

## **Greenwich Winter Night Shelter (GWNS)**

### **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy**

GWNS is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use the night shelter are not abused

and that the way in which we work with such individuals minimises the risk of abuse.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibility of volunteers and trustees working on behalf of GWNS in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults.

#### **What is a vulnerable adult?**

An adult (a person aged 18 or over) who 'is in receipt of or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation' (Department of Health, 2000, 'No Secrets').

It may also include victims of hate crime and anti-social abuse behaviour. The individuals' need for additional support to protect themselves may be increased when complicated by additional factors such as physical frailty, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, drug or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, poverty or homelessness.

#### **What do we mean by abuse?**

Abuse of a vulnerable adult may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may occur as a result of a failure to undertake action or appropriate care tasks. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur where a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not, or cannot, consent. Further examples of abuse include bullying or threatening behaviour, physical harm and discrimination.

#### **What should you do?**

Be alert to indicators of potential abuse situations and report concerns/disclosures to the Venue Co-ordinator or directly to the Safeguarding Officer on that working day where possible.

Should the individual be in immediate danger, or needs medical treatment contact the emergency services.

Contact details:

Safeguarding Officer: name and number Emergency Services: call 999

#### **Children**

It is essential that the needs of any children within an abusive situation where there is a

vulnerable adult involved are considered and acted upon. Therefore please do take care to report any such factors.

The Venue Co-ordinator or Safeguarding Officer will complete an initial cause for concern form so it would be helpful if you could include the following information: date, time, place where any alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

### **What should you not do?**

Do not confront the person you think is responsible for the abuse.

Do not destroy any evidence.

Do not start to investigate the situation.

Do not provide promises of confidentiality as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

### **Indicators of abuse**

The indicators a vulnerable adult may demonstrate are varied but include the following:

- dramatic changes in behaviour
- multiple bruising that is not consistent with the explanation
- cowering and flinching
- over-sexualised behaviour
- lack of eye contact

### **What will happen next?**

The Venue Co-ordinator or Safeguarding Officer will:

conduct sensitive enquiry; report the matter to the Project Manager/referral agency/appropriate local adult social services; produce a written record; including date, time, nature of the allegation and outcome of discussion with the referral agency.

The outcome will depend on the wishes of the person and the seriousness of the situation. If there is a physical danger, ensuring their safety is most important. This may involve outside agencies responsible for their care.

### **Confidentiality**

Volunteers and trustees have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly adult social services. Therefore, if the adult confides in you and asks that the information is

kept secret, it is important that it is sensitively explained to the individual that this is not possible as he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.

Within that context the adult must, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent must be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority.

All personal information regarding a vulnerable adult will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only contain details required in the initial cause for concern form.

Where a disclosure has been made, you must let the adult know the position regarding your role and what action will be taken.

### **Recruitment procedure**

GWNS operates procedures that take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults, including arrangements for the careful selection and recruitment of 'volunteers and trustees as appropriate.

### **In our care**

GWNS is committed to promoting and supporting a night shelter which ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. Appropriate support will be offered to any vulnerable adult who has or is currently suffering abuse, including partnership with other specialist agencies.

**SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS INITIAL CAUSE FOR CONCERN FORM**

Initial cause for concern must be discussed with Venue Co-ordinator/Safeguarding Officer within 24 - 48 hours.

**Name:**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Name of the individual cause for concern is about:**

**Describe your concern:**

**Observations to support cause for concern:**

**Name of alleged abuser and relationship with client:**

**Name of person submitting the form:**

Signature: Date:

**Please forward this form to the Venue Co-ordinator or Safeguarding Officer ASAP.**

**Office use**

Received by:

Date: