

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK AND ADULTS IN NEED OF PROTECTION POLICY (Northern Ireland)

Document Name	Safeguarding Adults at risk and Adults in need of protection policy Renamed from Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy
Document Classification	Safeguarding
Document Number	SGA001
Version Number	2.0
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Policy Reviewer	Lorraine Gallier
Date Created:	November 2020
Review Date:	26th April 2021
Responsible Committee	Senior Management Team
Superseded policy	1.0
Target Audience	All Staff Groups
Other relevant policies	Incidents & Serious Incident Reporting Safeguarding Vulnerable Children Agency Workers Handbook

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1.0 Policy Statement

SOS Medical is committed to ensuring the safety and security of every vulnerable person with whom its staff, contractors and temporary workers come into contact and as such we have in place stringent safeguards to protect the patients, Service Users, colleagues and customers with whom we work.

This policy also covers the practices and reporting procedures for our employees, contractors and temporary workers should they suspect that any form of abuse is taking place.

This policy is drawn from the guidance and requirements outlined in the following legislation:

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Adult Safeguarding Policy for Northern Ireland 'Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership'. 2015

The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

National Health Service & Community Care Act 1990.

The Police Act 1997.

Human Rights Act 2000.

Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.

Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Deprivation of Liberty Standards.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Mental Health Act 2007.

Equality Act 2010.

The Care Act 2014.

It is also based on advice and guidance taken from relevant regulatory agencies including the General Medical Council, Nursing & Midwifery Council and Health & Care Professionals Council.

The company's aim is to provide a service that enables patients to feel happy and secure and to allow parents, families and carers to feel confident that the people providing the services are trustworthy, responsible and will do everything they can to keep the person safe from harm by ensuring:

- We do not engage an employee, contractor or temporary worker to take part in regulated activity if they are on the adult's barred list
- We obtain an enhanced Access NI certificate for every employee, contractor and temporary worker taking part in a regulated activity prior to the employee or temporary worker commencing work.
- Candidates will not be allowed to participate in regulated activity without a valid Access NI check.
- Employees, contractors and temporary workers are trained to understand the different types of abuse, the indicators for each of these and the procedures to follow in the

event that they suspect such abuse is taking place.

- We consistently update training for employees, contractors and temporary workers to reflect statutory guidance and good practice guidance including where and how to report any concerns relating to suspected abuse or neglect. Normally this is done on a yearly basis.

SOS Medical has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and neglect.

2.0 Aims

The aims of the safeguarding adults' policy are to:

1. Identify risk factors and potential harm early
2. Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do when they have a concern about the safety or wellbeing of an adult
3. Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care or support needs; Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live;
4. Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned;
5. Raise public awareness so that communities as a whole, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect;
6. Address what has caused the abuse or neglect.

2.0 Scope of the Policy

It is the duty of all employees, contractors and temporary workers to comply with this policy. All employees, contractors and temporary workers are made fully aware of this policy and of their duties and responsibilities under the above legislation as part of the company's induction programme and mandatory safeguarding training.

This policy applies to all vulnerable Adults regardless of sex; race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin); religion or belief; age; disability; marital status and civil partnership; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity.

3.0 Definitions

VULNERABLE ADULTS

The definition of a vulnerable Adult is a person aged 18 or over and who has needs for care and support; and is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or neglect; and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

REGULATED ACTIVITY

An individual is engaged in regulated activity if they are providing any of the following activities as part of their role:

- Healthcare.
- Personal care.
- Social work.
- Assistance with cash, bills or shopping.
- Assistance with the conduct of their own affairs.
- Conveying services.

In addition, regulated activity also includes where an individual is providing “unsupervised” teaching, training, supervision, caring for or supervision of vulnerable persons where these activities are undertaken frequently. Frequently is determined as:

- Once a month or more.
- Three or more days in any 30 day period.
- Overnight between the hours of 2am and 6am.

RELEVANT CONDUCT

Main Types of the abuse include:

- Psychological / emotional harm caused by an action or inaction that causes mental anguish.
- Financial harm usually associated with the misuse of money, valuables or property.
- Physical harm caused by any physical action or inaction that results in discomfort, pain or injury.
- Sexual harm such as coercion or force to take part in sexual acts.
- Neglect caused by failure to identify and / or meet care needs.
- Verbal harm which includes any remark or comment that causes distress.

HARM

All forms of ill-treatment and impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in physical or mental health and impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to accept their personal involvement in applying it and must be familiar with the policy and ensure that it is followed by both themselves and employees, contractors and temporary workers for whom they have a responsibility.

Disciplinary action may be taken against any employee who acts in breach of this policy. Disciplinary action may include summary dismissal in the case of a serious breach of this policy or repeated breaches. In other cases, it may include a warning, oral or written. Such action will be taken in accordance with the Company's disciplinary procedure. For contractors or temporary workers on contract for services, the assignment may be terminated immediately and the contractor or temporary worker may not be offered further work until the outcome of the enquiry has been completed.

Breaches of this policy may also result in the employee responsible being held personally liable if legal action is taken in relation to safeguarding issues.

5.0 Procedures

5.1 SAFE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

When recruiting staff, contractors or temporary workers to take part in regulated activities involving vulnerable persons, SOS Medical will ensure that the following:

- Interviews are conducted by trained staff who have received guidance in relation to current legislation and best practice pertaining to the recruitment and placement of candidates who are to take part in regulated activity.
- The candidate's personal identity will be verified by checking an original form of recent photographic identification.
- Registrations will be checked with the relevant regulatory body and qualifications and training relevant to the role being recruited will be verified by checking original certificates and validating these for authenticity with the awarding body.
- A thorough biographical interview will take place to establish the candidate's employment history and identify any gaps in employment.
- A minimum of 2 written employment references will be obtained covering a minimum of the most recent 3 years employment and verification will be sought for any gaps in candidate's employment history of over 3 months duration.
- All candidates will be checked against the adults and childrens' barred lists to confirm that they are not barred from participating in regulated activity. • An enhanced Access NI check will be undertaken prior to commencement of regulated activity. Candidates will not be allowed to participate in regulated activity without a valid enhanced Access NI check.
- Candidates will be required to complete an application form which includes a declaration stating that there is no reason why they should be considered unsuitable to work with vulnerable persons (including past convictions, cautions, bind-overs or pending cases) and that they have not been barred from carrying out regulated activity.

6.0 INFORMING VULNERABLE PERSONS OF THEIR RIGHTS

Where our services are provided on client premises (e.g. a hospital), we will operate according to the policies and procedures of that institution / organisation and it is expected that the vulnerable person will have been informed of their rights by that institution / organisation.

7.0 IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL ABUSE

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human rights and can take the form of a single act or repeated acts. The main types of abuse include:

- Physical.
- Domestic.
- Sexual.
- Emotional / psychological.
- Financial.
- Modern slavery.
- Discriminatory.
- Organisational.
- Neglect or acts of omission.
- Self neglect.

All staff, contractors and temporary workers are expected to look out for the common symptoms or indicators associated with the different types of abuse and neglect. Typical signs for each of the above include:

Physical Abuse – the signs of this are often evident, but can be hidden by both the victim and the abuser. Any unexplained injuries should always be fully investigated. Evidence to look out for includes:

- Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, open wounds, bruises, welts, discoloration, black eyes, burns, bone fractures, broken bones, and skull fractures.
- Untreated injuries in various stages of healing or not properly treated.
- Poor skin condition or poor skin hygiene.
- Dehydration and/or malnourished without illness-related cause.
- Loss of weight.
- Soiled clothing or bed.
- Broken eyeglasses/frames, physical signs of being subjected to punishment, or signs of being restrained.
- Inappropriate use of medication, overdosing or under-dosing.
- A person telling you they have been hit, slapped, kicked, or mistreated.

Sexual Abuse - very often the behaviour of a person, even if they are confused, will tell you that something is wrong. Even with dementia, people can often make their feelings known to you if you take the time to listen, observe and take notice. It is the capacity to believe that sexual abuse is possible, (without automatically seeing it everywhere), that will increase the

potential to detect and respond to it when it happens. Some of the physical signs to watch for are:

- Bruises around the breasts or genital area.
- Unexplained STDs.
- Unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding.
- Difficulty in walking or standing.
- Marked changes in behaviour.
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing.
- A person telling you they have been sexually assaulted or raped.

If you suspect sexual abuse, do NOT wash the person or their clothing. Do NOT let time drift by while you think about your course of action. Inform this immediately to the nurse in charge of the shift and they will refer the matter to the Police as they are the experts and will have the skills, knowledge and equipment to respond appropriately and sensitively. Should you be the nurse in charge of the shift, then please contact SOS Medical and the Adult Safeguarding Champion will be able to assist you as they have full understanding of the local referral pathways and would advise who to contact.

The role of the Adult Safeguarding Champion is:

- To provide information and support for staff on adult safeguarding within the organisation;
- To ensure that the SOS Medical's adult safeguarding policy is disseminated and support implementation throughout the organisation;
- To advise the staff regarding adult safeguarding training needs;
- To provide advice to staff or volunteers who have concerns about the signs of harm, and ensure reporting to HSC Trusts where there is a safeguarding concern;
- To support staff to ensure that any actions take account of what the adult wishes to achieve – this should not prevent information about any risk of serious harm being passed to the relevant HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service for assessment and decision-making;
- To establish contact with the HSC Trust Designated Adult Protection Officer (DAPO), and PSNI;
- To ensure accurate and up to date records are maintained detailing all decisions made, the reasons for those decisions and any actions taken;
- To compile and analyse records of reported concerns to determine whether a number of low-level concerns are accumulating to become significant; and make records available for inspection.

Where the ASC is not immediately available, this should not prevent action being taken or a referral being made to the HSC Trust in respect of any safeguarding concern.

Emotional / Psychological Abuse - this can have a profound impact on an individual's mental health. They can feel trapped, threatened, humiliated, used or a combination of all these. Most

signs therefore relate to someone's mental state, and changes in behaviour such as:

- Helplessness.
- Hesitation to talk openly.
- Implausible stories.
- Confusion or disorientation.
- Anger without apparent cause.
- Sudden change in behaviour.
- Emotionally upset or agitated.
- Unusual behaviour (sucking, biting, or rocking).
- Unexplained fear.
- Denial of a situation.
- Extremely withdrawn and non communicative or non responsive.
- A person telling you they are being verbally or emotionally abused.

Neglect - this will often be manifested in the physical, social or health circumstances of the person. Examples may include:

- Dirt, faecal or urine smell, or other health and safety hazards in person's living environment.
- Rashes, sores, or lice.
- Inadequate clothing.
- Malnourishment or dehydration.
- Untreated medical conditions.
- Poor personal hygiene.
- Evidence of the withholding of medication or over-medication of the person.
- Evidence of a lack of assistance with eating and drinking.
- Unsanitary and unclean conditions.

In considering neglect it is also important to recognise that there are occasions when someone will choose a particular lifestyle that is considered by others to be poor. There is a difference between a chosen pattern of behaviour and neglect by others that causes deterioration in a person's circumstances and condition. It should also be remembered that neglect can be intentional or passive (i.e. where the 'perpetrator' is doing his / her best but cannot provide the level of care and support that is needed). From the perspective of the 'victim' the impact is the same, and they experience abuse.

Where abuse is intentional it is likely that the following signs will be apparent as the abuser may:

- Try to prevent the person from speaking for themselves or seeing others without them being present.
- Display attitudes of indifference or anger toward the person, or the obvious absence of assistance.
- Blame the person (e.g. accusation that incontinence is a deliberate act).
- Display aggressive behaviour (threats, insults, harassment) toward the person.
- Have a

previous history of abuse of others.

- Display inappropriate affection toward the person.
 - Display flirtatious behaviour, or coyness, etc that might be possible indicators of inappropriate sexual relationships.
 - Create social isolation of the family, or isolation or restriction of activity of the person.
 - Create conflicting accounts of incidents by family, supporters, or the person. •
- Display inappropriate or unwarranted defensiveness.

Financial Abuse – the signs of financial abuse may include:

- Signatures on cheques etc that do not resemble the person's signature, or signed when the person cannot write.
 - Sudden changes in bank accounts, including unexplained withdrawals of large sums of money by a person accompanying the older person.
 - The inclusion of additional names on an older person's bank account. •
- Abrupt changes to, or the sudden establishment of, wills.
- The sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives claiming their rights to a person's affairs or possessions.
 - The unexplained sudden transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family.
 - Numerous unpaid bills, or overdue rent, when someone else is supposed to be paying the bills.
 - Unusual concern by someone that an excessive amount of money is being expended on the care person's care.
 - Lack of amenities, such as TV, personal grooming items, appropriate clothing, that the person should be able to afford.
 - The unexplained disappearance of funds or valuable possessions such as art, silver or jewellery.
 - Deliberate isolation of a person from friends and family, resulting in one particular individual having total control.

8.0 REPORTING & RESPONSE TO SUSPECTED, ALLEGED OR CONFIRMED CASES OF ABUSE

Please note that you should always follow the Safeguarding Policy where you are placed to work and if you are unsure where to find this, please contact the nurse in charge of the shift. Should you be the nurse in charge of the shift, then please contact SOS Medical and the Adult Safeguarding Champion in the office will be able to assist you as they have full understanding of the local referral pathways and would advise who to contact. Our 24X7 helpline number us: 03333399390

Any employee, contractor, temporary worker, family member, carer, healthcare professional or any other individual with concerns about possible abuse should report the matter to the nurse in charge of the shift. Where it is suspected that such abuse may be caused by another staff member, then reporting the matter will be done in accordance with the company's Whistleblowing Policy.



The company expects its employees, contractors and temporary workers to take all possible steps to co-operate with investigations by any statutory bodies such as the Local Health and Social Care Trust Adult Safeguarding Gateway Team, Adult Safeguarding Champion at SOS Medical, Access NI and the Police if involved.

9.0 SAFEGUARDS

SOS Medical requires its employees, contractors and temporary workers to follow all of the instructions, guidance, policies and procedures provided by Health and Social Care Trust Adult Safeguarding Team. Induction training will also be provided to all employees, contractors and temporary workers engaged to undertake regulated activity with vulnerable persons, including but not limited to:

- Training in relation to safeguarding and handling of reporting of alleged or suspected abuse;
- Risk management to prevent abuse;
- Actions to be taken in the event of alleged or suspected abuse;
- The company's complaints and escalation process;
- The company's Whistleblowing policy;
- Current legislation and best practice.

All employees, contractors and temporary workers will be appropriately supervised.

10.0 CONFIDENTIALITY & RECORD KEEPING

In most cases, confidentiality will mean that information relating to alleged or suspected abuse is only passed onto others with the consent of the Service User, however it should be recognised that in order to protect vulnerable persons it may be necessary on occasion to share information that might normally be regarded as confidential in order to investigate an alleged or suspected offence, particularly if the individual / individuals are in serious danger or are incapable of making an informed decision.

All staff, contractors and temporary workers are required to abide by our Confidentiality Policy and will receive training in this area prior to commencing the job / their first assignment.

Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and may be altered from time to time in light of legislative changes or other prevailing circumstances.