**ADULT SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

Last reviewed: November 2019

Due for review: November 2020

1. **Policy Statement** 
   * This document sets out the procedures that constitute the Adult Safeguarding Policy of the New Cross Gate Trust, hereafter called the Trust. It is the Trust’s central policy in relation to safeguarding vulnerable persons and relates to any person of any age who may be deemed as vulnerable.
   * The Trust’s believes that, given a choice between protecting a vulnerable person from abuse, potential or actual, or protecting the reputation of an adult, the Trust, through this policy, will always choose to protect the vulnerable person.
   * Each Trustee and member of staff has an individual and collective responsibility to initiate this Safeguarding Policy if abuse is suspected or detected. It is not the responsibility or within the authority of any single individual to decide whether abuse has taken place.

**2. Policy Aims**

To ensure that vulnerable people which the Trust encounters are:

* + - Protected and kept safe from harm, exploitation or abuse;
    - Empowered through the services the Trust provides; and
    - Supported in matters of self-determination and personal choice.

**3. Scope and Definitions**

The Trust recognises that facilitating the self determination of vulnerable people can involve risk and will therefore ensure that such risk is recognised, understood by all concerned, and minimised.

Vulnerable adults may include, but are not restricted to, adults over the age of 18 who are in need of care and unable to protect themselves as a result of:

* a mental or learning disability;
* a physical disability;
* age or illness.

The Trust will endeavour to ensure that statutory requirements are observed so vulnerable people get the protection of the law and access to the judicial process.

The Trust defines abuse as a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons.In this policy,abuse is deemed to include exploitation and may consist of a single or repeated acts. It may be:

* + physical, verbal or psychological;
  + an act of neglect or an omission to act;
  + occurring when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent.

The Trust recognises the following main different forms of abuse:

* + - **physical abuse,** including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions;
    - **sexual abuse,** including rape and sexual assault or acts to which the vulnerable person has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting;
    - **psychological abuse,** including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal of services or supportive networks;
    - **financial or material abuse,** including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance, financial transactions, the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits;
    - **neglect and acts of omission,** including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding the necessities of life, such as medication, nutrition and heating; and
    - **discriminatory abuse,** including racist, sexist, or is based on a person’s disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

**4. Preventing Abuse**

While it is difficult to prevent all abuse, there are steps those working with and/or volunteering with the Trust can take to reduce the risk. They should:

* + - Know what abuse is.
    - Understand how it can happen.
    - Be alert to indicators of potential abuse situations.
    - Know the procedures for reporting concerns and poor practice.
    - Provide appropriate support through good assessment and planning.

**Safe Recruitment Procedures**

All paid staff will have to complete to complete an application form, detailing past work history and references. Applicants will be interviewed and references requested. Only on receipt of satisfactory references will a formal offer of employment be made.

All staff and volunteers working directly and having regular, sustained contact with vulnerable adults are required to have an enhanced check through the Disclosure and Barring Service before any commencement of work or activity. Copies of all returned DBS checks and documentation pertaining to any vulnerable adult issues will be kept confidentially and securely locked within the HR files.

**5. Recognising Abuse**

The following are potential social and emotional indicators of possible abuse. The vulnerable person may:

* + - Appear to be withdrawn or agitated or anxious;
    - Be isolated in one room or confined to living in a small space.
    - Have restricted mobility due to absence of suitable mobility aids.
    - Be excluded from outside social contacts.
    - Be overly subservient or anxious to please.
    - Avoid eye contact – looking at the floor or others to answer questions;
    - Show dramatic changes in behaviour or personality;
    - Be depressed or confused, for which no medical explanation can be offered.

The following are indicators of possible physical abuse:

* + - multiple bruising that is not consistent with the explanation e.g. a fall.
    - cowering and flinching.
    - bruised eyes and other unexplained bruises.

**6. Duties and responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of all staff members to report abuse and to follow through to the appropriate level any behaviour or allegations of behaviour towards a vulnerable person which may be considered as abuse.

It is ***not*** the responsibility of individual members of staff to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. The Trustees and each member of staff, individually and collectively, have the responsibility to act promptly to activate these procedures when abuse is suspected, disclosed, reported or observed.

The Chair of the Trust is ultimately responsible for implementation and review of this policy, and for providing the lead at Board level on all safeguarding matters. This responsibility shall include ensuring that the safeguarding policies are fully implemented, understood, adhered to and monitored throughout the organisation. In providing this overview, the Chair shall be prepared to challenge and hold to account staff on any aspect of the safeguarding policy

**7. Respect for the Individual**

If abuse is suspected, disclosed, reported or observed, it is important that the alleged victim be treated with dignity, involved as an equal in the investigation and kept fully informed on a regular basis.

People have the right to expect that all staff and volunteers will deal sensitively and sympathetically with their situation. It is important that information remains confidential and that information should only be shared on a “need to know” basis.

A vulnerable person has the right to be believed when they report abuse of themselves and/or others, unless there is unequivocal evidence to the contrary.

**8.** **Procedure**

* If the vulnerable adult is in danger, first ensure they are safe and if immediate help is needed, call the emergency services on 999, and ensure that the person or any other vulnerable adults are protected.
* Only ask the person sufficient questions to establish what has happened i.e. accident or possible abuse.
* Inform your **Line Manager** or other senior member of staff at the earliest opportunity. Any allegation or suspicion of abuse will then be reported immediately to the **Chair of the Trust**.
* The **Chair of the Trust** will appoint an investigating officer to undertake a preliminary investigation (within three working days).
* Depending on the seriousness of allegations/behaviour and evidence available, the Chair, may:
  + Immediately report it to the police and/or Lewisham’s Adult Social Care Team; or
  + Convene a panel to investigate the allegation further.
* Where appropriate, the police will always be involved. If the suspected abuser is a member of staff, the matter will be dealt with through the Trust’s disciplinary procedure. The member of staff could be suspended pending an investigation.

**9. Responding to allegations of abuse**

The Trust will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports concern(s) that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a vulnerable person.

Where there is a complaint, there may be two types of investigation:

* + A criminal investigation, led by the police
  + A disciplinary or misconduct investigation, led by the Trust.
  + The results of any police or Trust investigation may influence any disciplinary investigation, but will not necessarily do so.
  + If there is a police investigation, it will take precedence. The Trust will co-operate with any police and/ or statutory agency investigations by providing relevant information or attending meetings as necessary.

**Allegations of poor practice**

If, following investigation, an allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Trust will deal with it as a disciplinary issue.

**Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. All information should be handled on a need-to- know basis only. Need-to-know includes the following people:

* The Chair;
* The person making the allegation;
* Police and / or statutory agencies;
* The alleged abuser, when appropriate and not prejudicial to investigations.

**Internal Enquiries and suspension**

The Chair will make a prompt decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police or agency inquiries.

The Chair, or delegated staff member, will maintain a written record of any and all action taken and a summary of the reasons for those actions or decisions.

**Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse**

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that vulnerable individuals and members of staff may need. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

Consideration should also be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator of abuse against the vulnerable.

**10. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually

**11. Contacts**

[**Adult Social Care Advice & Information Team**](https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/contact-us/Pages/contact.aspx?directoryid=7)

**Tel:**020 8314 7777  **Email:**[SCAIT@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:SCAIT@lewisham.gov.uk)

**Opening hours:** Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm

Further information: The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel. 01788 550899.

A copy of this policy will be given to any new member of staff or volunteer.