

Safeguarding Adults Policy & Procedures

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Section 1: Safeguarding Adults Policy

The purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Back Up to safeguarding adults and to ensure that everyone involved in Back Up is aware of:

- The legislation, policy and procedures for safeguarding adults.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding adults.
- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult within the organization.

This policy is produced in accordance with Back Up's values aims to provide protection for adults who receive and deliver Back Up's services. The policy is designed to ensure that our staff and volunteers can respond to any concerns in a consistent manner.

All people that have contact with our service users should take all reasonable measures to minimize the risk of harm to the welfare of adults at risk. Where concerns are identified they must take appropriate action to address these concerns. This is the policy for safeguarding vulnerable adults, the child protection policy can be found [here](#). For a hard copy version please contact a member of Back Up's Safeguarding Team.

Who is this policy for?

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone providing support on behalf of Back Up.

Our Mission Statement

Driven by the needs of people with spinal cord injury, we are **passionate** about transforming lives. Through **challenge** and **fun**, we open up possibilities; to develop, achieve and get the most out of life. We **respect** individuality and embrace diversity. We strive for quality and **excellence** in all we do.

Commitments

Back Up will endeavor to safeguard the individual by valuing, listening to and respecting them. Back Up will provide on-going support to the individual and support them to make decisions based on choices available to them. In line with Back Up's values, we will make the dignity, safety and wellbeing of the individual a priority.

Section 2: Supporting information

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up using law and guidance that seeks to protect vulnerable adults:

- [The Care Act 2014](#)
- [Making Safeguarding Personal toolkit](#) (LGA)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [The Mental Capacity Act 2005 – England and Wales](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Scotland - Adults with Incapacity Act 2000](#)
- [Mental Capacity \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#)

Definition of adult at risk

Safeguarding adults is defined as protecting an adults' right to live in safety free from abuse and neglect.

An **adult at risk** is defined as anyone aged 18 years or over; Who may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age, mental or physical health; 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.

People at greater risk may:

- Be older in age
- Have a physical disability, learning difficulty or sensory impairment
- Have mental health needs
- Have a cognitive impairment
- Have a long-term health condition
- Misuse substances or alcohol to the extent that it affects their management of day to day living

The vulnerability of the adult is related to how able they are to make and exercise their own informed choices free from duress, pressure or undue influence of any sort and to protect themselves from abuse, neglect and exploitation. It is important to note that people with mental capacity can be vulnerable and therefore considered to be an 'adult at risk'.

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse is any action that violates a person's human or civil rights. It can take many forms and involve a number of factors. It can occur anywhere, and the abuser could be a stranger, a carer, a family member or someone else in a position of trust. Abuse can be intentional or caused by recklessness, it can also be single act or a reoccurring act.

Types of abuse include:

- **Physical abuse** – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **Domestic abuse** – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; controlling and coercive behaviours and 'honour' based violence.
- **Sexual Abuse** - including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressurised into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, Lasting Power of Attorney agreements, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Modern slavery** – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude or the removal of organs. It includes threatening, coercing, deceiving and forcing individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
- **Discriminatory abuse** – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- **Organisational abuse** – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the

withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

- **Self-neglect** – This covers a wide range of behaviour including neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Suicidal thoughts or plans, or indication someone has engaged in self-harm or risk-taking behaviors with the intent of harming themselves, can also be a sign that abuse is taking place.

Person centred safeguarding

The concept of 'Person centred safeguarding' means engaging the person in a conversation about how best to respond to their situation in a way that enhances their involvement, choice and control, as well as improving their quality of life, well-being and safety. The aim is to ensure that safeguarding is person led, and outcome focused.

There are **six key principles within the Care Act 2014** that inform the ways in which we, as professionals and other staff work with adults and children:

- **Empowerment** – people being supported, provided with information and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent
- **Prevention** – it is better to take action before harm occurs
- **Proportionality** – a proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- **Protection** – support and representation for those in greatest need
- **Partnership** – local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting abuse and neglect
- **Accountability** – transparency in delivering safeguarding

It is important to note that a safeguarding concern may arise from a range of sources and the action we take will depend on the individual person's circumstances.

Mental capacity

The law says that to make a decision a person needs to:

- Understand information
- Remember it for long enough
- Think about the information
- Communicate a decision

A person's ability to do this may be affected by things such as learning disability, dementia, mental health needs, acquired brain injury and physical ill health.

Every adult has the right to make his or her own decisions and must be assumed to have capacity to do so unless it is proved otherwise.

However, in circumstances where a service user has been assessed under the Mental Capacity Act as lacking capacity in certain areas which may include lacking capacity to make informed consent to a safeguarding referral – where this is the case, we will follow the legal framework.

Section 3: Safeguarding Adults Procedures

Responsibilities

All members of staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report in a timely way any concerns or suspicion that someone is at risk to a member of the Back Up Safeguarding Team. It is always unacceptable for anyone to suffer abuse of any kind and everyone regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity has the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

At Back Up we have a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of those who provide or receive Back Up's services and we work where possible to stop harm from occurring. This includes someone harming themselves, being harmed by someone else or if they are at risk of either.

The Board are ultimately accountable for how safeguarding is managed, and they delegate operational responsibility to the Leadership Team.

The Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that effective safeguarding systems are in place which meet our statutory obligation, minimize risk to service users and manage any reported incidents appropriately.

Within the Leadership Team the designated safeguarding officer is the Director of Services. Their role is to ensure that staff and volunteers can recognise safeguarding concerns and know how to report them.

There will always be two members of staff that are Safeguarding leads and able to give advice to any member of staff on safeguarding. These leads are:

- Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for adults is Katie Mitchell (Vocation Coordinator)
 - katie@backuptrust.org.uk / 020 8078 8573
 - For out of hours, Katie is on call and the number above forwards to her mobile.
- Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for children is Dominic Ridley (Family Support Coordinator)
 - dominic@backuptrust.org.uk / 020 8078 2942

The safeguarding leads are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding cases in their areas of operation are managed correctly and for implementing any action plans to address the safeguarding concern.

All staff, including senior managers and the Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone providing support on behalf of Back Up are expected to have an understanding of the different forms of abuse and how to recognise signs / indications. They also have a responsibility to report any actual or suspected case of adult abuse or neglect.

Training and Ongoing Support

All staff, including senior managers and the Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone providing support on behalf of Back Up will receive an introduction to our Safeguarding policy and procedures at their induction.

Back Up will offer annual safeguarding refreshers for staff delivered by the safeguarding leads. Volunteers will also be trained on Back Up's safeguarding procedures at their initial training events and be given refresher sessions at development days.

Back Up's role in safeguarding the welfare of staff, volunteers and service users includes recruiting staff and volunteers safely and ensuring all necessary checks are made.

Back Up also have a duty to provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision and ongoing training and support.

Reporting a concern

If someone has disclosed something to you or you have a gut feeling something isn't right, follow **the three Rs**:

- **Recognise** an issue, listen carefully to what that person has to say and don't try to interject.
- **Record** it as accurately as possible, and in the person's own words.
- **Report** it to a member of Back Up staff and/or the Back Up safeguarding team as soon as possible. Back Up staff should do this via the Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form.

Proof is not required to report a safeguarding concern. All that is required is that there are reasonable grounds to suspect there is a safeguarding concern. You can also report a concern directly to the police or that person's local authority.

Tips for when someone reports a concern:

- Try to stay calm
- Ask questions for clarification only
- Allow the person to continue
- Don't promise to keep secrets
- Be clear that you are going to report the concern to Back Up

What happens when a concern is reported?

Back Up will provide you with on-going support. It may not always be possible to inform you of action taken this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Back Up will endeavor to safeguard the individual by valuing, listening to and respecting them. In accordance with Back Up's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy and the Mental Capacity Act (2005), Back Up may share concerns with agencies who need to know, for example Social Services, GP or mental

health teams. Back Up may also be in contact with the individuals local safeguarding board. In all cases Back Up will aim to contact other agencies with the person's full knowledge and permission.

Only in circumstances where someone is at serious risk of harm, if there are public interest or vital interest considerations or if other people could be at risk from the same person will information be passed onto relevant safeguarding organisations without the person's consent – if we do this or anything else against the wishes of the person it will be fully explained to the person.

Support for you

After exposure to something concerning, feeling anxious about someone's welfare is normal. It's important you share how you feel, be in contact with a Back Up staff member, the safeguarding team or a mentoring supervisor.

People can feel guilty after passing on a safeguarding concern; they might feel they have shared personal information inappropriately. In fact, as stated in Back Up's [Confidentiality Policy](#), it is the duty of all those involved with Back Up to pass on any concerns about someone's welfare. Service users are made aware of the Back Up confidentiality policy when they agree to receive support services from Back Up, for example they sign up to a Back Up course or to receive mentoring.

Recording Concerns, information sharing and data protection

Confidentiality must not be confused with secrecy – i.e., the need to protect the interests of Back Up should not override the need to protect the adult. Back Up have a [Whistleblowing policy](#) and the protection under the Public Interest and Disclosure Act.

Decisions to pass on information to relevant safeguarding agencies are never made in isolation and Back Up safeguarding leads will seek support from SMT and multi-agency safeguarding hubs.

Information of individual safeguarding cases and actions is stored on an access restricted spreadsheet within Back Up's Microsoft 365 account.

Back Up are committed to reviewing policy and practice every three years, or sooner in the light of changes to activities or changes to the external policy environment / good practice guidance.