

Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme

Safeguarding Policy

This policy was agreed by the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme Steering Group on

_____ (date)

Signed _____ (chair)

Date of Review _____

Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme Safeguarding Policy

Definition

Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use our services are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of such abuse and any instances of possible abuse are identified and reported.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme Health and Safety Policy and the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme Lone Working Policy.

Definition

Vulnerable adults are people who are over 18 years of age and are getting or may need help and services to live in the community. Vulnerable adults may be unable to take care of themselves and unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by other people.

Abuse can include: physical, financial, material, sexual, psychological, discriminatory, emotional abuse or neglect. Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetuated by anyone. Vulnerable Adults can also be victims of self-neglect and as a result might need further support from the appropriate agency.

Safeguarding under 18s

Children and young people under the age of 18 may sometimes be involved in providing services for our clients through the involvement of other organisations, e.g. School, Brownies. The Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme expects the Safeguarding Policies of those organisations to apply in these circumstances and expects the organisers of those organisations to inform us of any particular requirements they may have of us in respect of safeguarding those children and young people.

Membership of the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme is not usually open to those under the age of 18 years living in the parish of Woodford Halse. Residents under 18 may be considered at the Organising Committee's discretion where the resident would be accompanied on their volunteering by relative or a DBS-checked volunteer at all times and/or where the volunteering undertaken by the resident would not involve being alone with a client.

Where clients have dependents living with them who are under the age of 18; volunteers should seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Person as an enhanced DBS might be required.

Responsibilities of the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme:

- To appoint a member of the organising committee as Designated Safeguarding Person;
- To ensure volunteers are aware of vulnerable adult's need for protection;
- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected;
- To support and where possible secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability;
- To DBS check volunteers that visit or transport vulnerable adults unaccompanied.

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Responsibilities of volunteers:

- To be familiar with the safeguarding vulnerable adult protection policy.
- To take appropriate action in line with the policies and code of conduct of the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme, including reporting any concerns to the Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme Designated Safeguarding Person.
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions.

Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Person:

- To ensure that they have up-to-date training in safeguarding.
- To keep thorough records of any concerns expressed by volunteers.
- To organise enhanced DBS checks for those undertaking regulated activities¹ and ensure that all new volunteers receive appropriate induction regarding safeguarding.

Procedures for visiting vulnerable adults in their own homes

Volunteers will be given a copy of the Lone Working Policy before visiting someone in their own home. They will always carry a mobile phone on a home visit, and ensure that someone knows where they are and when they are expected to return. They will always call by appointment and carry identification. Sometimes, a volunteer may feel that the person is experiencing personal care or health difficulties beyond those we can support as an organisation. The volunteer will discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Person and will not take independent action on this. Where volunteers and the DSP feel the need to refer the person to another agency for support we will talk this through with the vulnerable adult, seeking his/her permission before passing on personal information. However, if abuse is suspected, we may refer to the appropriate agency without seeking permission beforehand.

Responding to vulnerable adults who report abuse

We will ensure that when we are responding to an adult who may be disclosing abuse we will follow the relevant procedures agreed by the Northamptonshire Adult Social Services (<https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/adult-social-care/safeguarding/Pages/safeguarding-adults-forms.aspx>)

We will endeavour to:

- Listen carefully, taking the adult seriously
- Tell the adult he/she has done the right thing by telling us
- Clarify if necessary
- Say, if we can, what we will do next
- Make an accurate record as soon as possible
- Refer the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Person who will liaise with the appropriate agencies

We will not

- Promise confidentiality
- Investigate
- Ask leading questions
- Repeatedly question/ask the adult to repeat the disclosure over and over

¹ For details of current regulated activities, see current eligibility guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-eligibility-guidance> or https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216900/Regulated-Activity-Adults-Dec-2012.pdf

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Imminent risk

If we believe the vulnerable adult is in imminent danger, we will act immediately to secure their safety. We will seek the assistance of the police and then make a referral to Local Authority Social Care in accordance with the Child and Adult Protection Procedure below. If an adult needs emergency medical attention, we will seek this immediately and directly from the emergency services. We will keep relatives, if available, fully informed, with the vulnerable adult's permission.

Support for those who report abuse

We will seek to assure adults who report abuse that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their concerns will be shared with the appropriate authorities if they or others are at significant risk;
- Information about the complaint, allegation or concern will be treated confidentially between the Safeguarding Officer and appropriate authorities.

Support for the accused

- Any volunteer or client accused of abuse will be put in touch with citizens' advice who can give them details of support that is available.
- Whilst we may have to suspend the membership of a volunteer or client whilst the appropriate agencies carry out an investigation, we will always assume innocence until the outcome of any investigation is known.
- Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

The Vulnerable Adult has the right:

- To be made aware of this policy
- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
- To be involved in any process as appropriate
- To receive information about the outcome

Policy and practice regarding safeguarding will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1: Important Contact Details

Safeguarding Contacts:

If an adult is in serious imminent danger, then phone 999 / 101

In the event of any other safeguarding concern then please contact the Northamptonshire Adult Social Care <https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/adult-social-care/safeguarding/Pages/safeguarding-adults-forms.aspx>

Other useful numbers:

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247

Samaritans Helpline: 08457 90 90 90

Northamptonshire Age UK: 01604 611207 (Advice and Information)

Citizens Advice: 03444 88 9629

Appendix 2: Whistleblowing Policy

To fulfil their commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, all organisations that provide services for, or work with children or vulnerable adults are required to have appropriate whistle-blowing procedures, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare to be addressed.

Volunteers and Clients should be encouraged to acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of unacceptable practice, performance or behaviour to the attention of the incumbent. It is often the case that a co-voluntary worker may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express concerns, feeling that this would be disloyal; he or she may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however, natural, must never result in an adult who may be vulnerable continuing to be unnecessarily at risk.

How to raise a concern under the whistleblowing policy:

- Concerns, suspicions or uneasiness about practice or behaviour of an individual should be voiced as soon as possible to the Designated Safeguarding Person.
- If the concern is about the Designated Safeguarding Person, inform the Chair.
- Be specific about what practice is concerning, what has been heard or what has been observed
- Ideally put concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, and providing dates and times
- People are encouraged to put your name to any disclosure; however, any concern raised anonymously will be considered at the discretion of the DSP, taking into account the seriousness of the issue raised, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources

Appendix 3: DBS policy

(Reference should also be made to the Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders)

The Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme will apply the latest advice in requesting enhanced DBS checks, using the advice available through the Gov.uk website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-eligibility-guidance>

At present, the advice is that the following tasks that our volunteers are likely to be involved in are eligible for a DBS check:

- i. Carrying out tasks *for our clients* in the role of a volunteer involving handling money, e.g. shopping.
- ii. Transporting clients to medical appointments, social care appointments or personal care appointments (excluding hairdressing) as a volunteer.
- iii. The supervision of volunteers involved in the above activities (i.e. volunteer co-ordinator and designated safeguarding person).

Volunteers needing to carry out any of these tasks will be DBS checked.

It will be assumed that any volunteers using their cars for the purposes of Woodford Halse Good Neighbours Scheme will be involved in the above activities and an enhanced DBS check will be carried out.

Note: The Woodford Halse Good Neighbour Scheme will implement this policy for people carrying out these tasks when working as a volunteer for the scheme. There is no requirement for people helping their friends with these tasks to be DBS checked.