

Safeguarding adults at risk policy

Buddies for All CIC believes that every adult at risk using our service has the right to live in safety, free from harm, exploitation, abuse, and neglect. Our staff and volunteers will be trained and supported in recognising and dealing with incidents of abuse, which they will do with respect for the dignity, privacy, independence, and individuality of the adult at risk.

The procedures mentioned in this document cover the potential abuse of adults at risk using Buddies for All CIC services by anyone in a relationship of trust with them - friends, relatives, and even Buddies for All staff and volunteers themselves.

It is acknowledged that Buddies for All CIC has a wider responsibility to protect all people coming into contact with the organisation from harm, but the focus of this policy is on safeguarding adults at risk who use our service.

Key Messages for staff and volunteers

Why is safeguarding important?

As professionals working or volunteering for Buddies for All CIC, we have key responsibilities for the people we buddy up with. We always look to ensure they are free from abuse or neglect when we are supporting them on the telephone, via video conferencing or most importantly when we are supporting them to access the community.

What are your/our responsibilities?

The most important responsibility of all staff and you as a volunteer is to ensure you feel equipped to recognise the signs of abuse or neglect. All staff and volunteers will undertake the on-line Safeguarding Training provided within their three months of volunteering. Volunteers who require a more detailed understanding of what buddying / befriending entails should then supplement the initial training by attending local authority safeguarding courses or speak to a Buddies for All director to seek further reassurance.

What do you/we need to do?

Staff including volunteers need to be observant when considering the safety and wellbeing of our clients. Abuse or neglect could be committed by a family member/friend, health/social care professional and/or rogue traders/businesses. Abuse could be physical, psychological, or financial, where the victim may not necessarily be aware. Please see appendix at the end of document for examples of abuse and neglect.

What process do you/we need to follow?

In the first instance if you suspect a safeguarding concern, discuss this with a Buddies for All director including the circumstances which lead you to be concerned by what you may have seen. If it is agreed with one of the Buddies for All directors that this is a matter of concern, a Safeguarding Report Form needs to be completed for the appropriate social prescriber and submitted to their safeguarding team. An internal

incident report written by Buddies for All will also need to be completed and sent to the relevant parties.

What happens next?

Once reported the local authority will make a decision on whether to investigate further. If it is agreed that a Buddies for All CIC volunteer is able to continue to work with the individual then they should continue to be observant and monitor any changes or potential escalation in abuse/neglect. If we have new information, the volunteer or appropriate director should complete a further Safeguarding Report to the local authority. Not all safeguarding reports are investigated, so volunteers and directors should not assume that the matter is now being dealt with.

What if I have concerns but I'm not sure if it should be reported?

Volunteers and other staff members should discuss with a Buddies for All director any concerns they have for the individual. If there is still uncertainty as to whether to complete a safeguarding report the volunteer or staff member can discuss this with the Buddies for All CIC director where a decision and action plan will be agreed. If no safeguarding report is made, it may be necessary to put in place ongoing monitoring and review the circumstances/concerns we have for the individual. If these concerns increase it will most likely lead to a safeguarding report being made to the local authority, along with an internal incident report.

What if there is an accident in the community when a volunteer is supporting a client?

If an accident occurs while you are supporting a client you must end the support immediately ensuring the client gets home safe as soon as possible. You must also inform a Buddies for All Director at the earliest opportunity. Finally, alongside a director you must complete a safeguarding and internal incident report as soon as is practically possible.

What if a safeguarding issue occurs when a client is not with a Buddies for All volunteer?

This policy is not intended to cover incidents not taking place in the context of a relationship, for example a one-off theft which appears to have been perpetrated by a total stranger, burglary, mugging by a stranger in a public place, although aspects of the procedures will apply. Buddies for All is not responsible for any incidents when occur when a client is not being supported by Buddies for All or you the volunteer.

Recognising adult abuse

In the course of their work, staff may be involved in suspecting or identifying adult abuse. It is therefore vital that staff are alert to and aware of the different and varying types of abuse, the common behaviours/effects associated with them and their responsibilities and duties under this policy.

It is important to note that abuse may not always present as an acute situation demanding urgent action but may be a cause of concern over a longer period. Research suggests that victims of abuse do not always react in the same way. The more

common reactions are:

- Denial that anything is wrong and even an emphasis that all is extremely well;
- Acceptance or resignation to the situation;
- Depression, withdrawal from activity/communication or fearfulness;
- Dramatic change in behaviour or personality;
- Physical or verbal outbursts or displays of anger (often out of character);
- Seeking help or attention from numerous sources, sometimes inappropriately and frequently;
- Self-abuse.

If you are unsure or have any concerns, please ensure you discuss with a director immediately.

Recognising types of abuse

It is important for the volunteer to recognise that the main forms of abuse are:

- Sexual abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Discriminatory abuse
- Sexual exploitation
- Institutional abuse
- Modern Slavery
- Self-Neglect

A full description with examples of the abuse discussed can be found in appendix one at the end of this document.

Reporting abuse

All Buddies for All CIC staff and volunteers should be alert to the possibility of abuse or neglect in all contexts and by any person. Staff and volunteers should take seriously any adults at risk who disclose abuse so that they are not discouraged from making a report of what has happened.

Any staff or volunteer who is suspicious that abuse is occurring while supporting any client for Buddies for All is responsible for implementing these policies and procedures, in association with a Buddies for All director who will then inform the relevant social prescribing service. If you are in any doubt please discuss with a Buddies for All director.

Barriers to reporting abuse

Service users may be reluctant to report abuse due to shame, low self-esteem, intimidation, fear of the possible consequences and numerous other individual reasons. Buddies for All CIC volunteers and staff will encourage service users to discuss any concern they have with the intention of minimising adult abuse.

Collaboration with other agencies

Protecting adults at risk from abuse is a complex process. Staff assessment and action on abuse must almost always be in co-operation and collaboration with other agencies, such as social services, doctors, and the police.

Buddies for All CIC is committed to interdisciplinary working with these and other agencies, working within the guidelines of No Secrets government guidance, Care Act, and local Multi Agency Procedures.

Risk and protection

We acknowledge individuals' rights to independent lives which can involve a degree of risk. Where an individual chooses to accept this risk, their wishes should be respected within the context of their capacity to anticipate and understand the risk.

Privacy, dignity, independence, choice

Adults at risk, for reasons of age, illness, disability, or social circumstances should be respected by all volunteers with regards to privacy, dignity, independence, and choice.

Buddies for All procedure to be used in the event of actual or suspected abuse

It is Buddies for All's policy that all safeguarding issues will with be disclosed to the relevant social prescriber local authority, NHS provider or any other stakeholder which Buddies for All works with.

Once the safeguarding issue has been raised with the relevant parties all support offered by Buddies for All and you as our volunteers will be stopped until the issue has been resolved.

Therefore, Buddies for All will have a 3-step safeguarding policy.

Step 1: Awareness of Abuse

Person responsible: Volunteer

If you are the person who sees or hears of events which are/seem abusive, you may feel shocked. It is important to stay calm and make sure of what is presented. Sometimes, the person is not aware that normal boundaries have been crossed and that abuse has occurred.

A vulnerable person who makes an allegation should always be believed at this stage. If an allegation is made, reply that:

- They did right to tell you;
- It was not their fault;
- You are taking the information seriously;
- You must talk to your line manager;

If a service user alleges abuse:

You should actively listen, but not attempt an investigative interview. Information may be fragmented and may come out in the course of a conversation about other issues, in a situation

where the service user feels safe. The service user may not realise that the acts are abusive.

Take accurate notes and keep these as a record.

Reassure the service user that they have acted correctly and that the matter will be dealt with. It is important that the person does not feel it is their fault or that they are being punished.

You must not contact or confront the alleged abuser.

Where possible you should ensure that potential evidence is protected for further investigation.

Step 2: Duty to Report to director

Person responsible: Director.

All suspected abuse or allegations of abuse must be discussed with the David Bourroughs – Buddies for All Director at the earliest opportunity. It is not up to individual volunteers to make judgements about whether abuse has occurred or not and how serious it may/may not have been.

The following points amongst others may need to be considered:

- The seriousness of the abuse, including the risk of repeated or increasingly serious acts.
- The level of the victim's capacity to be involved in decision making.
- Whether independent advice from experts, whilst protecting victim's identity, would be useful before proceeding.
- Whether a referral to Social Services is appropriate (it will be in most cases)
- Whether the police should be brought in at this stage (in the case of sexual abuse immediate referral is essential to ensure that vital evidence is not destroyed or if there is immediate danger for the individual.
- Whether a doctor needs to be called

Step 3: Notify local authority or social prescribing service

Person responsible: Director

As Buddies for All is a buddying / befriending service we reserve once we have reported the safeguarding issue to the social prescriber or local authority and submitted the relevant safeguarding reports, we will have no further responsibility regarding resolving the client. We will not support the client any further until the safeguarding issue is resolved by the relevant authorities responsible for dealing with suspected safeguarding issues other than when a safeguarding issue.

Consent

When Safeguarding Adults procedures are being considered, the consent of the adult believed to be at risk should always be sought. Consent should be obtained as early as possible so that the concerns can be progressed to ensure the safety of the adult at risk. If consent cannot be sought due to the client's mental capacity Buddies for All and you as a volunteer reserves the right to withdraw support until the issue is resolved with the relevant authorities. Buddies for All reserves the right not to support an individual who does not have the mental capacity to give buddies for All their consent to report and record a safeguarding issue.

Recording

It is essential that all discussions involving consent to the use of the Safeguarding Adults

Procedures and all decisions are clearly recorded in the person's case file. The person concerned should be kept up to date about the process and any decisions to be taken as a result of it. Where the person at risk indicates that they have concerns as the procedure progresses, these should be recorded along with the outcome of a further discussion to confirm that the person continues to consent to the process.

Withdrawing Consent

It is important to note that initial consent can be withdrawn **at any time** and that the adult at risk should be made aware of this. In the event that consent is given initially but later withdrawn, exactly the same issues apply. However, if you as a volunteer feels uncomfortable supporting someone suspected of being at risk you reserve the right to withdraw supporting the individual.

Mitigating Risk

Where abuse is suspected and the adult at risk has withheld his/her consent to the implementation of Safeguarding Adults procedures, all other alternatives for minimising risk should be considered in discussion with the adult at Organisational Arrangement.

Incidents Reporting Procedure

Our Safeguarding Policy is aligned with our Incident Reporting Procedures; Where an event does not satisfy the five criteria required to be considered for a Safeguarding referral, then the Incident Reporting Policy and procedure should be considered.

Monitoring Safeguarding alerts and incidents

All safeguarding alerts and incidents are to be reported to Buddies for All where it will be decided whether a safeguarding and incident report needs to be completed. These will be reviewed to identify points of learning in relation to the specific situation and to identify situations that need to be discussed with the relevant social prescribing service.

Decisions about what information is shared and with whom will be taken on a case-by-case basis. Whether information is shared with or without the adult at risk's consent, the information shared should be:

- necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared.
- shared only with those who have a need for it.
- be accurate and up to date.
- be shared in a timely fashion.
- be shared accurately.
- be shared securely.

Subcontracted/Partner Services

All subcontracted and partner services will be subject to compliance checks to ensure that they have safeguarding policies in place in line with legal and mandatory guidelines.

Volunteer Induction policies

Buddies for All CIC will ensure effective recruitment, induction, support, training, and management of volunteers. Buddies for All CIC Recruitment & Selection Policy ensures that all of the Organisation's volunteers and their eligibility for DBS check (at enhanced, is documented. If a

DBS check is required for a specific role, this is made clear in the recruitment literature.

Documentation required for a Disclosure and Barring Service check (if relevant) is required at the offer stage and an offer will be revoked if a satisfactory DBS check is not obtained. DBS checks are renewed every three years.

Buddies for All CIC will ensure that any staff member or volunteer dismissed for abusing an adult at risk will be notified to the DBS. All staff are made aware of the safeguarding policy in their organisational induction.

All volunteers in contact with adults at risk are required to complete the training provided by Buddies for All CIC. Initial training may be online, with volunteers encouraged to supplement this with other safeguarding training of interest. Safeguarding induction training is mandatory and required to be completed before a volunteer or other staff member can complete buddy up with a client in the community.

Information Governance Policy

Buddies for All CIC's GDPR and Data Protection Policy details information governance across the organisation including relevant legislation, data protection, confidentiality and safe recordkeeping.

Staff and volunteers must ensure that their recording of facts, incidents, assessments, referrals, case discussions are all sufficient, accurate, concise, up-to-date, legible, dated, and factual. Opinions should be kept to a minimum and backed up by factual evidence. These records must be stored in an individual file and stored securely in a manner that safeguards the individuals' right to privacy and security

The GDPR and Data Protection Policy outlines how data will be stored and shared between organisations in line with the principles set out below:

- Adults have a right to independence, choice, and self-determination. This right extends to them being able to have control over information about themselves and to determine what information is shared. Even in situations where there is no legal requirement to obtain written consent before sharing information, it is good practice to do so.
- The person's wishes should always be considered, however, protecting adults at risk establishes a general principle that an incident of suspected or actual abuse can be reported more widely and that in so doing, some information may need to be shared among those involved.
- Information given to an individual member of staff belongs to the organisation and not to the individual employee. An individual employee cannot give a personal assurance of confidentiality to an adult at risk.
- An organisation should obtain the adult at risk's written consent to share information and should routinely explain what information may be shared with other people or organisations.
- Difficulties in working within the principles of maintaining the confidentiality of an adult should not lead to a failure to take action to protect the adult from abuse or harm.
- Confidentiality must not be confused with secrecy, that is, the need to protect the management interests of an organisation should not override the need to protect the adult

Equal opportunities

Sometimes people are the victims of abuse because they belong to a particular group in society. These policies and procedures take account of ethnic origins, gender, sexuality, age, religious and cultural background and are designed to counteract the abuse, whatever its underlying motivation.

Appendix one – Signs of abuse and neglect

	Typical Behaviour	Typical Signs
Physical Abuse	Pinching, punching, slapping, force feeding / starvation. Misuse of medication, throwing missiles, pushing, shaking, restricting movement, burning, scalding, inappropriate sanctions.	Bruising (especially in well protected areas such as inner thighs or arms), nose bleeds, internal injuries, scalds, cigarette burns, black eyes Weight loss, drowsiness due to medication, lack of personal hygiene, pressure sores Anxiety or fear – more pronounced in the presence of the ‘abuser’
Sexual Abuse	Involvement in sexual activities (touching, kissing, intercourse) without consent or, if they are confused, without true understanding.	Difficulty in walking or sitting; torn, bloody or stained underclothing. Pain or itching in the genital area. Bruising or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas Changes in behaviour (see Psychological Abuse)
Psychological Abuse	Absence of warm support or human contact, blackmail, teasing, humiliation, threats, verbal abuse, depriving of stimulation, criticism / undermining.	Behaviour, which is out of character, fearful, passive, quiet/withdrawn, depressed, aggressive (verbal and physical outbursts), absconding, uncontrolled/ unprovoked crying, wandering, confusion, calling out services without any clear problem, mental anguish/ anxiety. Disturbed sleep pattern Unusual weight gain/loss Low self esteem
Financial / Material Abuse	Misuse of possessions or property, deprivation of money or benefits, exploitation of a person unable to manage their affairs due	Indications of insufficient money to pay bills, buy cigarettes, toiletries, clothing.

	to mental or physical incapacity, theft, fraud, or intimidation in relation to wills, property, or possessions.	Sudden and/or large withdrawal from bank etc Transfer of property without formal consent Abuse of power of attorney
Neglect / Acts of Omission	Delays in seeking medical attention / ignoring mental or physical care needs. Failure to provide access to health or social care services, as necessary. The withholding of the necessities of life e.g., medication, food, heating etc.	Weight loss Deterioration in medical condition / change in medical symptoms Hypothermia Social isolation
Discriminatory Abuse	Racist or sexist abuse. Abuse based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment. Isolation from religious or cultural activity, neglect of certain types of care e.g., skin and hair care, disregard of specific food preferences.	Behaviour, which is set out of character, fearful, passive, quiet/ withdrawn, depressed, aggressive (verbal and physical outbursts), Absconding, uncontrolled/unprovoked crying, wandering, confusion, calling out services without any clear problem, mental anguish/anxiety. Poor skin and hair condition e.g., dry skin/hair Weight loss due to inability/refusal to eat food not suitable to dietary needs
Social Abuse	Isolation from social, religious, or cultural activity, lack of choice, denial of privacy, sensory deprivation, forced isolation or confinement, refusal to accept support from services.	Depression, confusion, loss of independence, inappropriate dress (e.g., 24 hours nightwear)

Institutional Abuse	<p>Where any of the above is brought about by the regime of the home or activity centre, in a systematic way, which results in the following:</p> <p>Undue restraint due to staff shortages (use of drugs or withholding of drugs)</p> <p>Lack of choices about bedtimes, meals, clothes etc</p> <p>Denial of privacy e.g., leaving toilet doors open, not knocking before entering bedrooms etc.</p> <p>Lack of supervision resulting in intentional/accidental harm, poor safety, pressure sores.</p> <p>Lack of stimulus or recreational activity</p> <p>Lack of consideration to a person's language, cultural or dietary needs</p> <p>Punishment for perceived 'bad behaviour'</p> <p>Lack of professional care</p> <p>Personal possessions or money used to supplement someone else, basic necessities bought with income, bribes</p>	<p>Poor management of life in the living environment</p> <p>Poor standards of cleanliness</p> <p>Low staffing levels over a long period of time</p> <p>Low percentage of permanent staff</p> <p>Lack of knowledge about care guidelines</p> <p>Staff factions, high staff turnover, staff ordering service users around.</p> <p>Lack of positive communication with service users</p> <p>Low staff morale</p> <p>Punitive treatment of service users</p>
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Domestic Abuse	Incident or pattern of abuse of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or identity.	Includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse: so, called ‘honour’ based violence; female genital mutilation; forced marriage
Modern Slavery	encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive, and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude, and inhumane treatment.	<p>PHYSICAL APPEARANCE: Victims may show signs of physical or psychological abuse, look malnourished or unkempt, or appear withdrawn.</p> <p>Isolation - Victims may rarely be allowed to travel on their own, seem under the control, influence of others, rarely interact or appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work.</p> <p>POOR LIVING CONDITIONS: Victims may be living in dirty, cramped, or overcrowded accommodation, and / or living and working at the same address.</p> <p>FEW OR NO PERSONAL EFFECTS: Victims may have no identification documents, have few personal possessions, and always wear the same clothes day in day out. What they do wear may not be suitable for their work</p> <p>RESTRICTED FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT: Victims have little opportunity to move freely and may have had their travel documents retained, e.g., passports</p> <p>UNUSUAL TRAVEL TIMES: They may be dropped off / collected for work on a regular basis either very early or late at night.</p> <p>RELUCTANT TO SEEK HELP: Victims may avoid eye contact, appear frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers and fear law enforcers for many reasons, such as not knowing who to trust or where to get help, fear of deportation, fear of violence to them or their family.</p>