

Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Harm Policy



This policy has been designed to provide guidance for Mortlake Community Association (MCA) staff and volunteers in the event that they suspect abuse or are party to a disclosure of abuse from a service user. As a charity that works with adults and predominantly with older people our trustees recognise that we have a number of legal responsibilities, and a duty of care to safeguard adults who access our services and minimise the risk of harm.

MCA runs a successful community programme to improve and enhance the lives of Mortlake's residents. A small team of staff and volunteers provide groups and activities to suit a variety of interests within the local community. Everyone is welcomed and valued and our excellent tutors and committed volunteer group leaders inspire and encourage the many people who come to us.

Our core charitable objectives are:

- combating isolation and loneliness;
- improving physical and mental health wellbeing;
- promoting greener, healthier and culturally enriched lifestyles.

Our Commitment

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. MCA is committed to ensuring people's individual rights and freedoms are protected through opposing neglect, abuse, exploitation, harassment, and discrimination, and facilitating a safe and welcoming environment and activities and support delivered by well trained staff and volunteers. We believe a safe organisation is one where we are all aware of our responsibilities to safeguard adults at risk. MCA is committed to ensuring that adults at risk that we support through our activities are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of such abuse. This Policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect adults at risk and should be read in conjunction with the MCA Equal Opportunities Policy and the MCA Health and Safety Policy.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Trustees, contractors, service users and visitors. All staff, volunteers, Trustees, contractors, service users, and visitors are required to report any suspected abuse and be aware of the appropriate reporting and support procedure for safeguarding whilst carrying out activity on behalf of MCA.

Our Nominated Safeguarding Person (NSP) will discharge their safeguarding functions in a way that ensures that adults at risk are safeguarded from harm and promotes their welfare. The NSP is responsible for following up any suspected reports of abuse, collating the information from the disclosure or observation and referring to adult social care or other external bodies.

Nominated Safeguarding Person (NSP): Timea Fabian – timi@mortlakecommunityassociation.org.uk

Nominated Safeguarding Trustee (NST): Geri Cox - gerimcox@gmail.com

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The purpose of this policy:

- To protect adults who attend MCA's community programme to ensure that everyone using the building is treated with respect and is safe and free from harm.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to adult safeguarding.
- To set out the process to follow when a concern is raised and to ensure that names and contact details of designated trustee and manager are available to all users on request.

Definition

An adult at risk as described by the Care Standards Act 2000 is a person aged 18 or over who has a condition of the following type:

- A learning or physical disability.
- A physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise including addiction to alcohol or drugs.
- A reduction in physical or mental capacity.

The Care Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as a person who is 18 years+

- who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs).
- is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect.
- who as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Abuse can include:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Psychological/Emotional/Mental
- Financial and material
- Neglect and act of omission
- Discriminatory
- Organisational
- Modern Day Slavery
- Domestic Violence
- Self Neglect – including hoarding

Also relevant but not included in the Care Act:

- Forced marriage
- FGM
- Radicalisation
- Cyber-bullying
- Mate/hate crime

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All our activities are aimed at adults, some of whom will be adults at risk. The context in which we work directly with adults at risk include:

- Connect More to Technology – a series of courses in computer use
- Balance and Stretch group with physical and mental agility exercises.
- The Mortlake Community Singers
- The Drawing Group.
- Embroidery Workshop (a Mortlake Tapestry for the 21st century)
- A Reminiscence Group meets once a month where local people can meet and share memories and explore Mortlake's history.
- MCA day trips to local places of interest
- MCA's Community Garden at Alder Road
- Mortlake Community Hub is a socially inclusive community hub that provides simple, nutritious lunch, company and support.

All activities incorporate a social cup of tea and chat. This social aspect is just as important as the activity itself and participants look forward to seeing each other and develop new friendships within the community.

Staff, volunteers, trustees and contractors at MCA will be working with adults at risk from time to time. We are committed to recruiting safely, taking up references and completing DBS checks where required. Safeguarding training is mandatory for all staff and key volunteers. Staff may also access higher level safeguarding training when necessary to their role. Identified staff and volunteers will undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services check.

MCA undertake to ensure the following:

- The welfare of the adult at risk is paramount.
- All adults at risk have the right to protection from abuse.
- MCA promotes a culture of "Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility." Everyone involved in MCA activities has a responsibility to be aware and behave and act appropriately.
- A risk assessment is carried out for all activities and events in order to ensure the safety and welfare of adults at risk. MCA will designate a person who will be in attendance as a safeguarding lead for each activity and event.
- Staff are aware of indicators of abuse and know how to share their concerns appropriately.
- All allegations and suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- MCA staff involved in delivering activities complete Level 1 Safeguarding Awareness training either online or classroom based at least every three years. NSP and NST will complete Level 2 Safeguarding Awareness training.
- We take all reasonable steps to recruit our volunteers safely, taking up references, and once in post inducting, managing and supervising them regularly.
- All staff have read and understood the Safeguarding Policy and are aware of the indicators of abuse (see Appendix One).

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- All staff comply with the MCA Volunteer Policy.
- MCA policies and procedures are available on request.
- Service users are clear how to raise a concern about MCA staff and the service/activity they are delivering.

Recruitment, Induction and Supervision of Staff and Volunteers

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable individuals are prevented from having any involvement with MCA:

- MCA commitment to safeguarding adults at risk of harm will be stated in all volunteer recruitment.
- A written application form is to be completed for applicants to all posts, including volunteers. Applicants will be asked if they have ever had any complaints of abuse against them.
- Prior to appointment two references will be taken.
- All new staff and volunteers will read and understand this Safeguarding Policy as part of their induction process. We will ensure all staff and volunteers have a clear understanding of their role and responsibility with regard to confidentiality and safeguarding issues.
- Staff and volunteers will be able to identify the signs of abuse (see Appendix One) and will be confident about the steps to take and to report any concerns.
- Working unsupervised with adults at risk or undertaking other regulated activities can only be carried out with the condition of a current and valid DBS check.
- Supervision and support of all volunteers will include monitoring of safeguarding practice and reviews of progress.

Code of conduct

There is a code of conduct outlining good practice when working with everyone but in particular adults at risk of harm. This makes it clear that bullying, shouting, abusive language, harassment, racism, sexism or any form of discrimination are not acceptable at any time and will not be tolerated. (See Appendix Two)

Whistleblowing Policy

MCA is committed to being open, honest and accountable. It encourages a free and open culture in its dealings between the Trustees, staff and volunteers. Our Whistleblowing Policy sets out clear whistleblowing procedures within a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting welfare to be addressed.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

MCA is committed to a policy of protecting the rights and privacy of individuals, voluntary and community group members, volunteers, staff and others in accordance with The Data Protection Act 1998. The policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Trustees and contractors. Any breach of The Data Protection Act 1998 or MCA Data Protection Policy is considered to be an offence, and, in that event, disciplinary procedures will apply.

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Reporting a concern or disclosure

All staff, volunteers, Trustees and contractors have the following responsibilities in helping to identify welfare concerns and indicators of possible abuse or neglects:

Recognise – be aware and report any concerns or observations or disclosure received. If anyone discloses possible abuse, neglect, or harm the person they tell should listen attentively to what is being disclosed, conduct a calm conversation, reassure that they have done the right thing and inform them that you must pass their information on but only those who need to know. It is not the staff/volunteers role to investigate or gather evidence, or to assess whether the safeguarding concern should be reported. It is simply their responsibility to report the concern to the NSP/NST.

Report when they observe or have concerns about an adult at risk to:

- The NSP – Timea Fabian, 07494 297 690 or timi@mortlakecommunityassociation.org.uk
- The NST – Geri Cox, 07944 512 995 or gerimcox@gmail.com
- Adult Safeguarding is governed by the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (See Appendix Three) which underpins the process where the adult does not necessarily have the capacity. If after discussion with the adult at risk, they refuse to consider any intervention, their wishes will be respected unless:
 - There is a public interest, for example, not acting will put other adults or children at risk.
 - There is a duty of care to intervene, for example, a crime has been or may be committed.
 - They are not considered to have mental capacity.
- Social Services at https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/adult_social_care/safeguarding_adults/report_adult_abuse#report_online or by email to adultsocialservices@richmond.gov.uk or by calling 020 8891 7971

ALWAYS PHONE 999 IF THE VULNERABLE ADULT IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

Record in writing basic information including:

- name and contact of the adult at risk
- details of the allegation or the grounds of suspecting abuse
- the date and time of the incident
- the people involved and details of any observed injuries/their appearance and what they have said.

Record should not delay reporting. All records need to be kept securely and the information shared only with the chair and external agency. It is not the role of NSP/board to investigate or assess.

Refer – The concern should be referred as soon as possible to the Richmond Adult Safeguarding Contact, who will advise next steps. The role of MCA is to receive the report, record it and action as soon as possible, co-operating with any further investigation.

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Conclusion

MCA's policy and procedures for the safeguarding of adults at risk will be reviewed annually. Its prime aim is to prevent inappropriate behaviour and to prevent injurious situations from arising while having proper procedures in place should it occur.

Updated: February 2023

Next review: February 2024

Appendix One: Signs and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

Abuse can include physical, financial, material, sexual, psychological, discriminatory, emotional abuse, and neglect. It can take place in any setting and can be perpetuated by anyone.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal, or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship, and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. The main types of abuse are:

- **Physical abuse** - including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse** - including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, could not consent, or was pressured into consenting.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Discriminatory abuse** - including race, sex, culture, religion, politics, that is based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment and hate crime.
- **Institutional abuse** - requires specific mention simply to highlight that adults placed in any kind of care home or day care establishment are potentially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. This can be especially so when care standards and practices fall below an acceptable level.

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- **Multiple forms of abuse** - Multiple forms of abuse may occur in an ongoing relationship or an abusive service setting to one person, or to more than one person at a time, making it important to look beyond single incidents or breaches in standards, to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence or ignorance.

Domestic abuse is 'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are, or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.' It may include a range of abusive behaviours. It occurs in all sections of society irrespective of race, culture, nationality, religion, sexuality, disability, age, class or educational level. It includes incidents where extended family members may condone or share in the pattern of abuse e.g. forced marriage, female genital mutilation and crimes rationalized as punishing women for bringing 'dishonour' to the family. It is important to recognise that vulnerable adults may be the victims of Domestic Abuse themselves or be affected by it occurring within their household.

This is likely to have a serious effect on their physical and mental wellbeing.

Possible signs of abuse include:

Physical abuse signs

- A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries
- Bruising in well protected areas, or clustered from repeated striking
- Lack of medical attention when an injury is present
- Finger marks
- Burns of unusual location or type
- Injuries found at different states of healing
- Injury shape similar to an object
- Injuries to head/face/scalp
- History of GP or agency hopping, or reluctance to seek help
- Accounts which vary with time or are inconsistent with physical evidence
- Weight loss due to malnutrition, or rapid weight gain
- Ulcers, bed sores and being left in wet clothing
- Drowsiness due to too much medication, or lack of medication causing recurring crises/hospital admissions

Sexual abuse signs

- Disclosure or partial disclosure (use of phrases such as 'It's a secret')
- Medical problems, e.g. Genital infections, pregnancy, difficulty walking or sitting
- Disturbed behaviour e.g. depression, sudden withdrawal from activities
- Loss of previous skills, sleeplessness or nightmares, self-injury
- Showing fear or aggression to one particular person

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- Inappropriately seductive behaviour
- Loss of appetite or difficulty in keeping food down
- Behaviour of others towards the vulnerable adult
- Circumstances – e.g. two service users found in a toilet area, one in a distressed state

Psychological/emotional signs

- Isolation
- Unkempt, unwashed, smell
- Over meticulous
- Inappropriately dressed
- Withdrawn, agitated, anxious or not wanting to be touched
- Belongings or money going missing
- Tearfulness
- Unexplained paranoia, or excessive fears
- Low self-esteem
- Untreated injuries or medical problems
- Poor personal hygiene
- Not attending / no longer enjoying their activities/events
- Change in the behaviour or confidence
- Fear of a particular group of people or individual
- Someone else ways speaks for the person and doesn't allow them to make their own choices

Discriminatory abuse signs

- Lack of respect shown to an individual
- Signs of substandard service offered to an individual
- Exclusion from rights afforded to others, such as health, education, criminal justice

Appendix Two – Volunteer Code of Conduct

Our approach to volunteering is based on commitment from both MCA and volunteers.

MCA will

- ensure that volunteers are properly trained and supported to fully contribute to the MCA's work
- expect staff to support and encourage volunteers
- recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet their expectations
- provide a safe working environment
- apply our feedback and complaints procedure if there is any problem

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- apply our diversity and equal opportunities policy
- review your volunteering with us after 12 weeks

Volunteers will

- carry out their volunteer role activities with due care and diligence
- work reliably to the best of their ability, and give us as much warning as possible whenever they cannot work when expected
- follow all reasonable requests by staff who support and manage their volunteer role activities
- behave responsibly and act appropriately within the boundaries of the volunteer role
- treat all staff, volunteers, tutors, service users with respect
- act within the law
- maintain the trust and confidence and uphold the reputation of MCA
- be aware of MCA policies and their meaning
- immediately report any injury or accident occurring whilst volunteering for MCA.
- report any loss or damage to personal or MCA property to staff
- wear any protective clothing/equipment provided to them for their volunteer role
- respect, maintain and care for any property belonging to or paid for by MCA.
- return all property belonging to MCA on or before the last date of their volunteering.

Volunteers will not

- use threatening, discriminatory, aggressive or violent behaviour or language
- use illegal drugs or drink alcohol at work, nor be under the influence of them
- harass or bully anyone
- hazard the safety or well-being of other volunteers and staff
- criticise the organisation to customers / the general public / on social media

Confidentiality

Volunteers will:

- respect the need for confidentiality of information held and communicated about the MCA and any of its business.

Volunteers will not:

- pass to any person outside MCA any document relating to service users, other volunteers or staff.
- disclose any information on issues shared by a service user or other volunteer **unless** there is a risk to that person or others; illegal activity has been undertaken; if there are safeguarding concerns or if the service user, volunteer or staff member gives permission in writing that disclosure to a third party can take place.
- publish any materials containing photographs of an individual without his/ her express permission or the permission of a parent or guardian if appropriate.
- visit service users in their home, will not exchange contact details and will not befriend service users on social media or accept friend request by a service user.

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- discuss personal information of service users with families, friends, or other service users or the general public at any time unless they have been given specific consent to do so by the individual or their legal guardian.

Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of a volunteer's relationship with the MCA or other corrective action.

Online safety and social media code of conduct

The MCA expects staff and volunteers to behave in a civilised nature online and will not tolerate any of the following online behavior:

- Posting defamatory content about MCA staff, volunteers or participants
- Complaining about MCA values and methods on social media
- Posting content containing confidential information regarding the MCA or any members of its community
- Contacting MCA staff, volunteers and participants through social media, including requesting to 'follow' or 'friend' them, or sending them private messages
- Creating or joining private groups or chats that victimise or harass a member of staff, volunteer, participants or the MCA in general
- Posting images of any staff, volunteers, participants without their prior consent

Appendix Three – Mental Capacity Act 2005

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 is a law that protects vulnerable people over the age of 16 around decision-making. It says that: every adult, whatever their disability, has the right to make their own decisions wherever possible.

The 5 main principles of the Mental Capacity Act

1. Always assume the person is able to make the decision until you have proof they are not.
2. Try everything possible to support the person make the decision themselves.
3. Do not assume the person does not have capacity to make a decision just because they make a decision that you think is unwise or wrong.
4. If you make a decision for someone who cannot make it themselves, the decision must always be in their best interests.
5. Any decisions, treatment or care for someone who lacks capacity must always follow the path that is the least restrictive of their basic rights and freedoms.

It's also important to remember that a person may have capacity for some decisions but not others, or they may not have capacity right now but may regain it in the future with support. This means all capacity decisions should be regularly reviewed to make sure they still reflect the person's ability to make decisions.

Supporting someone to make a decision

Before deciding that someone lacks the capacity to make a decision, all practical and appropriate steps must be taken to help them make the decision themselves. The **Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice** includes four main points to help someone make a decision:

1. Provide relevant information
2. Communicate in an appropriate way
3. Make the person feel at ease
4. Support the person

Making a best interests decision

After all steps have been taken to support someone to make their own decision, if the person is assessed as lacking capacity to make that particular decision, then a 'best interests' decision must be made.

Best interests checklist

The Mental Capacity Act sets out a best interests checklist, which must be followed when making a best interests decision:

1. Will the person regain capacity?
2. Involve the person.
3. Consult all relevant people.
4. Consider all the information.
5. Do not make any assumptions.
6. Consider past, present and future wishes.
7. Always pick the very least restrictive option.

Involve the person you are making a best interests decision for

Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA)

If a person has no family or friends for the decision-maker to ask about important decisions like serious medical treatment or changes of accommodation, then an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate must represent the person's views.

They are a legal safeguard for people who lack the capacity to make big decisions.

[What is The Mental Capacity Act? | Mencap](#)

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Support and Advice

Domestic Abuse – where to get help in Richmond

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/community_safety/domestic_abuse/where_to_get_help_for_domestic_abuse

Support for those affected by the abuse of an older person Hourglass is a national charity that provides support and advice. It's 24-hour helpline is a confidential service that provides information and support to an older person or anyone concerned about an elder person experiencing or recovering from any form of abuse or neglect 0208 891 7971 <https://wearehourglass.org/hourglass-services>

Hate Crime Richmond Council works with the police and Stop Hate UK to reduce incidents of hate crime in the borough. Reporting hate crime is essential in making sure no one suffers in silence. You can report a hate crime or incident in the following ways:

- Call 999 if it is an emergency and a crime is in progress.
- Call 101 in a non-emergency to report, whether you're a victim, witness or making a report for someone else.
- Report it online via the [Met Police website](#)
- If you want to report crime completely anonymously to the police, visit [Crime Stoppers website](#)
- Stop Hate UK offers a 24-hour telephone number for people wanting to report hate crime. They also offer support and advice to those affected by hate crime and discrimination. Call 0800 138 1625 or visit [Stop Hate UK website](#)
- For a confidential 24-hour helpline for young people under 18, call 0808 801 0576 or text 07717 989 025 or visit [Call Hate Out](#)

Papyrus is the national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide. Suicide is the biggest killer of young people, male and female, under 35 in the UK. Papyrus offers a range of support including the Hope Line, that provides confidential support and advice to young people struggling with thoughts of suicide, and anyone that is worried about them – professionals, family, friends. 0800 068 4141.

Men's Advice Line - For male domestic abuse survivors. Tel: 0808 801 0327

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline Tel: 0800 999 5428

Respond - Respond provides a range of services to victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse who have learning disabilities, and training and support to those working with them. Tel: 020 7383 0700 or 0808 808 0700 (Helpline) Email: services@respond.org.uk www.respond.org.uk

Victim Support - Provides practical advice and help, emotional support and reassurance to those who have suffered the effects of a crime. Tel: 0808 168 9111 www.victimsupport.com