

West End Refugee Service (WERS) Policy Statement

Safeguarding Adults

Policy Statement

WERS is committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all the adults who access our service. In accordance with this, WERS does not tolerate any abuse or harm (deliberate or through neglect) to vulnerable adults and wishes to ensure their protection and safety. In keeping with the mission and values WERS is committed to:

- valuing, listening to and respecting vulnerable adults as well as safeguarding and promoting their welfare and protection;
- empowering the clients we support to safeguard themselves within the community, equipping them with knowledge and resources that available to them;
- having an effective procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse, working in co-operation with other agencies, including statutory bodies;
- ensuring that safeguarding is integral to the recruitment of paid staff, trustees and volunteers, and that those known to have been convicted of offences related to abuse will not be allowed to work at WERS, and
- training, supervising and supporting employees and volunteers so that they are equipped to identify and deal with safeguarding issues.

We recognise the additional needs of vulnerable adults with refugee or asylum status, minority ethnic groups and disabilities and the barriers they may face around communication. WERS works to ensure that all vulnerable adults have the same protection regardless of refugee status, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Aims of the policy

The policy is relevant to all staff, volunteers and Trustees at WERS and sets out the collective responsibility for all of us to act if we have concerns about the safety of any adult at risk. WERS works to discourage abuse, support adults who may or previously experienced abuse and take appropriate action to any allegations or suspicions of abuse.

The policy has been written to provide accessible advice and procedures to follow when a WERS staff, trustees or volunteer is concerned about an adult at risk that they come across in their work. It is the collective responsibility of all, to act if there are concerns about the safety of an adult at risk and do so whilst upholding the six principles:

- Empowerment; ensuring adults are supported and encouraged to make their own choices

and have control over their lives.

- Prevention; take proactive measures to prevent abuse, neglect or harm to adults whenever possible.
- Proportionality; intervene in a way that is proportionate to the seriousness of the risk and the individuals' needs.
- Protection; support and take action to protect adults from abuse, neglect or harm.
- Partnership; collaborate with relevant agencies and professionals to provide effective and coordinated safeguarding responses.
- Accountability; hold individuals and organisations accountable for their actions and decisions in safeguarding adults.

WERS is not a statutory organisation and therefore all projects should work in conjunction with Local Authorities and their procedures in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, The Care Act 2014 & Sexual Offences Act 2003.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the children & young people safeguarding policy, Whistleblowing policy (undergoing review), recruitment and selection policy and code of conduct (undergoing review).

General information

This policy is relevant to all staff, volunteers and trustees at WERS and sets out the collective responsibility to be alert types of abuse and protect against abuse. This policy relates to 'vulnerable adults', or 'adults at risk'.¹ The safety and welfare of such adults is of the utmost importance.

The standard definition of 'Vulnerable adult' describes 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 or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'. The vulnerability may be permanent or temporary, and may be on account of the misuse of drugs or alcohol.

WERS recognises that many people we work with are experiencing trauma (often undiagnosed) as a result of what they have been through, both in their country of origin, on their journey to safety and in the asylum system. They may be socially isolated, unsure of the UK protocols and norms, fearful of authority and therefore more likely to be submissive. This increases their risk of abuse and manipulation, therefore making them a potential target for exploitation. They may also lack appropriate levels of English to communicate their needs clearly. As a consequence, they may find it difficult to protect themselves from abuse and/or radicalisation. WERS is committed to ensuring all adults are free from abuse.

Abuse can occur in any relationship, be deliberate or unintentional and may be a single act or repeated acts. Abuse includes:

- Physical abuse e.g. hitting, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate touch or punishment.

1 'Adult at risk' is a new term in official use, in place of 'vulnerable adult'.

- Sexual abuse e.g. rape and sexual assault or sexual acts of touching of intimate places to which the vulnerable adult has not or could not consent to and/or was pressured into consenting.
- Emotional or psychological abuse e.g. threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, compulsion, inappropriate language, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive and/or spiritual networks, withdrawal or omission to provide opportunities and choice including choice of gender of carer.
- Financial or material abuse e.g. theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. Damage or threats of damage to property.
- Neglect and acts of omission e.g. ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational and leisure services, the withholding of the necessities of life such as; medication, adequate and appropriate nutrition, information, clothing, comfort, relationships, safety and environment.
- Discriminatory abuse e.g. racism, sexism, or prejudice based on an individual's disability, or other forms of harassment, taunts or similar treatment.
- Institutional/organisational abuse e.g. non-negotiable systems and routines, lack of adequate physical care, withholding care, inappropriate use of power.
- Domestic abuse including Honor-Based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.
- Self-neglect e.g. inability to cater for basic needs, not accessing medical assistance when needed, hoarding items, neglecting personal hygiene, not attending to living conditions.
- Modern slavery/Victim of trafficking, exploitation of an individual for personal or commercial gain.
- Cyber abuse involving online behaviour which threatens, intimidates, harasses, harms or humiliates another this can include cyberbullying, grooming with the intent to radicalise and sexual exploitation.

Adults are entitled to independence, choice, and self-determination, which encompass control over personal information. While respecting these rights is fundamental, there are specific circumstances in adult safeguarding where they may be superseded. While obtaining consent for sharing information is optimal, in situations where it is not feasible, sharing concerns may be deemed in the person's best interest.

Responsibilities

WERS trustees are responsible overall for setting the Safeguarding Adults policy and ensuring its implementation. However, all employees and volunteers have a duty to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice. Oversight is provided by the Trustee Safeguarding Lead.

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that staff know of and adhere to the policy. The volunteer co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring that existing and potential volunteers are aware of and adhere to the policy. After their induction at WERS, staff and volunteers sign to say that they have read, understood and agree to abide by this policy.

The safeguarding policy, the name and details of the safeguarding lead and a poster detailing the key areas covered by the policy will be displayed in the building.

With regard to other agencies providing regular surgeries/drop-ins on WERS' premises:

- At the outset, WERS should ask to see the agency's policy to ensure that visiting agencies adhere to the same standards as WERS in regard to safeguarding. In the event that an agency does not have a policy, WERS will give them a copy of its own safeguarding policies to which they must adhere.
- If a safeguarding issue is disclosed to a worker from a visiting organisation, that organisation should initiate the safeguarding process.

Supporting Guidelines

1. Safe Recruitment

All WERS staff and Trustees are subject to Enhanced DBS Checks upon appointment. Volunteers working in a 1-1 context with clients, including but not limited to befriending and support work are subject to Enhanced DBS Checks. It is the responsibility of the Head of Corporate Services to ensure these are received. Volunteers in group settings will not be required to undertake Enhanced DBS checks, however, will undergo a self-declaring risk assessment prior to appointment.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an individual from working with the organisation. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

2. Training

All staff and volunteers will undergo Safeguarding training upon appointment and are expected to attend update training throughout their time at WERS. The training will include but not limited to; recognising and responding appropriately to abuse to ensure the best protection for WERS' clients and their families. Staff and volunteers are not expected to be experts, however, they should have the appropriate training and awareness to raise a concern.

3. Identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns

WERS staff (employees and volunteers) may have concerns about the safeguarding of a vulnerable adult as a result of:

- observation while working with a vulnerable adult
- a disclosure by the adult
- another person reporting a concern
- observation of or reports about the behaviour of a staff member towards a vulnerable adult

If a vulnerable adult discloses a safeguarding issue to a WERS staff member, the latter should:

- listen carefully, without interrupting
- remain calm and receptive, without displaying emotion
- give reassurance that it is right to speak out
- try to clarify information without probing or over-questioning
- explain the need to share information
- not make promises or agree to keep information confidential

4. Reporting and investigation

WERS staff and volunteers are not expected to be experts in identifying abuse or investigating allegations. Any concerns or disclosures of abuse should be accurately logged. Regardless of role the following actions should be taken:

- Make a written record of the disclosure, allegation or reasons for suspicion. Where possible specific details should be included (date, location, form of suspected abuse, reasons why abuse is suspected).
- Discuss with the WERS Designated Safeguarding Lead or Chief Executive Officer on the same day.
 - Designated Safeguarding Lead – Heather Andrews – heather@wers.org.uk
 - Interim Chief Executive Officer – Andy Durma – andy@wers.org.uk
- In their absences or if an allegation is made against them, this discussion should be made Board Trustee Safeguarding Lead.
 - Board Trustee Safeguarding Lead – Reverend John Howard-Norman – john.howard-norman@methodist.org.uk
- If the adult appears to be in immediate danger or in need of urgent medical attention, the emergency services must be contacted immediately.
- WERS is not responsible for investigating reported abuse, every effort should be made to ensure the alleged victim understands their options, make informed choices and consent to any follow-up actions taken by WERS in the sharing of their information to other agencies. Efforts should be made to help the alleged victim access appropriate statutory or voluntary agencies.
- Any follow up actions by WERS or changes in circumstances should be monitored and logged by staff on Lamplight and reported to the DSL or CEO.
- A referral to Adult Services or other notification to statutory services may be made without the person's consent if the situation is of such seriousness that inaction would leave the person or other people at risk of significant harm. The person still should be informed about the action taken, unless telling them would jeopardise their safety or the safety of others. Mental capacity is a factor in such situations.
 - Advice on these matters (including the assessment of mental capacity) should be sought from Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Unit (contact details below).

WERS works closely with a wide range of health professionals in primary and secondary care, Northumbria Police, Victim Support, Hate Crime UK, Social Services, REACH (a counselling service for rape victims) and others. Additionally, a number of its own services offer support and advice in the areas of befriending, advice and advocacy and these may be helpful in preventing further abuse or helping the client who has been abused.

Managing a concern about a WERS representative

Any allegation against a member of staff must be reported to the DSL or CEO immediately. When a WERS representative is suspected to be a perpetrator of significant harm or abuse, the safety of the alleged victim concerned is of the utmost importance. The alleged victim should be made safe and kept away from the alleged perpetrator. The investigation should follow the WERS disciplinary

procedure. Abuse of a client is an act of gross misconduct and may also be a criminal offence.

6. Report to the board of trustees

Chief Executive will report on safeguarding issues at each meeting of the board of trustees; either that there are none to report or the outline of the concern if any have arisen.

7. Important local contacts

WERS named safeguarding officer:

- 1) Heather Andrews – 0191 273 7482 – heather@wers.org.uk
- 2) Andy Durma – 0191 273 7482 – andy@wers.org.uk

WERS named Safeguarding Lead for the Board of Trustees: Revd John Howard-Norman
john.howard-norman@methodist.org.uk

Adults 18 years and over

Newcastle City Council Community Health and Social Care Direct for referrals during office hours (Monday-Friday 8am-5pm)

Call 0191 278 8377

Newcastle City Council Out of Hours Service for emergency social care needs

Call 0191 278 7878

Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Unit Advice line for advice (not referrals) for practitioners Monday to Friday 10.00am to 4.00pm. Call 0191 278 8156.

Newcastle City Council Community Health and Social Care Direct (0191 278 8377, 8am-5pm) should be contacted within one working day if there are allegations that a member of staff or a volunteer has harmed or posed a risk to a vulnerable adult.

Adults and children

If you think a crime against a child, young person, or adult at risk has been committed but they are not in immediate danger, or you want advice if you are worried about sexual exploitation, call 101 and ask for the Northumbria Police Safeguarding Department.

Date reviewed and updated: May 2024

Next review: May 2025

WERS SAFEGUARDING CONCERN FORM

Concerns raised by	
Full name	
Position at WERS or relationship to individual	
Address	
Contact number	

Details of the individual at risk	
Full Name	
Date of Birth	
Address (if known)	
Further details e.g. any care and support needs, history of abuse or any dependants	

Details of the concern	
Date and time of disclosure:	
Was the disclosure or concern made to the named person completing this record? If not, please provide their details:	
Details of the disclosure or concern (be factual, use only their words, do not impose opinions and where possible include names, dates and locations).	
Details of any evidence seen	
Name of the alleged abuser (if known)	
Address of the alleged abuser (if known)	
Relationship of the alleged abuser to the victim (if known)	
Date of incident (if known)	
Name of any additional witnesses (if applicable)	
Contact details for any witnesses (if applicable)	

Safeguarding response	
Details of any immediate action taken: (For example, calling the police, hospital admittance)	
Details of any actions WERS is taking:	
Name and contact details of any persons who have been made aware of the concern:	

Further information

Signed		Date	
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