

Adult Safeguarding – policy & procedures

Safeguarding adults refers to the *multi-agency* procedure that works to protect a special category of adults, who are deemed to be ‘vulnerable adults’ or ‘adults at risk’ from abuse or neglect.

Although RCoS is committed to protecting the safety of all service-users, **this policy only refers to adults deemed to be ‘vulnerable’**. Refugees and asylum-seekers who have been in the UK for less than one year are considered vulnerable.

While asylum-seekers or refugees who have been here longer than one year may not officially be considered ‘vulnerable’, Ripon City of Sanctuary (RCoS) believes that they are less likely than members of the general public to be able to protect themselves from harm, and thus extra care should be taken.

Other RCoS policies which should be cross-referenced

Items in red are still to be finally ratified and published.

- **Ripon City of Sanctuary Policy Handbook**
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy
- Use of Vehicles Policy
- **Recruitment and Selection Policy**
- **Risk Management policy.**

1. Who are ‘adults at risk (‘vulnerable adults’)?

Adults are considered to be at risk if they are aged 18 years or more, and

- need care and support (whether or not these are currently being met), and
- are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect, or the risk of it.

An adult at risk may therefore be a person who, for example:

- is a refugee or asylum-seekers during their first year in the UK
- is an older person who is frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment
- has a learning disability
- has a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment
- has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder
- has a long-term illness/condition
- misuses substances or alcohol
- is an unpaid carer such as a family member/friend who provides personal assistance and care to adults and is subject to abuse
- lacks mental capacity to make particular decisions.

2. Ripon City of Sanctuary's commitment

RCoS will not tolerate any form of abuse towards vulnerable adults, and will work with the relevant agencies to:

- understand what neglect and abuse are, and how to spot the signs (see Appendix 1)
- look out for signs of abuse and/or neglect
- prevent abuse/neglect
- report signs of abuse and/or neglect
- end abuse/neglect that is occurring
- support adults at risk of abuse/neglect.

Safeguarding is everybody's business. All RCoS volunteers and management committee members (collectively known here as 'volunteers') must take issues of abuse and neglect seriously; doing nothing is not an option. All volunteers will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults.

3. RCoS designated safeguarding officer

The designated adult safeguarding officer is listed at the end of this policy. All matters relating to adult safeguarding at RCoS should be referred to them and/or the chair of RCoS.

4. If you see or suspect abuse/neglect

Any volunteer who is told of abuse/neglect, witnesses it, or suspects it has a responsibility to act. Doing nothing is not an option. Their responsibilities are to:

- 4.1 **Take action** – If what appears to be abuse or neglect is encountered, it cannot be kept secret, even if the apparent victim asks for it not to be shared. Volunteers should take the most appropriate action based on the urgency of the situation:

Are the police required?

- If an urgent police presence is required to keep the individual safe, call 999
- If a crime is ongoing and someone is in imminent danger, call 999
- If a crime has *been* committed but the victim is not in imminent danger, call 101
- If you want police advice, call the non-emergency number 101

Are health professionals required?

Decide if the person needs medical assistance –

- For emergency medical attention, call 999
(do not transport the person to hospital yourself)
- For a doctor, call the individual's own GP
- For NHS advice if you can't find out who the individual's GP is, call 111.

Are Social Care required?

Remember that alerting Social Care is a significant step, especially if it concerns a refugee/asylum-seeker. This decision needs to be well-informed and should usually be left to a more appropriate agency (eg police, health professionals or Refugee Council). However, if you believe that Social Care have not been alerted and you believe that either this adult, or other adults or children in the household, remain at risk, you should alert NYCC Social Care without delay (see below).

- 4.2 **Preserve the evidence** if you believe a crime may have occurred. Do not touch anything that could compromise evidence, or – without risk to yourself – allow anyone else to do so. If you are able to do so

without putting yourself at risk, take any photos which could be useful (only take photos of alleged victims with their permission).

- 4.3 **Clearly record in writing**, fully and as soon as possible afterwards, what you have witnessed or been told. Note your responses and any actions you have taken. Note who else attended (eg police, medical professionals) and what they said/did, and what was your concluding involvement in the event. Take into account your data protection responsibilities by protecting this report and only sharing it with people who need to see it.
- 4.4 **Tell RCoS'** adult safeguarding officer and/or chair, as soon as possible afterwards, what has happened and what actions you have taken, and provide a copy of your report (above).

5. RCoS management committee responsibilities

Once the RCoS management committee has received a report of suspected abuse or neglect, it should meet as soon as possible to consider what should be done. At that meeting and/or on an ongoing basis, the committee should:

- Keep full and careful records of all discussions, decisions and actions taken
- Decide who needs to be informed about the suspected abuse/neglect, if they are not already aware – for example, the Refugee Council or North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC).
- Consider if a safeguarding concern should be raised with Social Care, taking into account that it may be more appropriate for this to be done by the Refugee Council, police or health professionals (see 4.1 above). Concerns may need to be raised if:
 - It is in the public interest, eg there is also a risk to others or a volunteer is involved.
 - The person lacks mental capacity to consent and it is in the person's best interests
 - The person is subject to coercion or undue influence, to the extent that they are unable to give consent
 - It is in the person's vital interests, to prevent serious harm or distress or life threatening situations
 - Other appropriate agencies are not reporting the suspected abuse and RCoS believes it needs to be reported.
- Provide full co-operation to the relevant authorities (eg police, health professionals, social services, refugee council, NYCC).
- Keep a close eye on other members of the family of the suspected victim of abuse/neglect, in case they are not the only victim.
- Provide appropriate practical and emotional support to the suspected victim, without pressure and only if wanted.
- Provide any necessary support to the person who reported the suspected abuse/neglect, and signpost them to further professional support if wanted.
- Decide whether other organisations (such as Harrogate School of English, Harrogate District of Sanctuary) need to know any aspect of the situation, for example to advise that the individual may be unable to attend an event or may need extra support. Wherever possible, provide only practical information needed by that organisation rather than any information which could further expose the individual to abuse/neglect or cause them a loss of dignity.

6. Seeking advice

Volunteers should seek advice from any or all of the following:

- the RCoS adult safeguarding officer (see end of this policy)
- a member of RCoS management committee
- the Refugee Council

- the police or health professionals
- NYCC (see the [NYCC website](#))

7. If nothing happens when a concern is raised

RCoS should contact the NYCC Social Care team without delay, especially if it is believed that the adult remains at risk (or that other children or adults in the household are at risk), if:

- after notifying a concern to any agency such as the Refugee Council, police, or health professionals, RCoS believes that no actions have been taken, and no satisfactory explanation has been given
- action has been promised but not carried out in a sufficiently timely, comprehensive or accurate manner, and no satisfactory explanation has been given:

Office hours 0845 034 9410
(Monday to Friday 8.00am-5.30pm, Saturday 9.00am-5.00pm)

Out of hours 0845 034 9417

Email care@northyorks.gov.uk

Make a referral Go to the [NYCC website](#) and use the online referral form

8. RCoS designated adult safeguarding officer

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Next review due September 2019

Appendix 1 – What do abuse and neglect constitute?

These can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual should always be considered. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. The following are examples of potential safeguarding concerns:

- Physical abuse includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, unlawful or inappropriate restraint, or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- Domestic abuse is an incident or pattern 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 sexuality (Home Office, 2013).
- Sexual abuse includes rape and sexual assault, sexual acts, and touching of sexual parts of the body, to which the adult has not consented, or could not consent, or was pressured into consenting.
- Psychological abuse includes 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 from services or supportive networks.
- Financial and material abuse includes 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 includes ignoring medical, physical, emotional and psychological needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, and the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) - includes procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Procedures can cause severe bleeding and problems urinating, and later cysts, infections, infertility as well as complications in childbirth with increased risk of newborn deaths. It can occur either in this country or the person's country of origin.
- Modern slavery includes human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use the means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhuman treatment.
- Honour-based violence is where someone is subjected to violence committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or a particular community
- Discriminatory abuse includes abuse based on a person's race, sex, disability, faith, sexual orientation, or age; other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment or hate crime/hate incident.
- Organisational abuse includes neglect and poor 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.
- Forced marriage is a marriage that is performed under duress and without the full and informed consent or free will of both parties.
- Spiritual or religious abuse: Spiritual abuse is not covered by the statutory definitions but is of concern because harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, obtrusive or forced healing and deliverance ministries or rituals, and of which may result in someone experiencing physical, mental, emotional or sexual harm.
- Self-neglect covers a wide range of behaviours, such as neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviours such as hoarding.