immediate risk of harm or abuse, call 999.

Meningitis now

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