

The Garden Pathway Safeguarding Policy

Updated November 2023

Introduction

‘The Garden Pathway’ is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, engaged in the breadth of its activities.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of sub-contracted/self-employed workers and volunteers working on behalf of ‘The Garden Pathway’ in relation to protection from abuse.

All children, young people and adults have the right to be safe from harm and should be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The key objectives of this policy are to:

- ⤴ Explain the responsibilities that our workers and volunteers have in respect of children, young people and vulnerable adult protection.
- ⤴ Provide workers and volunteers with an overview of the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- ⤴ Provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where protection issues arise.

This policy will be reviewed and updated every 2 years.

Context

For the purpose of this document, 'child' means up to the age of 18, 'young person' is 18 – 25, 'adult' means aged 25 years or over.

Children and young people are unlikely to be able to protect themselves from abuse. Vulnerable adults are less able to protect themselves than others, and some have difficulty making their wishes and feelings known which could make them vulnerable to abuse. The broad definition of a 'vulnerable adult' is:

“A person 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 themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation”.

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of children, young people and adults. To this end it is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person/agency.

All workers and volunteers working on behalf of ‘The Garden Pathway’ have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Workers and volunteers may receive disclosures of abuse or observe children, young people and vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy will enable staff and volunteers to make

informed and confident responses to specific protection issues.

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a child, young person or vulnerable adult is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets' report suggests the following as the main types of abuse:-

- **Physical abuse**- including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse**- including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable person has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse**- including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse**- including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect and acts of omission**- including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse**- including harassment, slurs or similar treatment due to disability, age, race, sexual orientation or gender.

Roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers in relation to safeguarding

The named safeguarding lead for The Garden Pathway is Dr Clare Tangye, however, safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers working at The Garden Pathway. All staff and volunteers must follow the Safeguarding Procedure if they suspect abuse has occurred or if abuse is disclosed to them.

At the end of every Garden Pathway session all staff and volunteers will participate in a reflective practice session where a review of any safeguarding concerns that may have arisen in the course of the previous gardening session will be a standing agenda item. This is in addition to full Safeguarding Level 2 training which all staff and volunteers will be required to undertake on a yearly basis.

Procedure in the event of a disclosure

All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously, and this procedure must be followed whenever a complaint or allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

This should include the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, the name to whom it was disclosed, 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 and the account which has been given of the allegation.

Steps to follow in the event of a disclosure or if you suspect abuse:

STEP 1: Be calm, sensitive and non-judgemental, make sure the person knows you're taking them seriously

STEP 2: Encourage them to talk freely

STEP 3: Keep calm, listen carefully to what they're telling you and get as clear a picture as you can without asking lots of questions

STEP 4: Explain that you can't keep what they're telling you a secret as you have a duty to protect them and this will require other people to be told about what's happened

STEP 5: Reassure them that they'll be involved in decisions about what happens and

STEP 6: If they have difficulty communicating, give them support and information in a way that's easiest for them

Remember:

- Don't assume that someone else knows what happened and will report it
- Don't contact the alleged abuser
- Don't promise to keep it a secret
- Don't be judgmental or jump to conclusions and
- Don't be afraid to report what you've been told - you have a duty to do so

Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse

DO

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them where possible or appropriate
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

DON'T

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgemental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional protection agencies.

In the event of an emergency situation

STEP 1 Quickly assess any risks and make sure the person isn't in immediate danger.

STEP 2 Assess if there's a need for emergency medical treatment and call an ambulance or suitably trained colleague if necessary. If you think the injury is non-accidental, then you must tell your colleague or the ambulance staff so they can preserve possible forensic evidence.

STEP 3 If you think a crime (such as abuse) has been committed, the police must be contacted. This will be the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead who you must report to once you have carried out steps 1 and 2 above.

STEP 4 Don't disturb or move anything that could be used in evidence. For example, don't wash away blood or other forensic materials and don't tidy up financial paperwork.

STEP 5 If you think a child might also be at risk, it'll be necessary to contact the children and families department. This will also be the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead.

STEP 6 As far as possible, make sure that other people are not at risk including other clients working on the project, staff, or anyone else in the vicinity.

Recording

As soon as possible you must make a written record of what happened using the Garden Pathway's 'Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form' as a guide. It must be signed and have the date and time recorded. Write a clear and accurate record of what was actually said and done by the people immediately involved – the victim and any witnesses. You must use their own words, exactly as they said them, to ensure it's not biased. Only record the facts, not your views or assumptions.

Reporting

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to The Garden Pathway's Lead Therapist on that working day where possible.

The Lead Therapist shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local social services duty social worker. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made using 'The Garden Pathway's Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form' as a guide. The documented information must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported.

During 9am-5pm Monday – Friday concerns will be reported to the Adult Social Care Helpdesk – **01452 426868**.

Outside of these hours the concerns will be reported to the Emergency Duty Social Worker Team – **01452 426868**

The telephone report will be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority social services department within 24 hours.

These details are also available on the Gloucestershire County Council's Safeguarding Adults Board website: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/contact/

Police Involvement

If there is suspicion / knowledge that a crime has been committed, in addition to making a referral to Adult Social Care Team, the police should be informed immediately. It should also be considered if any other person is at risk or if a child is at risk.

Examples of concerns involving Police involvement:

- Sexual abuse
- Young adult sexual exploitation
- Financial abuse
- Human trafficking / modern day slavery concerns for an adult at risk with care and support needs
- Physical (concern of assault)
- A crime is reported

Confidentiality and Consent

All information relating to safeguarding is subject to the Data Protection Act, The Social Care Act, and Safeguarding within Section 42 (2015) which requires safeguarding information to be shared appropriately.

All staff and volunteers of 'The Garden Pathway' are expected to seek consent to share information from the individual when it is safe and possible to do so.

Sometimes, however, seeking consent may prejudice a police investigation or increase the risk of harm.

Information may be disclosed without consent in the following circumstances:

- When it is necessary to prevent a crime
- To protect the health and /or safety of the victim or others
- To protect the rights and freedoms of those who are victims of violence and/or their children
- When the need to share information is proportionate to the risk of harm
- When the individual involved lacks capacity at the time.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult confides in a member of staff or volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that they are told sensitively that

we have a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies. Within that context, they should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances, as outlined above, obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is the priority.

Where a disclosure has been made, staff should let the child, young person or vulnerable adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.

Workers and volunteers should assure them that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. Their involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

All written records will be kept in a secure area.

Safe Recruitment

All new staff and volunteers working on any Garden Pathway project will be required to undergo a DBS check which will need to be renewed every 5 years.

All new staff and volunteers will be provided with Safeguarding Level 2 training before starting work on The Garden Pathway. This training will be repeated for existing staff on a yearly basis thereafter.

Dr Clare Tangye, Lead Therapist and Safeguarding Lead for The Garden Pathway

I confirm that I have read 'The Garden Pathway Safeguarding Policy' and agree to follow the procedures outlined within the document.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

