

Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

Home-Start is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of all who use its service. We recognise that we have a responsibility to protect the welfare of adults at risk through our support for families and to ensure they are protected from harm. Home-Start has no statutory remit or role to investigate but acknowledges a responsibility to pass on to the appropriate statutory agency concerns in relation to the safety or welfare of an adult at risk so that these concerns can be assessed.

Definition of an Adult at Risk

A person aged 18 years or over who is receiving or may be in need of community care services and is or may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from significant harm or serious exploitation. This may include a person who:

- Is elderly or frail
- Has a mental illness including dementia
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless.

In this context community care services includes all care services provided in any setting by any agency whether statutory, voluntary or community and therefore includes the services provided by Home-Start schemes.

Principles

This policy and following procedures are based on the following principles.

All adults at risk in Home-Start, irrespective of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to:

- Have their money, goods and possessions treated with respect and to receive equal protection for themselves and their property.
- Guidance and help in seeking assistance as a consequence of abuse.
- Be supported in making their own decisions about how they wish to proceed in the event of abuse and to know their wishes will only be over-riden if it is considered necessary for their own safety or the safety of others.
- Be supported in bringing a complaint under any existing complaint procedure.
- Be supported in reporting the circumstances of any abuse to independent bodies.
- Have alleged, suspected or confirmed cases of abuse that come to light through Home-Start support dealt with as a priority.
- Receive appropriate support following abuse.

It is the responsibility of all within Home-start to report any concerns about abuse. When abuse of an adult needs to be reported each local authority will have its own system, resources and reporting procedures.

This may be a dedicated phone line or a specific social services team. Schemes should familiarise themselves with local procedures in their area. Alternatively adult abuse can be reported directly to the police.

All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Where there are concerns about the safety or welfare of an adult at risk this policy and these procedures will be followed and information will be shared with the relevant agencies in order to protect them.

Home-Start will take all possible steps to ensure that adults with whom it works are kept safe through

- Clear procedure for the raising of concerns about an adult at risk
- Safe recruitment processes for all trustees, staff and volunteers including the obtaining of DBS or Access NI checks as appropriate
- Procedures to structure the management of an allegation of abuse against trustees, staff or volunteers
- Effective induction, training and support for trustees, staff and volunteers to ensure they are aware of and understand the importance of implementing this policy and the related procedures
- Identified personnel to hold the strategic lead and designated safeguarding responsibilities for the safeguarding of adults at risk within Home-Start
- Clear expectations of all trustees, staff and volunteers for sharing information.

Disclosure of Information

- Home-Start recognises the importance of sharing information to protect an adult at risk and normally any disclosure of confidential information to any other person may only be undertaken with the express permission of the person.
- Where it is considered necessary for the welfare and protection of an adult at risk, the person will be kept informed unless to do so would put his or her welfare and safety at risk of harm.
- In recognition of its commitment to pass on concerns, Home-Start will maintain effective working partnerships with organisations working with adults at risk within the community and will maintain current information on and work within the requirements of the local procedures followed by statutory and voluntary agencies.

Procedure when there are concerns

- a) If anyone who is associated with Home-Start has concerns about the welfare of an adult at risk they must raise those concerns and inform the designated person **without delay**
- b) If an adult discloses that they are being, or have been abused this information must be taken seriously and the information must be passed to the designated person for

dealing with their concerns without delay and in any event **within 24 hours** of the information coming to light

- c) The first priority should always be to protect the safety of all adults at risk and it is the responsibility of all within Home-Start to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect
- d) The information regarding the concerns and the action taken will be recorded and passed to the relevant agencies. Written information will be passed to the respective agencies **within 7 working days (within 2 days in NI)**
- e) If an adult is at risk of immediate harm then the designated person will inform the appropriate agency without delay
- f) If the adult is not in immediate harm the information must be passed to the designated person who will respond as soon as possible but **within 24 hours**
- g) Failure to report concerns may lead to suspension pending investigation and for staff, disciplinary action
- h) If a member of staff, volunteer or trustee is alleged to have put the welfare or safety of an adult at risk, the designated person will inform the appropriate agency and cooperate fully with the authority in the manner in which the matter is dealt with including the immediate suspension of the person pending an investigation

Allegations against staff and volunteers

It is important that any concerns for the welfare of an adult at risk arising from abuse or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately to the designated person, or, if they are implicated in the concerns, to the strategic lead or a named trustee, and an incident form completed. Concerns about poor practice should also be reported to the designated person.

Where there are allegations of abuse or concerns about poor practice of staff or volunteers there may be three strands of investigation as follows.

1. Adult at risk protection investigation (externally led)
2. Criminal investigation (externally led by the Police Authority)
3. A disciplinary investigation (internally led)

It may be that the employee will be suspended with pay during an investigation or a volunteer asked to cease volunteering pending the outcome of the investigation.

Designated Safeguarding Personnel

Home-Start NWK has appointed

Name: Debbie Bowler to take the strategic lead responsibility and

Name: Rosie Neale & Paula Foley to act as the designated person(s) and

Name: Pamela Hill to act as named trustee.

Retention of Records

A factual, dated and signed/initialled record of concerns about an adult at risk in a family supported will be kept, in line with Home-Start record keeping and procedures.

Records kept by employees about adults at risk should only include contacts made, referrals made including date, time, and reason, and referral agency.

This policy will be reviewed annually and more frequently if appropriate

Signature of Chair:

Name:

Patricia Burleigh

Date policy and Procedure adopted:

31 July 2020

Date to be reviewed:

July 2021