

Safeguarding adults at risk

The aim

The aim of this policy is to outline the practice and procedures for paid staff and volunteers in Parkinson's UK to contribute to the safeguarding of adults at risk through raising awareness and providing a clear framework for action when abuse is suspected.

It is aimed at protecting the adult at risk and volunteers or staff members. The policy covers all staff and volunteers with specific guidance for those regularly in contact with adults at risk. This policy is applicable across the UK. Please note that in Scotland the term 'protected person' is used rather than 'adult at risk' and 'vulnerable person' in Northern Ireland.

Definitions

Safeguarding appropriate people

A generally accepted definition of an 'adult at risk' (or a 'protected person' in Scotland) is:

'An adult aged 18 years 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 or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation' (DH,2000)

So, an adult at risk may be a person who:

- is elderly and frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment
- has a learning disability
- has a physical disability and/or sensory impairment
- has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder
- Has a long-term illness/condition
- misuses substances or alcohol
- is a carer, such as a family member/friend who provides personal assistance and care to adults and is subject to abuse
- Is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support

This list is not prescriptive, therefore other variations should be considered.

All children (up to the age of 18 years) are potentially vulnerable to abuse. Details of legislation and guidance regarding safeguarding children in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland can be found on the NSPCC website www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/policyandpublicaffairs/ppa_wda48585.html

What do we mean by abuse?

Abuse is a violation of human and civil rights by another person or persons. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be planned or unplanned. It may be the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance. It may happen when an adult at risk is persuaded to enter into a transaction that they are unable to consent or have not consented to.

Abuse can take many forms and includes but is not limited to:

- physical
- financial
- material
- sexual
- psychological
- discriminatory
- emotional
- neglect

Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetrated by anyone.

Our duty of care

While Parkinson's UK has no statutory responsibility to act in cases of abuse, it does have a duty of care for our beneficiaries, volunteers and staff. To exercise our duty of care we operate within the following framework:

- Our procedures aim to make sure that the safety, needs and interests of adults at risk are always respected and given priority.
- We believe people should be empowered and supported to make their own choices, while being protected from harm.
- We will assess the safeguarding risks that adults at risk/protected persons encounter in their association with Parkinson's UK and take all necessary steps to manage them, while also ensuring staff and volunteers take steps where necessary to look after themselves in all their activities.
- We will inform everyone we work with, including our staff and volunteers, how to voice concerns about any safeguarding situations.
- We will regularly update our policies, procedures and guidelines to take account of UK safeguarding legislation and good practice.
- We expect staff and volunteers to understand their duty to report concerns.
- We will ensure we maintain high standards in our staff and volunteer safeguarding approach through recruitment, training, support and supervision. We will apply this policy to internal and external partners, and other agencies acting on our behalf¹.
- We will check criminal disclosures where appropriate and legally entitled to do so, in line with our staff and volunteer recruitment policies.
- We will identify a senior member of staff as Designated Protection Officer who has responsibility for overseeing safeguarding policy and procedure and for making decisions with regard to referrals to safeguarding authorities.

¹When we refer to external partners and or agencies this may include organisations acting on our behalf including those providing services to our local group network or members.

Statutory agencies involved in safeguarding – primarily the Police, Local Authorities and the Health Service – have explicit expectations of staff and volunteers in voluntary organisations and these are based on a clear definition of who should be considered an ‘adult at risk’. Put simply the expectation is that:

- all staff and volunteers from any service or setting should know about the safeguarding policy and procedures and how to access the most up to date information and guidance
- all staff and volunteers from any service or setting who have contact with adults at risk have a responsibility to be aware of issues of abuse, neglect or exploitation
- all staff and volunteers have a duty to act in a timely manner, ideally on the same or next working day on any concern or suspicion that an adult, who is at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited and to ensure that the situation is assessed and referred to safeguarding authorities, as appropriate. It is important to note that where an ‘adult at risk’ is deemed to be in immediate danger we will involve the emergency services to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the individual

A safeguarding concern

It is recognised that there need to be several appropriate routes to report any safeguarding concerns. This may be if an adult experiencing abuse or neglect confides in you, or if you have concerns regarding an ‘adult at risks’ behaviour or changes in state of mind.



Please inform your relevant contact of your concerns and they or the Designated Protection Officer will be able to make a judgment using the information given on whether the concern should be referred on to an adult safeguarding agency.

Please refer to the ‘Useful contacts for volunteers’ information available in the awareness guide to access details for the regional manager or country director.

If your relevant contact is not available contact the designated protection officer or the UK helpline direct. The contact details for the designated protection officer are **0844 225 9853** or **safeguarding@parkinsons.org.uk**. The contact details for the UK helpline are **0808 800 0303**, please ask for the ‘manager’ due to safeguarding concerns and say that it is in relation to a safeguarding concern.

Consent and capacity

Issues of consent and capacity underpin our approach to safeguarding. The role of Parkinson's UK does not include conducting investigations, but it is important to understand these issues and consider the way in which they may impact on decision making in relation to a reported concern.

An individual's consent should always be sought when sharing information with other parties, ie the safeguarding contact and external safeguarding agencies. A person's wishes will be respected as far as possible while judging this against our duty of care towards individuals. Parkinson's UK should only take any action once consent has been given by the 'adult at risk', except in exceptional circumstances. We will record where consent has been given on the record of concern form and a copy will be given to the 'adult at risk'.

'Mental capacity' refers to an individual's ability to make decisions for themselves. We will always assume that an individual has the mental capacity to make their own decisions unless it is known otherwise. Staff and volunteers are not expected to assess capacity.

When we refer to exceptional circumstances this may include if the individual is deemed to be in immediate danger, or unable to make a decision themselves, then the safety and wellbeing of the individual is the first concern. Emergency services should be contacted where necessary; however the individual should be informed of this action and the reason for this wherever possible.

Further guidance and relevant policies

Alongside this policy there are other documents for staff and volunteers available that are essential guidance. These should be referred to when considering safeguarding.

These are:

- safeguarding adults at risk – guidance notes (please refer to the appropriate version for your role)
- safeguarding adults at risk – awareness guidance
- safeguarding adults at risk – record of concern (for staff only)

Other relevant staff policies to refer to are:

- health and safety
- whistleblowing
- data protection
- lone working