

BGNS Vulnerable Adult and Safeguarding Policy

Good Neighbour Scheme (GNS) network members are committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use our services are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of such abuse. Volunteers and the Steering Group of each group are expected to raise any concerns about potential abuse with the safeguarding team at the appropriate local authority, and to inform BedsRCC of the situation.

Definition of vulnerable adults

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 take place in any setting, public or private, urban or rural, and can be perpetuated by anyone. The person may be a stranger but, more often than not, may be known to the vulnerable adult, such as a relative, neighbour or health / care professional.

Abuse can include:

- physical; financial; material; sexual; psychological;
- discriminatory; emotional abuse; neglect; self-neglect;
- modern slavery; domestic abuse; forced marriage; institutional abuse.

A detail description of types of abuse can be found in Guidance Note GU03

Rights and responsibilities of the group's Steering Group:

- To review the Group's safeguarding policy annually at the AGM
- To ensure that volunteers are aware of vulnerable adults' need for protection, and the group procedure for raising concerns
- To support and where appropriate / possible to secure the safety of individuals
- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability

- To ensure that at least one Steering Group member attends Safeguarding Awareness training to keep the group policy up to date; and to ensure that other volunteers are encouraged to attend
- To DBS check volunteers who have access to or work with vulnerable adults

Responsibilities of all volunteers:

- To be aware of their Group's Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
- To take appropriate action in line with the policy should they have concerns or should concerns be reported to them by another volunteer, a service user, carer or member of the general public
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions.

Support for those who report abuse

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they are volunteers, service users, carers or members of the general public have the right to expect that:

- They will be taken seriously and treated with respect. Should their concern turn out to have an innocent explanation their coming forward to express those concerns will still be appreciated as 'better safe than sorry'.
- While their comments will usually be treated confidentially, their concerns may be shared with other appropriate authorities if they or others are at significant risk.

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 and to receive information about the outcome

NOTE: Although Groups do not work directly with children or young people it is recognised that volunteers will occasionally come into contact with them through the volunteer's work with family members or other adults. Groups

would seek to safeguard children and young people by reporting any concerns and seeking advice from relevant agencies, should it be suspected that a child may be experiencing harm or be at risk of harm.

Contact information

If you are worried that you or someone you know is in immediate danger, you should call the police on 999.

If you are concerned about a situation, but do not feel that it is an emergency, please discuss it with your Steering Group who will support you to contact the Safeguarding Team at the appropriate local authority:

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Team

Tel: 0300 300 8122 (Monday to Friday, 8:45am to 5:20pm)

Tel: 0300 300 8123 (outside of these hours)

Email: adult.protection@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Bedford Borough Safeguarding Team:

Tel: 01234 276222

Tel: 0300 300 8123 (outside office hours)

Email: adult.protection@bedford.gov.uk

Network Group members will inform BRCC on all occasions where this procedure is followed, and are committed to reviewing policy and good practice annually.