

Morecare Vulnerable Adults Policy

A vulnerable person is any adult who

- ✓ May be in need of community care services by reason of age or illness or disability (physical or mental)
- ✓ May be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation

Definition of Significant harm

Ill-treatment including:

- ✓ physical abuse
- ✓ sexual abuse
- ✓ forms of ill treatment that are not physical
- ✓ treatment or neglect causing avoidable deterioration in well-being
- ✓ the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development

Definition of Risk

Refers to situations or behaviours which present a real or potential threat of harm to a person's health, development, safety or well-being. Vulnerable people can be at risk because of the actions or behaviour of others or they can be at risk because of self-neglect, their behaviour and lifestyle.

Definition of Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person. Abuse may consist of single or repeated acts. It can be physical, psychological, financial, sexual, neglect or discriminatory abuse and can take place in any setting

Neglect can be deliberate or unintentional, amounting to abuse by a carer (formal or informal) or self-neglect by the vulnerable person.

Morecare is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use our services are not exploited or abused and that working practices minimise the risk of abuse. If abuse is reported to us or volunteers recognise abuse, this policy outlines what steps should be taken. This policy complements our Equal Opportunities Policy.

Values

All individuals will be treated with equal respect regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual identity or impairment

- ✓ The rights of all individuals will be upheld, and decisions will be taken in partnership with the vulnerable person
- ✓ There will be no unnecessary delay in resolving matters
- ✓ Intervention will be no more than is necessary to protect the individual
- ✓ Personal information will be treated in the strictest confidence within the limits of the law, and following Morecare's Confidentiality Policy

Aims

- ✓ To respond sensitively to reported incidents of self-neglect and abuse
- ✓ To respect the rights and wishes of the vulnerable person
- ✓ To work to the highest standards of good practice

Procedure

What to do if abuse is reported or suspected

- ✓ If you have any concerns about a vulnerable person, discuss these with the telephone co-ordinator immediately
- ✓ Record all the information carefully – on Client At Risk (CAR) form
- ✓ If the matter is urgent due to the severity of the symptoms, the telephone co-ordinator should contact a medical practitioner
- ✓ The telephone co-ordinator will consult committee members who will contact the appropriate agency (e.g. Social Services)
- ✓ If an individual is in need of immediate protective action, it may be necessary to contact the police
- ✓ All reports of suspected or alleged abuse must be recorded in detail by the telephone co-ordinator on the CAR form

Action to take when abuse is disclosed

- ✓ Listen carefully to what the person is saying
- ✓ Give the person time to say what he or she wants to
- ✓ Make initial enquiries and establish the situation as far as possible without starting an investigation
- ✓ Sensitive ask open questions (not leading questions) to obtain key information:
 - What has happened
 - When did the activity take place
 - Where did it take place
 - Who is involved
 - Discuss with the person what action s/he wishes you to take
 - Ensure that the person knows how to contact the police to report the incident if s/he wishes to do so

If the person asks you not to take any action

You must explain to the person that you must inform the appropriate person in charge.

Tell the person you understand that he or she does not wish to take any action and you will inform the co-ordinator of this. If the abused person does not want the matter to go any further then his/her wishes should be respected, unless the following apply:

- ✓ Where the alleged abuse has been perpetrated by a professional, a paid helper or volunteer of any organisation who may have access to other vulnerable people
- ✓ Where there is likelihood of a serious crime occurring
- ✓ Where the client lacks the mental capacity to make an informed decision

If the person wishes action to be taken

You should record all the information that you have been told and what you have observed e.g.

bruising. The wishes of the vulnerable person should be taken into account, and their consent (if they are able to give it) should be obtained regarding further action and the sharing of information.

Support for Volunteers

It is recognised that dealing with allegations of abuse can be stressful and Morecare will offer volunteers as much support during the process as resources permit.

If allegations are made against a volunteer of Morecare, the Management Committee will refer to its Disciplinary Procedure taking the Vulnerable Adults Policy into account. The rights of volunteers under Grievance and Disciplinary procedures will still apply.

Confidentiality

- ✓ Though Morecare policies contain confidentiality clauses it must be stressed that where abuse to a volunteer or client is alleged, suspected, reported or concerns are raised, then the telephone co-ordinator must be notified, as mentioned in the Confidentiality Policy
- ✓ The volunteer should be made aware that the management committee cannot ignore issues around abuse and that steps will be taken to deal with them in as sensitive a manner as possible.
- ✓ The confidentiality of the vulnerable adult should be respected wherever possible, and their consent sought to share information.

Volunteer Training

- ✓ Morecare will ensure that all of its volunteers who have direct contact with vulnerable adults have relevant training in the recognition of abuse and understand how to use the procedures to support the vulnerable adults and alert other appropriate volunteers
- ✓ Morecare will ensure volunteers are aware of the legal protection afforded by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1988 (protection from unfair dismissal or victimisation for whistle blowing on poor or abusive practice by colleagues).