

Safeguarding

Nottinghamshire Mind is committed to safeguarding the welfare of adults and children who use or visit our services. As an organisation specialising in work with adults who may be at risk of abuse we are particularly conscious of our responsibility to safeguard people and minimise the potential for abuse to occur. We recognise the need to work in partnership with other organisations in order to achieve this.

Definitions and Clarifications-

- **Vulnerable adult:** Vulnerable adults are people over 18, we define as vulnerable someone who is or may be in need of community services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; 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.
- **Children:** although none of our services works directly with children we are involved with families from time to time. We have a responsibility to safeguard children with whom we come into contact in these circumstances.
- **Abuse:** Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can be at many levels, from poor practice at one end of the spectrum to gross physical abuse at the other; it can involve one person or many, and one perpetrator or several; it can be a single act or a persistent pattern.

Forms of abuse-

- **Physical abuse** - ranging from rough, inappropriate handling to direct physical violence. Examples include shaking, slapping, pushing or kicking someone.
- **Sexual abuse or exploitation** - including any sexual activity that the vulnerable person does not want, understand or agree to.
- **Psychological abuse** - this can be verbal and non verbal harassment, ridicule or treating with contempt; it can include threats of harm or abandonment or humiliation, intimidation or verbal abuse.
- **Financial or material exploitation** - includes misappropriation of money, benefits or possessions, neglect or physical abuse to obtain money, denying someone access to their money, abuse of legal rights or pressure to obtain legal powers over finance or inheritance.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** - includes careless as well as deliberate poor care; ignoring their medical or care needs, for example: withholding assistance to use the toilet or failure to keep a vulnerable person warm, comfortable and safe from harm inflicted upon themselves by others or themselves (self harm), inadequate provision of food, or isolation against the will of the vulnerable individual.
- **Discriminatory abuse** - racist, sexist, homophobic and other remarks or actions, including those relating to age, disability religion or illness.

The abuser-

- Often well known to their victims but can be strangers.
- Might be a relative, partner, son or daughter, friend or neighbour, a paid or voluntary worker, or a health or social care worker.
- Could be another vulnerable adult or service user.
- May not realise they are abusing and can sometimes act out of character and abuse because of the stress of caring.

Settings of abuse-

- The vulnerable adults' own home.
- A carer's home.
- A day centre.
- A care home.
- A hospital.
- The workplace.
- Educational institutions.

Confidentiality-

People have the right to expect that all staff and volunteers will deal sensitively and sympathetically with their situation. It is important that information remains confidential and that only those with a 'need to know' should be privy to it.

Safe Recruitment Procedures-

Nottinghamshire Mind's recruitment policy stipulates that all paid staff will have to complete an application form, detailing past work history and references. Individuals are then interviewed and references requested. Only on receipt of satisfactory references will a formal offer of employment be made.

Those working directly and having regular, sustained contact with vulnerable adults are required to have an enhanced check through the Disclosure and Barring Service before any commencement of work which involves substantial client contact.

Copies of all returned DBS checks and documentation pertaining to any vulnerable adult issues will be kept confidentially and securely locked within the organisations administration office. Staff can undergo training and induction whilst waiting for the checks to clear, but cannot undertake any unsupervised face-to-face work with service users until satisfactory checks have been received.

Safeguarding and prevention of abuse-

Nottinghamshire Mind has a Professional Boundaries Policy governing the behaviour expected of its staff and volunteers. In particular, it describes the nature and limits of the relationships we expect those working on behalf of Nottinghamshire Mind to have with adults and children with whom they come into contact.

Staff and volunteers are required to attend training workshops on Personal and Professional Boundaries, designed to raise awareness of the general need for protection of both themselves and the people they work with.

All Nottinghamshire Mind staff and volunteers have a duty to protect vulnerable adults and children with whom they come in to contact with in their work, and must take steps to ensure that the potential for abuse to occur is minimised.

In addition to this staff and volunteers have a particular responsibility towards people experiencing a mental health problem. The vulnerabilities and risks likely to be faced by people using our services form part of the basic mental health awareness training which our staff and volunteers undergo.

As part of the induction process and / or training programme, all staff and volunteers must be made aware of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. It must be made clear to them that they have an individual responsibility to raise concerns over suspected or known cases of abuse. They must also understand that they can expect the organisation to support them if they are acting in good faith.

During one-to-one supervision Line Managers will ensure that staff and volunteers feel confident to raise any concerns. When doubts and / or concerns regarding a situation are raised the person making the report must not be belittled or suffer punitive measures as a result. It is important that concerns are recognised and taken seriously.

During regular supervision or through additional contact, Managers will offer support in dealing with the impact on staff members themselves of dealing with abuse, and the impact on other people using the service. They will also offer support in working with both the victims and the perpetrators of abuse.

Risk assessments carried out on individuals must address the potential for abuse by other people.

Reporting abuse or suspected abuse-

Members of staff must report any known or suspected abuse at once to their Line Manager. If that person is not available, they should contact the CEO.

Volunteers should speak to any member of staff, who will then be responsible for taking action. If none are available, they should contact the service's Line Manager or CEO.

Known or suspected instances of abuse perpetrated by members of Nottinghamshire Mind's staff can be reported directly to the CEO if the circumstances require.

When a case of abuse or suspected abuse is raised, whether by a member of staff, volunteer, service user or anyone else, it is vital for the staff member or manager receiving the report to record every word and the informant should verify accuracy and sign accordingly.

In a situation relating to suspected criminal actions, the police must always be informed. In any instance of suspected abuse staff and volunteers must therefore take account of the need to preserve evidence and keep detailed records (Appendix 1). The person receiving the report must take action as quickly as possible and always during the same working day, following the guidance in the flowchart: Responding to Allegations of Abuse Procedure (Appendix 2). There is a checklist of information to have at hand when making a referral (Appendix 3.)

At all times confidentiality should be respected and personal material/documentation should be kept in a secure place with limited and agreed access. For investigations that involve service users, all information will be held on their file in the relevant project. Details of abuse allegations that involve staff will be held at Head Office.

The Manager receiving the report is responsible for ensuring that the incident is entered on the Safeguarding Central Log held at Head Office, and that it is updated and outcomes recorded. Information from this Log is reported to meetings of the Nottinghamshire Minds Board of Trustees and to the relevant commissioning and contracting authorities, in accordance with service specifications and contracts.

If the organisation is felt to be responsible for failing to protect a vulnerable adult then the Complaints Procedure must be followed.

Appendix 1 Preserving Evidence

Whilst your first concern will be the immediate well being of the victim, your efforts to preserve evidence are vital.

To enable the Police to investigate effectively, it is imperative that evidence is preserved. For the short time before the Police arrive, what you do or do not do can make a crucial difference. What follows is a checklist which may help to ensure that evidence is not destroyed.

In cases of alleged sexual abuse the entire following list applies:

- **Do not wash or bath** the victim.
- **Physical contact** with the victim or alleged perpetrator **should be avoided** as cross contamination can destroy evidence. Explain why you are not giving a hug, if this would be something you would usually do when the person is upset.
- Preserve bedding where appropriate. Note and preserve any bloody items. Do not handle without disposable gloves.
- Preserve any used condoms.

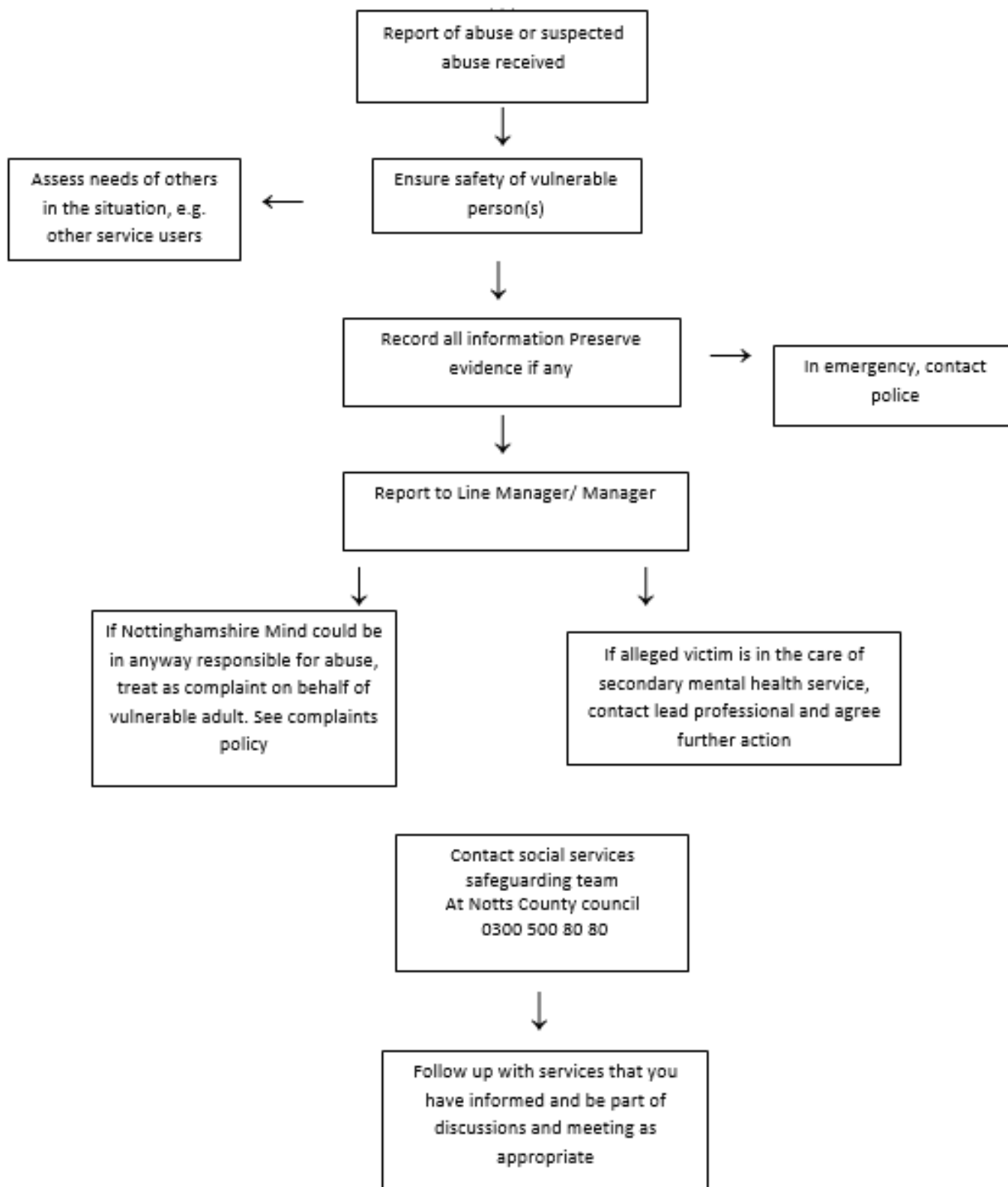
For all other cases:

- Where possible, leave things as and where they are. If anything has to be handled, keep this to a minimum. **Do not clean up.** Do not touch what you do not have to.
- If you have been given items of possible interest e.g. a weapon, avoid handling them wherever possible. Keep in a safe, dry place until the police are able to collect.
- Preserve the clothing and footwear of the victim. Handle these as little as possible.
- Preserve anything used to comfort or warm the victim – e.g. a blanket.
- Note in writing the state of the clothing of both alleged victim and alleged perpetrator.
- Note injuries in writing.
- Make full written notes on the conditions and attitudes of the people involved in the incident. Make these as factual as possible, rather than interpretive, e.g. “her/his voice was high pitched, shaky, barely audible” rather than “s/he sounded afraid”.
- Note and preserve any obvious evidence such as footprints or fingerprints.
- Secure the room and do not allow anyone to enter until the police arrive.

In any instance where a victim is seriously injured and is taken to hospital,

- Ask that a sample of blood be taken before any transfusion is given, as a transfusion will invalidate evidence in relation to blood.

Appendix 2 Responding to allegations procedure



Appendix 3 Referrers Checklist

This checklist will assist in making sure you have adequate information when making a referral to the Safeguarding Service - 0300 500 80 80.

	Essential	Desirable
Name of Alerter		√
Contact details of Alerter		√
Relationship to victim		√
Organisation of Alerter		√
Name (of Vulnerable Adult)	√	
Address of Vulnerable Adult	√	
Address, if different, of place of alleged abuse	√	
Contact details of vulnerable	√	
Contact details of vulnerability (older, frail, Mental health, learning difficulties etc.)	√	
Date of birth or age		√
Gender		√
Ethnicity		√
Religion		√
Capacity and understanding		√
Communication needs (sensory loss language other)		√
Name of Alleged perpetrator		√
Address of Alleged perpetrator		√
Date of Birth of Alleged perpetrator		√
Details of referral- You need to consider the following so that the person taking the referral can gain adequate information		
Nature of abuse/incident	√	
When did it happen?	√	
Where did it happen?	√	
Was anyone else involved?		√
Was the incident witnessed?		√
Have you had previous concerns regarding this person? If so what?		√
Does the vulnerable adult know you are making this referral?	√	
Have you done anything to assist the vulnerable adult at this time? (what actions have been taken?)	√	
How do you want to be contacted in the future?	√	