

Safeguarding: Definitions, guidance and roles etc.

What is Safeguarding? Safeguarding is an on-going process that seeks to prevent or reduce the harm caused to children or vulnerable adults, as well as those people who are working with them.

What is meant by children? A child for safeguarding purposes is any person between birth and under the age of 18. There are some exceptions to this: Children who are placed in local authority care are usually classed as children **until aged 21**, and those with some special needs are regarded as children while aged **under 25**.

What is meant by vulnerable adults? A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or over:

'Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is unable to take care of him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.' (Who Decides, Lord Chancellors Department 1997)

This may include a person who has one or more of the following (either on an ongoing or temporary basis): Elderly and frail, has a mental illness, has a physical or sensory disability, has a severe physical illness, is a substance misuser or is homeless, in debt or other similar stress.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) merged in 2012 to become the Disclosure and Barring Service. An organisation must obtain DBS checks if relevant people within it work with children or vulnerable people. "Enhanced" checks are required for people involved in 'regulated activity'

Regulated Activity involving children guidance
Regulated Activity involving adults guidance.

(Knutsford G.R.O.W.'s coordinators are enhanced DBS checked.)

It is illegal for your organisation to knowingly employ someone (including a trustee or volunteer) who is barred to work with vulnerable people in any capacity. You can obtain up to date information from:

- <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/vetting-barring-scheme>
- DBS Helpline: 0870 90 90 811

The types of harm that safeguarding addresses:

Abuse Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take a variety of forms:

Children:

- **Physical Abuse** This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm.

Physical harm can also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child (known as Munchausen's syndrome by proxy).

- **Sexual Abuse** Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. Non – contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities. Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, including the involvement in prostitution.
- **Emotional abuse** The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child causing severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional well-being and development. It may involve conveying that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate or not valued. Imposing inappropriate expectations on their age or stage of development. Causing children to feel frightened or in danger. Exploitation and corruption of children.
- **Neglect** The persistent failure to meet a child's physical and psychological needs which could result in the serious impairment of their health and development. It may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing. Failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger. Failing to ensure access to appropriate medical treatment or care. Neglect of the child's basic emotional needs and to ensure a satisfactory education.

Vulnerable Adults: Although the forms of abuse are the same for vulnerable adults the definitions may alter slightly, with additional forms of abuse which are relevant to vulnerable adults.

- **Physical abuse** This could include hitting, slapping, pushing kicking, misuse of medication and restraint.
- **Sexual abuse** Includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which a vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent to, or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological/ Emotional abuse** Threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse and isolation.
- **Financial or material abuse** This could include theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property inheritance or the misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect or Acts of Omission** Includes ignoring medical or physical care, failure to provide appropriate health, social care, withholding of necessities such as medication, heating and adequate nutrition.
- **Discriminatory abuse** Treating a person in a way which does not respect their race, religion, sex, disability, culture, ethnicity or sexuality. Hate crimes.
- **Institutional abuse** Where routines and rules make a person alter their lifestyle and culture to fit in with the institution.
- **Forced marriage** Where one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage and some element of duress and coercion is involved. **NB:** To be

distinguished from arranged marriages where the young person is allowed to choose whether they accept the arrangement proposed by families.

What to do if you are concerned? If you have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult don't keep the information to yourself.

Refer to Knutsford G.R.O.W.'s safeguarding policy and adhere to it including reporting your concerns to the safeguarding lead. (Chairman) and completing a paper record on the correct form (there are different ones for children and vulnerable adults.) All can be downloaded from Knutsford G.R.O.W.'s website.

If you have a general concern report this to the local children's assessment team or social care team who will record your concerns and follow them up. Do not discuss your concerns with anyone outside these teams and make a note of the date, time and person to whom you reported your concerns on the form which can be downloaded from Knutsford G.R.O.W's website.

What to do if someone discloses something or makes an allegation.

- Remain calm; don't show any strong reactions such as shock and disgust.
- Reassure the person that they are doing the right thing by telling you, and it is not their fault.
- Take the allegation seriously.
- Do not promise confidentiality, explain that you will have to share this information, but only to people who need to know such as Knutsford G.R.O.W's chairman.
- Accept what is said without comment or judgement.
- Take time to listen carefully to what is being said.
- Do not ask leading questions – use words such as what, why, who, when and how. This will allow them to share their story freely.
- Do not ask too many questions or press for more details.
- Do not interrupt them – allow them to share whatever is important to them.
- It is crucial that you record (on the download able form)
 - what was said
 - what you saw
 - where it was said
 - where you saw it and who was there, including their relationship to you.
 - Any questions you have asked and their views and wishes.
 - In the case of a vulnerable adult also record what they want to be done.
- Do this as soon as you can so that none of the detail is lost – make sure you use the individual's own words as much as possible – do not add any interpretations, reactions, evaluations or conclusions.
- This information should be kept confidential and passed onto Knutsford G.R.O.W's safeguarding lead (Chairman) as soon as possible.

- Do not keep your own copy.

Local Safeguarding Boards The Local Safeguarding Boards are multi-agency organisations that provide strategic leadership for the development of safeguarding policy and practice. The Care Act 2014 made it a statutory requirement for Local Councils to have a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB).

Information on the Care Act 2014

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-statutory-guidance-for-implementation><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-statutory-guidance-for-implementation>

Safeguarding your organisation Safeguarding is not just about spotting and reporting abuse – it is important you take steps to protect your organisation in other ways. It is also usually a requirement of grant funders or contracting organisations that you have a safeguarding policy and procedure in place.