



Mediation
Buckinghamshire



A P O S I T I V E C H O I C E

Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy & Procedure

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1. Purpose of the Policy

This Policy defines Mediation Buckinghamshire's (MB) commitment to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and ensuring their wellbeing. MB recognises safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

2. Policy Definition

MB recognises that everyone has a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial, and discriminatory abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.

We recognise the personal dignity and rights of vulnerable adults and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.

3. Aim

The Care Act 2014 provides a definition and framework for Safeguarding Adults Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organizations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

The principle aims of adult safeguarding are to: Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible and to:

- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs.
- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live

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- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned
- Raise public awareness so that communities, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect
- Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult
- Address what has caused the abuse or neglect

4. Implementation

Through the implementation of this policy MB aims to ensure that:

- All people who may be in vulnerable situations and who interact with the service do so through people they can trust.
- All risks that may arise through interaction with people who may be in vulnerable situations are carefully assessed and all necessary steps are taken to minimise and manage them

This policy is based on the following general principles:

- All adults who may be in vulnerable situations have a right to protection – including from the law - and their decisions respected, even if that decision involves risk.
- Adults may choose to take risks, but they do not choose to be abused;
- So far as they are able, adults who may be in vulnerable situations or who have been abused will be enabled to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.
- Where someone declines to take action on abuse, and there are no justifiable factors to disregard those wishes, MB will work with adults to assist them to reach a point where they feel able to take any necessary action.
- MB provides a confidential service. However, there may be occasions when it may be necessary to make decisions about sharing information in appropriate circumstances. This will be undertaken in accordance with the confidentiality policy.

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There are several scenarios in which MB may have to consider Adult Safeguarding intervention:

- There is an allegation that an employed member of staff, or a volunteer for one of the services, has exploited their position to abuse an adult who is in a vulnerable situation.
- Someone using our services, discloses abuse and:
 - a) Does not wish any action to be taken beyond that disclosure - the abuse only affects them and is a threat to life or limb or a serious crime.
 - b) Does not wish any action to be taken beyond that disclosure - the abuse affects more than them or is a threat to life or limb or is a serious crime;
 - c) Wishes to pursue the matter further.

4.1 Issues of choice

An adult's right to make choices about their own safety has to be balanced with the rights of others to be safe. Things to consider when making decisions about sharing information include:

- Risks to children: for example, a person who is causing harm to an adult may also present a risk to a child, or an adult's parenting capacity may be adversely affected by the stress of the abuse they or others in the home are experiencing;
- Risks to other adults: e.g., other adults within the person's home;
- Risk of serious harm or homicide: information may be shared without consent if there is a public interest in sharing the information to prevent a crime or protect others from harm;
- Legal restrictions: there may be exceptional circumstances where someone intends to act in a way that is unlawful;
- Mental capacity and impaired decision making: you should not assume a person lacks capacity merely because they appear to be vulnerable.

Where a caller to MB discloses abuse and does not wish any action to be taken beyond that disclosure, but the abuse affects more than them or is a threat to life or

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limb, or is a serious crime, MB will consider over-ruling the wishes of the caller. If someone is in immediate danger or harm, MB will consider whether the emergency services need to be contacted.

5. Reporting procedures

The following procedure refers to abuse or suspicion of abuse of that staff and volunteers become aware of during their work with Mediation Buckinghamshire.

Any member of staff or volunteer who becomes aware that an adult is or is at risk of, being abused or has safeguarding needs should raise the matter immediately to a member of staff or to the designated safeguarding lead.

Early sharing of information is the key to providing an effective response where there are emerging concerns To ensure effective safeguarding arrangements no member of staff or volunteer should assume that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to the safety and wellbeing of the adult.

MB will:

- Inform the adult of the action we propose to take.
- Seek their agreement for any referral unless there is a risk of significant harm to them or others
- Ensure that they are kept informed about what will happen next, so they can be reassured about what to expect.
- Endeavour to ensure that they are safe and supported before proceeding with any other action.
- Inform the adult if MB are planning to seek advice from or report concerns to an external agency.

In most situations there will not be an immediate threat and the decision about protecting the person with safeguarding needs will be taken in consultation with themselves and/or Social Services.

5.1 Safeguarding Leads

Should you have any concerns you must raise your concerns with our Safeguarding lead who provides a direct point of contact, they will provide all staff and volunteers with support, record any concerns clearly and securely, and ensure that the appropriate action is taken.

They will also ensure that the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Child and young person Protection Policy is being fully adhered too.

MB Safeguarding lead is: Rita Jackson

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They can be contacted on: jacksonrita6@gmail.com during office hours or on 07903 374 935 at other times. If you are emailing please do not put the names of the client and relevant others in the email and please mark it urgent safeguarding query.

If the Safeguarding Lead is not available (due to annual leave, sickness etc.), staff and volunteers should report to the Deputy Safeguarding Lead who is Anthea Beeks

They can be contacted on: anthea.beeks@mediationbucks.org.

If neither the Safeguarding Lead nor Deputy Safeguarding Lead is available, advice should be immediately sought from: The First Response Team on 01296 383962 (outside of office hours call: 0800 999 7677) email: secure-cypfirstresponse@buckscc.gov.uk NB.

There are some cases that require an urgent response

- If you suspect a serious criminal act has taken place, telephone 999. Tell them if you think it might be adult abuse.
- If the individual is injured seek immediate medical treatment. Tell the ambulance personnel or A&E staff that this is a potential adult abuse situation.

Child Protection

If at any time you become concerned that a Child might be at risk you need to follow the Child Protection Procedure outlined in MB Children & Young Person Protection/Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

If neither the Safeguarding Lead nor Deputy Safeguarding Lead is available, advice should be immediately sought from: The First Response Team on 01296 383962 (outside of office hours call: 0800 999 7677) email: secure-cypfirstresponse@buckscc.gov.uk NB.

Or if a child is in immediate danger of being harmed, the police should be called on 999.

6.Responsibilities

The Trustees have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that this Policy and Procedure is adhered to but has delegated the responsibility for its implementation to its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to ensure that practice meets the highest standards and that we adhere to safeguarding best practice.

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MB will ensure that MB staff and volunteers will:

- For all required staff roles have checks carried out under DBS or PVG services;
- For required volunteer roles have checks carried out under, DBS, or PVG services;
- have two references provided before they will have direct contact with people who use the service;
- be required to read this Policy and the Safeguarding Procedures;
- be required to attend safeguarding awareness training.

MB partners and suppliers will:

- act in accordance with this policy and guidance provided by Mediation Buckinghamshire.
- have checks carried out on their staff or volunteers under, DBS, or PVG services and appropriate references provided before they will have direct contact with people who use the service.
- have in place mandatory safeguarding training for their staff which is repeated on a regular basis.
- make this policy accessible to all staff, their volunteers and people who contact them.
- have clear policies against discrimination and harassment towards any person (staff, volunteers and people who use the service) on any grounds including disability, age, race, faith, culture, gender, or sexuality.
- have clear, accessible and well-publicised complaints procedures – including information about how to complain to external bodies.

7. Confidentiality

All information will be handled sensitively and in line with MB Policy and Procedure and following any relevant data protection requirements

8. Supporting Documents

Appendix 1 – MB Safeguarding Guidance

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9. Review of Effectiveness

The implementation and effectiveness of this policy and the requirements that stem from it will be monitored by the Trustees at least annually, to identify any trends which may need further action.

The CEO is responsible for ensuring appropriate reporting to the Trustee Board and will recommend and implement any improvement actions required.

10. History and Approvals

Revision History

Date	Document Version	Document Revision History	Document Author / Reviser
31 st December 2021	V1.0	Reviewed & Update	A.Beeks
09 th February 2022	V1.01	Further amended	A.Beeks
19 th January 2023	V2.0	Reviewed and amended	A.Beeks

Approvals

Date	Document Version	Approver Title	Approver Name & authorisation
27 th January 2022	V1.0	Chair Trustees	Phyllida Middlemiss
09 th February 2022	V1.01	Chair of Trustees	Phyllida Middlemiss
31 st January	V2	Chair of Trustees	Phyllida Middlemiss

Appendix 1. Safeguarding Information and Guidance

Safeguarding Duties

The Care Act 2014 introduced statutory safeguarding duties. The safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- (a) Has needs for care and support (whether the authority is meeting any of those needs),
- (b) Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- (c) As a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Key Principles for adult safeguarding

In the safeguarding of adult MB are guided by the principles set out in The Care Act 2014 (See Appendix Two) and aim to demonstrate and promote these principles in our work

- **Empowerment** – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** – The 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 neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Recognising the signs of abuse

Staff / volunteers may be particularly well-placed to spot abuse and neglect, the adult may say or do things that hint that all is not well. It may come in the form of a

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complaint, or an expression of concern. Everyone within the organisation should understand what to do, and where to go locally to get help, support and advice. It is vital that everyone within the organisation is vigilant on behalf of those unable to protect themselves, including:

- Knowing about different types of abuse and neglect and their signs
- Supporting adults to keep safe
- Knowing who to tell about suspected abuse or neglect and
- Supporting adults to think and weigh up the risks and benefits of different options when exercising choice and control.

The Care Act 2014 defines the following areas of abuse and neglect; they are not exhaustive but are a guide to behaviors that may lead to a safeguarding enquiry. This includes:

Physical abuse

The physical mistreatment of one person by another which may or may not result in physical injury, this may include slapping, burning, punching, unreasonable confinement, and pinching, force-feeding, misuse of medication, shaking, inappropriate moving and handling.

Signs and indicators

Over or under use of medication, burns in unusual places; hands, soles of feet, sudden incontinence, bruising at various healing stages, bite marks, disclosure, bruising in the shape of objects, unexplained injuries or those that go untreated, reluctance to uncover parts of the body.

Sexual abuse

Any form of sexual activity that the adult does not want and or have not considered, a sexual relationship instigated by those in a position of trust,

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 pressured into consenting.

Signs and indicators

Signs of being abused may include recoiling from physical contact, genital discharge, fear of males or female, inappropriate sexual behaviors in presence of others, bruising to thighs, disclosure, and pregnancy. Abusers may take longer with personal

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care tasks, use offensive language, work alone with clients, or show favoritism to clients.

Financial or material abuse

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, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

Signs and indicators

This may include not allowing a person to access to their money, not spending allocated allowance on the individual, denying access to their money, theft from the individual, theft of property, misuse of benefits. There may be an over protection of money, money not available, forged signatures, disclosure, inability to pay bills, lack of money after payments of benefits or other, unexplained withdrawals. An abuser may be evasive when discussing finances, goods purchased may be in the possession of the abuser, there may be an over keenness in participating in activities involving individuals money

Psychological and/or Emotional abuse

This abuse may involve the use of intimidation, indifference, hostility, rejection, threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, verbal abuse such as shouting, swearing or the use of discriminatory and or oppressive language. A deprivation of contact, blaming, controlling, coercion, harassment, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks. There may be a restriction of freedom, access to personal hygiene restricted, name calling, threat to withdraw care or support, threat of institutional care, use of bribes or threats or choice being neglected

Signs and indicators

Stress and or anxiety in response to certain people, disclosure, compulsive behavior, reduction in skills and concentration, lack of trust, lack of self-esteem, someone may be frightened of other individuals, there may be changes in sleep patterns

Neglect and acts of omission

Behavior by carers that results in the persistent or severe failure to meet the physical and or psychological needs of an individual in their care. This may include 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

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life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating, willful failure to intervene or failing to consider the implications of non-intervention in behaviors which are dangerous to them or others, failure to use agreed risk management procedures, inadequate care in residential setting, withholding affection or communication, denying access to services,

Signs and indicators

There may be disclosure. Someone being abused may have low self-esteem, deterioration, depression, isolation, continence problems, sleep disturbances, pressure ulcers. There may be seemingly uncertain attitude and cold detachment from a carer, denying individuals request, lack of consideration to the individuals request, denying others access to the individual health care professionals

Self-neglect

This covers a wide range of behavior neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behavior such as hoarding.

Discriminatory Abuse

This includes forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, and religion or health status and may be the motivating factor in other forms of abuse. It can be personal, a hate crime or institutional.

Signs and indicators

There may be a withdrawal or rejection of culturally inappropriate services e.g. food, mixed gender groups or activities. Individual may simply agree with the abuser for an easier life, there may be disclosure, or someone may display low self-esteem. An abuser may react by saying "I treat everyone the same", have inappropriate nick names, be uncooperative, use derogatory language, or deny someone social and cultural contact.

Institutional or Organisational Abuse

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

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through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Signs and indicators

This may include a system that condones poor practice, deprived environment, lack of procedures for staff, one commode used for a number of people, no or little evidence of training, lack of staff support/supervision, lack of privacy or personal care, repeated unaddressed incidents of poor practice, lack of homely environment, manager implicated in poor practice. There may be a lack of personal clothing, no support plan, lack of stimulation, repeated falls, repeated infections, unexplained bruises/burns, pressure ulcers, unauthorised deprivation of liberty. Abusers may have a lack of understanding of a person's disability, misuse medication, use illegal controls and restraints, display undue/inappropriate physical intervention, and inappropriately use power/control.

Domestic abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behavior, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

A new offence of coercive and controlling behavior in intimate and familial relationships was introduced into the Serious Crime Act 2015. The offence will impose a maximum 5 years imprisonment, a fine or both.

Signs and indicators

May include many of those indicators listed under previous categories in this document, including unexplained bruising, withdrawal from activities, work or volunteering, not being in control of finances, or decision making

Modern slavery

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Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, and 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.

Signs and indicators

There may be signs of physical or psychological abuse, victims may look malnourished or unkempt, or appear withdrawn. Victims may rarely be allowed to travel on their own, seem under the control, influence of others, rarely interact or appear unfamiliar with their neighborhood or where they work. They may be living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation, and / or living and working at the same address. Victims may have no identification documents, have few personal possessions and always wear the same clothes day in day out. What clothes they do wear may not be suitable for their work. People may have little opportunity to move freely and may have had their travel documents retained, e.g. passports. They may be dropped off / collected for work on a regular basis either very early or late at night. 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.

Radicalisation to terrorism

The Government through it's PREVENT programme has highlighted how some adults may be vulnerable to radicalisation and involvement in terrorism. This can include the exploitation of vulnerable people and involve them in extremist activity. Radicalisation can be described as a process, by which a person to an increasing extent accepts the use of undemocratic or violent means, including terrorism, in an attempt to reach a specific political/ideological objective. Vulnerable individuals being targeted for radicalisation/recruitment into violent extremism is viewed as a safeguarding issue.

Signs and indicators

May include being in contact with extremist recruiters. Articulating support for violent extremist causes or leaders. Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element. Possessing violent extremist literature. Using extremist narratives to explain personal disadvantage. Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues. Joining extremist organisations. Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour.

Who might abuse?

Abuse of adults at risk, may be perpetrated by a wide range of people including relatives, family members, professional staff, paid care workers, volunteers, other service users, neighbours, friends and associates, people who deliberately exploit vulnerable people and strangers.

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more. Professionals and others should look beyond single incidents or individuals to identify patterns of harm.

Patterns of abuse vary and include:

- Serial abusing in which the perpetrator seeks out and 'grooms' individuals. Sexual abuse sometimes falls into this pattern as do some forms of financial abuse;
- Long-term abuse in the context of an ongoing family relationship such as domestic violence between spouses or generations or persistent psychological abuse;
- Or opportunistic abuse such as theft occurring because money or jewellery has been left lying around.