



## **RHL Adult Safeguarding Policy**

RHL Safeguarding Policy February 2024 – Review February 2024 and each year thereafter ( or whenever significant changes or a local incident occurs which highlights that a review is needed). This policy is displayed on our website and visible to all staff, volunteers and the general public

### ***To ensure the prevention and protection of adults at risk from abuse***

**The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of adults at risk. To this end it is the responsibility of all staff to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect, and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person/agency.**

No Secrets, 2000

**No-one shall be subjected to torture or to in-human or degrading treatment or punishment**

Human Rights Act, 1998

## **1 Statement**

1.1 RHL considers it the duty of staff and volunteers to protect adults at risk with whom they come into contact from abuse.

Safeguarding is underpinned by [the six principles](#):

- Empowerment - people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent
- Prevention - it's better to take action before harm occurs
- Proportionality - least intrusive responses appropriate to presenting risks
- 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



RHL is committed to comply with national and local guidance and single and multi-agency policies and procedures to safeguard adults including:

-[Care Act 2014](#)

-[HIPS 4LSAB Safeguarding Adults Multi-Agency Policy, Process and Guidance, July 2023](#)

-Disclosure, Vetting & Barring Guidance Criminal record checks: [guidance for employers](#)

## 2 Introduction

2.1 RHL is involved in providing services for a wide range of people. Some of these people are likely to be 'adults at risk.'

2.2 This policy is based on No Secrets, the national guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect adults at risk from abuse (Department of Health, 2000)

2.3 RHL has obligations to strive to protect adults at risk who it may believe to be abused or at risk of abuse or neglect.

2.4 The policy and procedures have been developed to assist staff and volunteers in acting on reported or suspected abuse.

2.5 Depending upon the nature of particular services or the requirements of particular funders or partner agencies, the policy and procedures may be supplemented by local procedures.

## 3 Definitions

3.1 No Secrets defines an adult at risk as:

***'A person (over 18) who is or may be in need of community care 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.'***

\* Disability includes sensory impairment, physical impairment, learning difficulties, mental illness. The list is not exhaustive

3.2 No Secrets defines abuse as:

***'Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.'***



## **4 Categories of Abuse**

4.1 No Secrets recognises six categories of abuse:

4.1.1 physical abuse, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions

4.1.2 sexual abuse, including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting;

4.1.3 psychological abuse, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks;

4.1.4 financial or material abuse, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits;

4.1.5 neglect and acts of omission, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating; and

4.1.6 discriminatory abuse, including racist, sexist, which is based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

## **5 Responsibilities of Staff and Volunteers**

5.1 Paid staff and volunteers have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a person at risk. However, they are not responsible for diagnosing, investigating or providing a therapeutic response to abuse. In addition, not all concerns relate to abuse, there may well be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind and consider what is known about the vulnerable person and his or her circumstances. No action should be taken without discussion with a member of the management team.

### **Safer Recruitment of Staff**

- RHL is committed to safeguarding and protecting all adults at risk by implementing robust safer recruitment practices (as guided by Hampshire Safeguarding Partnership)
- RHL will use safer recruitment procedures to identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with adults at risk and using Disclosure and Barring Services at the levels required by UK Government guidance. This guidance can be found at:



- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dbs-check-eligibility-guidance-for-the-charity-sector-and-overseas-aid-organisations>
- RHL will conduct appropriate recruitment and employment practices including references, right to work checks, ID and appropriate DBS checks at the recruitment stage.
- RHL will respond to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process
- RHL will respond to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role
- RHL will ensure all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction which includes child protection
- RHL also consider other policies such as Equality and Diversity and Equal Opportunities during our Safer Recruitment process.
- RHL will provide regular training (including updates to policies and procedures) to all new and existing staff

Guidance for training and useful training tools can be found here: [Safeguarding adults | Health and social care | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

## **6 Disclosure of Abuse**

6.1 If a person at risk discloses that they are being abused or any service user discloses that they are involved in abuse of a vulnerable person, action should continue as in Section 8. All action must proceed urgently and without delay.

## **7 Suspicion of Abuse**

7.1 There may be circumstances when a volunteer or member of staff suspects that an adult at risk is being abused or neglected.

7.2 It is vital that any anyone who suspects an adult at risk is being neglected or abused discusses the situation immediately with his or her line manager or another member of the management team. Action should continue as in Section 9.



## **8 Action on Disclosure of Abuse**

8.1 There should always be the opportunity to discuss welfare concerns with and seek advice from colleagues, managers and other agencies, but:

- Never delay emergency action to protect an adult at risk
- Always record in writing concerns about an adult at risk's welfare, whether or not further action is taken
- Always record in writing discussions about an adult at risk's welfare.
- At the close of discussion, always reach clear and explicit recorded agreement about who will be taking what action, or that no further action will be taken.

8.2 At all times action must proceed urgently.

8.3 A staff member or volunteer informed of abuse should remind the service user that the RHL cannot guarantee confidentiality where a person at risk is at risk of abuse or further abuse.

8.4 Volunteers should consult with the staff member co-ordinating their service before taking any action.

8.5 Additionally, all action taken following a disclosure of abuse should be discussed in advance with a member of the management team.

8.6 In circumstances where a service user declines to disclose, despite some work having been done towards disclosing, it may be necessary to report the alleged abuse without the service user's agreement. In these circumstances, a service user must be notified in advance of the decision to report to social services.

8.7 Any staff member may report a disclosure of abuse to social services irrespective of the opinion of other staff.

8.8 It is important for staff and volunteers to make written records of any incidents or concerns that they have as soon as possible and if appropriate to include sketches of sites and sizes of injuries. It is also important to make a record of conversations with the vulnerable person using the same language the person at risk used especially names used for body parts or sexual acts.

8.9 Full written records must be maintained of all disclosures and actions following disclosure.

## **9 Action on Suspicion of Abuse**

9.1 There should always be the opportunity to discuss welfare concerns with and seek advice from colleagues, managers and other agencies.



The escalation policy is:

Report directly to CEO (RHL Safeguarding Officer). He will advise appropriate action and detail what needs to be done and the formal reporting procedure (detailed below). The CEO will take responsibility of reporting to the appropriate authority / organisation (detailed below)

The CEO (RHL Safeguarding Officer) will record details reported to him and ask for appropriate evidence and statements. In his absence, staff and volunteers can report to the appropriate authority / organisation (detailed below). They must also report to the RHL Chair of Trustees at the earliest opportunity.

The CEO (RHL Safeguarding Officer) will keep a record of all referrals and advise the Chair of the Board. If an allegation is made against a staff member, this must be made to the CEO who will involve the RHL Chair of trustees immediately. This is covered in the RHL disciplinary policy and procedures

RHL staff and volunteers must:

- Never delay emergency action to protect an adult at risk
  - Always record in writing concerns about an adult at risk's welfare, whether or not further action is taken
  - Always record in writing discussions about an adult at risk's welfare.
  - At the close of discussion, always reach clear and explicit recorded agreement about who will be taking what action, or that no further action will be taken.
- 9.2 At all times action must proceed urgently.
  - 9.3 Volunteers should consult with the staff member co-ordinating their service before taking any action.
  - 9.4 Additionally, all action taken following suspicion of abuse should be discussed in advance with a member of the management team.
  - 9.5 In all cases of suspected abuse, the manager and staff member should discuss whether issues relevant to different cultures and lifestyles have any bearing on the matter.
  - 9.6 As an organisation RHL welcomes the fact that people and lifestyles are diverse and does not make judgements about the acceptability or otherwise of lifestyles. However, it is important that this philosophy does not stand in the way of the organisation's responsibility to protect people at risk from harm.



- 9.7 Any staff member may report a suspicion of abuse to social services irrespective of the opinion of other staff.
- 9.8 It is important for staff and volunteers to make written records of any incidents or concerns that they have as soon as possible and if appropriate to include sketches of sites and sizes of injuries. It is also important to make a record of conversations with the person at risk using the same language the person at risk used especially names used for body parts or sexual acts.
- 9.9 Full written records must be maintained of all disclosures and actions following disclosure.

## **Management of Allegations**

RHL will manage allegations relating to adults in accordance with the Safeguarding Allegations Management Advisor (SAMA). Detailed stages of management and action can be found here:

[4LSAB Multi-Agency Guidance on Managing Allegations Against People in a Position of Trust \(hampshiresab.org.uk\)](https://www.hampshiresab.org.uk/4LSAB-Multi-Agency-Guidance-on-Managing-Allegations-Against-People-in-a-Position-of-Trust)

## **10 Making a Referral**

10.1 The Area/Local Adult Services office is responsible for co-ordinating the investigation of all cases of suspected abuse of adults at risk within their areas, unless the police assume that responsibility where a crime has been committed.

10.2 All RHL staff have the responsibility of informing the relevant Adult Services department of concerns over the abuse or neglect of adults at risk. A member of the management team should also be informed.

10.3 Managers should work within the following timescales for reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse:

- Immediate if the person at risk is at risk of serious physical harm, or a serious criminal act has taken place, and evidence will need to be kept safe
- Within 24 Hours if it relates to a specific incident which is, or may be still going on, or may happen again
- Within 7 Days if it is a more general concern, which does not indicate immediate harm.





## **Confidentiality**

Guidance on information sharing/confidentiality can be found here:

<https://www.hampshiresab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Care-Act-Briefing-Note-Information-Sharing.pdf>

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/practice/sharing-information#does-not-want-you-to-share>

## **11 Support to Staff and Volunteers**

11.1 RHL will support staff and volunteers in these circumstances. If the Adult Services department need further involvement from staff or volunteers following a report of abuse, a member of the management team will discuss with the Adult Services department the nature of their needs and how they might be met.

## **12 Allegation of Abuse Made Against a Staff Member or Volunteer**

12.1 Staff and volunteers may be subject to abuse allegations.

- RHL and its staff are duty bound to follow and administer Safeguarding Adults and Children Policies and Procedures and will act strictly within the law at all times
- If the allegation is directly from the service user, we will provide information on how to escalate further either as a complaint against RHL or if a safeguarding issue, relevant contact methods for Safeguarding Teams authorities
- RHL will immediately contract the relevant Safeguarding Teams to advise of any allegation
- RHL will follow relevant internal disciplinary procedures against the individual including support until the allegation is resolved.
- RHL will comply with any requests from the Safeguarding Teams
- An internal review will take place after resolution regardless of whether it was proven or unfounded

## **13 Confidentiality**

13.1 Confidentiality is central to the work of RHL and the attention of all staff and volunteers is drawn to the Confidentiality Policy.





## 14 Preventing Abuse by Staff and Volunteers

14.1 It is important that any staff or volunteers who are likely to be working alone with people at risk are thoroughly vetted before being employed. At RHL this means as well as references being checked there will also be a requirement for offences to be declared and a Criminal Records Bureau / DBS check undertaken.

14.2 It should be noted that having a criminal record does not prevent someone from being recruited as a staff member or volunteer in all circumstances. Staff should seek the advice of their manager in cases of doubt. 14.3 It may be very hard for a worker to report a concern about a colleague to a line manager but, as with all the other difficulties people will come across, the safety and protection of a vulnerable person must be the priority in any decision that is made.

## 15 Safeguarding Contacts

### Hampshire:

Adult Services Hampshire  
During office hours: 0845 603 5630  
Outside office hours: 0845 600 4555

Email address: [safeguarding.admin@hants.gov.uk](mailto:safeguarding.admin@hants.gov.uk)

For professional safeguarding advice please contact: **Safeguarding Professional line: 01962 847214**

E-mail address: [adult.safeguarding.unit@hants.gov.uk](mailto:adult.safeguarding.unit@hants.gov.uk)

### Berkshire:

<https://berks.proceduresonline.com/>

Berkshire covers 5 regions: Bracknell Forest, Slough, Royal Borough of Maidenhead and Slough, Wokingham and West Berkshire. Each unitary council has its own Safeguarding Teams and details can be found clicking on the link

### Surrey:

<https://www.surreysab.org.uk/>

Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) is a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and details of individual teams can be accessed by clicking the link



## Data Protection

RHL will follow its policy on GDPR at all times. The policy can be found here:

[gdpr\\_procedure July 2023.pdf](#)

### RHL:

Safeguarding Lead: Jim Ruddy, CEO RHL

Contact No: 01252957430

Email: [jim.ruddy@rhl.org.uk](mailto:jim.ruddy@rhl.org.uk)

Website: [www.rhl.org.uk](http://www.rhl.org.uk)

Sign off:

Jim Ruddy  
CEO  
RHL  
February 2024