

Aims

- Reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to our members
- Safeguard in a manner which supports our members to make their own informed decisions
- Raise awareness of safeguarding within the Union, University, and wider community to support the prevention, identification and response of abuse or neglect

Legal Requirements

The legislation covering safeguarding is the Care Act 2014 (England) and the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

There is no statutory duty for The Advice Centre to report safeguarding issues about an adult, but we do have a responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of adults using our service. This responsibility applies to all staff within The Advice Centre.

We will aim to achieve this by:

- Stopping or reducing harm or the risk of harm wherever possible
- Empowering our members to make decisions for themselves with the support and guidance of trained advisers
- Integrated and co-operative working with university support services
- Maintaining up-to-date functional policies and procedures
- Maintaining a safeguarding lead (Head of Advice)
- Knowledge among all Advice Centre staff of when to report concerns and who to report them to
- Providing support in accessible ways that meet the needs of the individual
- Promoting an understanding to the wider community of the different types of abuse, staying safe and how to raise a concern

Six principles for safeguarding adults

First introduced by the Department of Health in 2011, but now embedded in the Care Act, these six principles apply to all health and care settings. The Advice Centre will use these principles to guide their own safeguarding work:

1. Empowerment

People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions, and informed consent

2. Prevention

It is better to take action before harm occurs.

3. Proportionality

The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

4. Protection

Support and representation for those in greatest need.

5. Partnership

Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.

6. Accountability

Accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice.

Indicators of abuse or neglect

- Below gives an idea of signs and symptoms someone may be displaying which could be an indicator of abuse or neglect. This is not an exhaustive list and further information can be found on [Social care institute for excellence safeguarding adults webpage.](#)

Physical abuse

What this involves

Hitting, kicking, spitting, restraining and withdrawal or removal of basic necessities such as food and water.

Signs of abuse

Abrasions, burns, bruises. An unwillingness to explain how they appeared or trying to hide or minimise their existence.

Emotional/ psychological abuse

What this involves

Emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks

Signs of abuse

Seemingly unable to attend an appointment alone. Unable or unwilling to speak for themselves. Overbearing approach of companion or an air of silence when that person is present. Withdrawal or change in psychological state of the individual. Signs of distress. Changes in weight/appearance/ self care.

Financial abuse

What this involves

Theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with financial transactions, or the misuse of possessions or benefits

Signs of abuse

Unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle, unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts, signs of financial hardship in cases where the person's financial affairs are being managed by another, rent arrears and eviction notices but no corresponding loss of financial input, disparity between the person's living conditions and their financial resources, e.g. insufficient food in the house

Modern day slavery

What this involves

Slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude

Signs of abuse

Signs of physical or emotional abuse (see above), appearing to be malnourished, unkempt or withdrawn, isolation from the community, seeming under the control or influence of others (see emotional/psychological abuse), living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation and/or living and working at the same address, lack of personal effects or identification documents, always wearing the same clothes, avoidance of eye contact, appearing frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers

Sexual abuse

What this involves

Rape, any inappropriate touching, indecent exposure, sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or lacks the capacity to consent, sexual photography or forced use of pornography or the witnessing of sexual acts

Signs of abuse

Indicators for this type of abuse can be easily confused with physical abuse but others indicators may be; difficulty or discomfort sitting, bruises to the back of the neck, self harming.

Self neglect

What this involves

Neglecting to care for ones own personal hygiene or surroundings

Signs of abuse

Very poor hygiene or unkempt appearance. Malnourished.

Domestic violence

What this involves

Physical abuse and the following: psychological, sexual, financial, emotional. It includes any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It also includes 'honour'-based violence, female genital mutilation & forced marriage

Signs of abuse

Low self esteem, physical evidence of violence such as bruising, cuts, broken bones, verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others, fear of outside intervention, limited access to money

Radicalisation and safeguarding

The government has a counter-terrorism strategy, PREVENT strategy, that includes supporting vulnerable people to prevent them being drawn into terrorism. Any concerns regarding the radicalisation of our members should be raised with the Head of advice and lettings or Director of membership.

Mental capacity and safeguarding

The Advice Centre will assume that a member has the mental capacity to make their own decisions on how they wish to live their lives. We assume mental capacity because our service is built around supporting informed decision making rather than making decision for you ([The Advice Centre charter](#))

The [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#) is central to decisions and actions in safeguarding adults. Where a person can make an informed choice in relation to a particular decision, they have a right to self-determination.

In practice, it may come to light that a member does not have capacity to make their own informed decisions. Examples of this may include (but is not limited to) an inability to retain information or a concern of abuse as mentioned in 6, an inability to understand the information being presented to them or to engage in a conversation around it or an inability to engage in the decision-making process.

Where mental capacity is a concern to advisers, they should make the Head of advice or lettings or Director of membership aware. This will facilitate a further discussion around confidentiality.

Supervision and training

SUSU has a clear learning and development policy which aims to provide staff with the necessary tools to excel in their roles. In addition, The Advice Centre have regular peer-led case reviews and supervision to support them with their casework. Supervision will be used to support the ongoing development of staff and identify any training needs.

Where there is evidence of unusual or excessive contact with an Advice Centre member, this will be investigated through supervision and necessary action taken to prevent harm to the individual, the staff member, and the service.

Where necessary, safeguarding training can be discussed and will take the form of internal policy training or external safeguarding training.

Safeguarding procedure

The Advice Centres adheres to a strict confidentiality policy to ensure that our members can feel safe and free to engage in an open and honest discussion with our advisers about their issues.

If an adviser has concerns about the wellbeing of one of our members, they have a responsibility to take action. The need for confidentiality does not override this safeguarding policy and both policies should reflect this.

1. Where an adviser has concerns regarding the wellbeing of one of our members, the adviser will raise their concerns with the Safeguarding Lead (Head of Advice) or Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Director of membership).
2. A meeting will be booked the same day for the adviser to discuss in full the concerns with the Head of advice and lettings or the director of membership.
3. A further urgent case review will be booked for the same day at 4pm for all staff members with The Advice Centre to discuss and be made aware of concerns raised and action taken.
4. The Head of advice and lettings or Director of membership will decide whether an external service should be made aware of our concerns. We will, wherever possible, aim to get consent of the member to contact the external department before doing so. There will be occasions when this is not deemed possible (such as serious risk to life or immediate danger being present). At all times, staff will ensure that they are acting in a way that minimises risk to the member.
5. Any decisions made with regards to breaching confidentiality should be recorded in our case management system and the head of advice and lettings or director of membership should be kept up-to-date with all correspondence in relation to the case.

Disclaimer:

While care has been taken to ensure that information contained in The Advice Centre publications is true and correct at the time of writing, changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of this information. The Advice Centre and SUSU cannot accept responsibility for any actions taken as a result of advice given in this publication.

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Providing free, independent, and confidential advice and information.

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