



Safeguarding Adult Policy

Version 1

Aims

Next Steps is a Community Interest Company offering counselling, group workshops and other support services to people who are experiencing issues relating to life-limiting illness, bereavement, grief and loss.

Next Steps will not tolerate the abuse of adults in any of its forms and is committed to safeguarding adults with care and support needs from harm.

This policy outlines the steps Next Steps will make to safeguard an adult with care and support needs if they are deemed to be at risk or are vulnerable. This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of Next Steps in working together with other professionals and agencies in promoting the adult's welfare and safeguarding them from abuse and neglect.

Next Steps will ensure that decisions made will allow adults to make their own choices and include them in any decision making. Next Steps will also ensure that safe and effective working practices are in place.

This policy is intended to support staff and volunteers working within Next Steps to understand their role and responsibilities in safeguarding adults. All staff and volunteers are expected to follow this policy.

The key objectives of this policy are for all employees and volunteers of Next Steps to:

- have an overview of adult safeguarding
- be clear about their responsibility to safeguard adults
- ensure the necessary actions are taken where an adult with care and support needs is deemed to be at risk

This policy is based on:

- The Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support statutory guidance
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-supportstatutory-guidance>

Under the Human Rights Act 1998, everyone has the right to live free from abuse and neglect. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights/human-rights-act>

Copies of this policy should be available within Next Steps, and Next Steps will not tolerate the abuse of adults in the organisation and staff and volunteers should be made aware of how this policy can be accessed.

Victoria Heath – Designated Safeguarding Lead

What is Safeguarding adults?

Safeguarding refers to the actions that are taken to promote the health, welfare and human rights of all individuals, and enable them to live free from abuse, harm, and neglect, whatever their background. Next Steps through its statement on difference and diversity, its complaints process, and whistleblowing policy, ensures that all those involved in the

service have an opportunity to take action that will lead to **general safeguarding** being protected and promoted.

The safeguarding policies of Next Steps deal with the protection of **vulnerable adults and all children**, and follow the principles enshrined within the Care Act 2014 -

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

Vulnerable adults and children are two sections of society which are particularly vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and who require particular actions and policies to protect them. A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or above who is likely to receive health and care services for poor mental health, disability, age, or illness. They will struggle to adequately care for and protect themselves, and as a consequence be more susceptible to harm, neglect or exploitation from others.

Any child or young person under the age of 18 can be considered to be at risk of harm or abuse, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or religion. It is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with vulnerable adults and all children to ensure their wellbeing is being promoted and that they are protected from harm.

Next Steps staff and volunteers have a responsibility to recognise a safeguarding concern about a vulnerable adult or child when a disclosure of abuse, harm or neglect has been made; respond with reassurance to the individual making the disclosure; ask what they would like to happen and explain how Next Steps will act; record the disclosure; report the disclosure to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Next Steps staff and volunteers can refer for further information and advice on safeguarding to the Social Care Institute for Excellence -

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults>

Next Steps adheres to following the six key principles that underpin safeguarding work (See Care Act guidance)

- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Proportionality
- Protection
- Partnership
- Accountability

Next Steps will not tolerate the abuse of adults in the organisation. Staff and volunteers should ensure that their work reflects the principles above and ensure the adult with care and support needs is involved in their decisions and informed consent is obtained. Next Steps should ensure that the safeguarding action agreed is the least intrusive response to the risk. Partners from the community should be involved in any safeguarding work in preventing, detecting, and reporting neglect and abuse. Next Steps should be transparent and accountable in delivering safeguarding actions.

Who do adult safeguarding duties apply to?

The Care Act 2014 sets out that adult safeguarding duties apply to *any* adult who:

- has care and support needs, and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect, and
- is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect, because of those needs.

Who do I go to if I am concerned?

- The designated safeguarding officer is responsible for safeguarding duties for Next Steps and can be contacted at info@next-steps.org. Please also contact your supervisor.
- All staff and volunteers should contact the designated safeguarding officer or the acting designated safeguarding officer for any concerns/queries they have in regard to safeguarding adults. A log of the concern must be kept.
- The designated safeguarding officer will be responsible to make decisions about notifying adult social services if required and consider alternative actions, where necessary.
- The designated safeguarding officer will also ensure that the safeguarding adults' policies and procedures are in place and up to date. They will ensure a safe context is promoted for staff and volunteers and adults accessing the service. The designated safeguarding officer will ensure they are up to date with their safeguarding adults training.
- Next Steps is not a 24-hour service. As such, any out of hours safeguarding concerns where there is an immediate risk of danger to the person or to others should be signposted to the appropriate out of hours services where possible.

What should I do if I am concerned?

Contact the designated safeguarding officer to discuss your concerns and raise these with your supervisor.

(See also Appendix 1 at the bottom of this policy).

1. Respond

- Take emergency action if someone is at immediate risk of harm/in need of urgent medical attention. Dial 999 for emergency services
- Get brief details about what has happened and what the adult would like done about it, but do not probe or conduct a mini-investigation
- Seek consent from the adult to act and to report the concern. Consider whether the adult may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other

people's safety and wellbeing. If you decide to act against their wishes or without their consent, you must record your decision and the reasons for this.

2. Report

- Report to Victoria Heath and your supervisor any potential safeguarding concerns.

3. Refer

In making a decision as to whether to refer or not, the designated safeguarding officer should take into account:

- (1) the adult's wishes and preferred outcome
- (2) whether the adult has mental capacity to make an informed decision about their own and others' safety
- (3) the safety or wellbeing of children or other adults with care and support needs
- (4) whether there is a person in a position of trust involved
- (5) whether a crime has been committed

This should inform the decision whether to notify the concern to the following people:

- the police if a crime has been committed and/or
- relevant regulatory bodies such as Care Quality Commission, Ofsted, Charities commission
- family/relatives as appropriate (seek advice from adult social services)

The designated safeguarding officer should keep a record of the reasons for referring the concern or reasons for not referring.

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and may affect one person or more. Staff and volunteers should look beyond single incidents to identify patterns of harm. Accurate recording of information will also assist in recognising any patterns.

As soon as a complaint is made the Next Steps safeguarding adults process is followed. See Appendix 1 at the bottom of this policy.

What are your roles and responsibilities?

All staff, directors and volunteers at Next Steps are expected to report any concerns to the named person for safeguarding. If the allegation is against one of Next Steps members, volunteers, or directors, seek advice from Next Steps Designated Safeguarding Lead or director at info@next-steps.org

The designated safeguarding adults officer should be responsible for providing acknowledgement of the referral and brief feedback to the person raising the original concern. Feedback should be given in a way that will not make the situation worse or breach the Data Protection Act. If the police are involved, they should be consulted prior to giving feedback to the referrer to ensure any criminal investigation is not affected.

The local authority will decide on who will officer on a safeguarding enquiry should it progress to that stage. The named organisation should not conduct its own safeguarding enquiry unless instructed to do so by the local authority.

Staff and volunteers should ensure that the adult with care and support needs is involved at all stages of their safeguarding enquiry ensuring a person-centred approach is adopted.

Complaints procedure

Next Steps promotes transparency and honesty when things go wrong. All staff and volunteers should apologise and be honest with service users and other relevant people when thing go wrong.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 is to be used when decisions on behalf of those adults with care and support needs who are unable to make some decisions for themselves. Refer to the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-capacity-actcode-of-practice>. You will need to involve an advocate if the person lacks capacity to make decisions about the safeguarding concern.

Confidentiality and information sharing

Next Steps expects all staff, volunteers, directors to maintain confidentiality at all times. In line with Data Protection law (GDPR), Next Steps does not share information if not required.

It should however be noted that information should be shared with authorities if an adult is deemed to be at risk of immediate harm. Sharing the right information, at the right time, with the right people can make all the difference to preventing harm. For further guidance on information sharing and safeguarding see: <https://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/safeguarding-adults/sharinginformation/keymessages.asp>

Training

Next Steps ensures that all staff and volunteers receive basic awareness training on safeguarding adults as they may come across adults with care and support needs who may be at risk of abuse. Those adults may report things of concern to staff or volunteers who should be equipped with the basic knowledge around safeguarding adults and be confident to identify that abuse is taking place and action is required. All staff and volunteers should be clear about the core values of Next Steps and commitment to safeguarding adults.

It is also useful to discuss training with staff who have attended training sessions to ensure they are embedding this in practice.

Similarly, staff and volunteers may encounter concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children. For more information about children’s safeguarding, refer to Next Steps Children’s safeguarding policy.

Useful links

Care act- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

Carer and support statutory guidance-

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/506202/23902777_Care_Act_Book.pdf

Prevent-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

Information sharing- <https://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/safeguarding-adults/sharing-information/keymessages.asp>

Revision History

Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Other Comments

Appendix 1

What are the types of safeguarding adults abuse?

The Care and Support statutory guidance sets out the 10 main types of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological
- Financial abuse
- Discriminatory
- Organisational
- Domestic violence
- Modern Slavery
- Self-neglect

However, you should keep an open mind about what constitutes abuse or neglect as it can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual case should always be considered.

For more information, read section 14.17 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance.

What are the possible signs of abuse?

Abuse and neglect can be difficult to spot. You should be alert to the following possible signs of abuse and neglect:

- Depression, self-harm, or suicide attempts
- Difficulty making friends
- Fear or anxiety
- The person looks dirty or is not dressed properly,
- The person never seems to have money,
- The person has an injury that is difficult to explain (such as bruises, finger marks, 'nonaccidental' injury, neck, shoulders, chest and arms),
- The person has signs of a pressure ulcer,
- The person is experiencing insomnia
- The person seems frightened or frightened of physical contact.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour
- The person is withdrawn, changes in behaviour

You should ask the person if you are unsure about their well-being as there may be other explanations to the above presentation.

Who abuses and neglects adults?

Abuse can happen anywhere, even in somebody's own home. Most often abuse takes place by others who are in a position of trust and power. It can take place whether an adult lives alone or with others. Anyone can carry out abuse or neglect, including:

- partners.
- other family members.
- neighbours.

Raising a safeguarding concern

