

SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS

Aim of Policy

This document outlines the agency's policy on safeguarding vulnerable clients from possible abuse.

Policy statement

The agency recognises that all persons must be safeguarded from all forms of abuse wherever and however it might occur: from within the family or others or from abusive behaviour on the part of other staff. Trueblue Nurses takes every possible action to prevent abuse and to deal with it promptly and effectively if it occurs, or is reported as occurring.

Legislation

The agency undertakes to work in compliance with No Secrets (the Department of Health guidance on multi-agency policies and other national policy documents and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse) as well as observing the relevant sections of the CQC's Essential Standards. The agency works in accordance with its local Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults protocols and multi-agency working guidelines.

The agency recognises that persons who might lack mental capacity are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitations. It is accordingly mindful of the need to follow the principles and practice guidance that has accompanied the Mental Capacity Act 2005. These apply particularly to investigations of possible abuse in which it is important to seek means of ascertaining the experiences and views of any victim or indeed alleged perpetrator who might lack capacity, for example by seeking the services of independent advocates.

The agency makes all staff aware of the policy and instructs them in the specific procedures for preventing, observing and reporting suspicions or signs of abuse. In reporting possible abuse, staff are made fully aware of the agency's whistleblowing policy, which recognises that the safety of persons is always their paramount concern. All clients and stakeholders are made aware of the agency's determination to take action where it comes across abuse.

Principles

The policy is based on the agency's conviction that:

- a. Vulnerable people are at risk of abuse in varied forms
- b. They are in a position to be abused by different people, including family members, friends, stranger and possibly agency staff.
- c. It has a duty of care to do everything possible to prevent, report and tackle abuse wherever it is encountered.

Recognising Abuse

The agency expects its staff to be vigilant regarding the welfare of persons. It provides staff training so that they can recognise the risks and signs of abuse. Trueblue Nurses acknowledges that abuse may take any of the following forms and more than one might be present in an abusive situation:

Physical abuse

Neglect

Psychological abuse

Financial or material abuse

Sexual abuse

Racial, discriminatory, religious or cultural abuse

Failure to prevent self-harm

Inhuman or degrading treatment

Reporting Abuse

Any member of staff who knows or believes that abuse is occurring has an obligation to report it as quickly as possible to their manager. If the victim requests that the matter should not be reported, the staff member should inform them that they have a duty to report the matter. The staff member should then reassure the person that the matter will not be taken further than the manager without their consent unless there are exceptional circumstances. Trueblue Nurses will take vigorous action against anyone trying to suppress a possible report of abuse.

Action in Emergency Situations

If the situation is an emergency, with a person in immediate danger, staff are instructed to call for assistance immediately. They should give any necessary first aid and contact appropriate emergency services if necessary. If the abuser remains present and poses a threat to any agency staff present as well as the victim, staff are not expected to put themselves at risk of violence or other harm. They should then put into action agency procedures on how to respond to abusive, aggressive or violent behaviour, which forms part of the agency's policies on health and safety of its staff.

Immediate Action to be Taken by Managers

When a manager receives a report of suspected, imminent or actual abuse, an investigation must be opened as soon as possible. The staff member investigating the abuse takes steps to arrange for the person to be interviewed and, if possible,

to give their consent to further investigation and action. If the person refuses consent, their wishes must be respected unless the manager judges that they or others are in serious danger or if they are clearly incapable of making an informed decision. In cases of proven or suspected incapacity, the manager acts in accordance with the 'best interests' principle laid down in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and pursues the matter by obtaining the services of an independent advocate or another independent representative to elicit the person's views and wishes. If the suspected abuser is a member of the agency's staff, the manager takes appropriate steps under the disciplinary procedure. The agency expects its staff to take all possible steps to co-operate with further investigations by the local authority safeguarding unit and the police if involved.

Referral to External Agencies

Where the vulnerable person is thought to be at risk of further abuse, the situation should be reported as soon as possible to the manager of the local authority safeguarding unit who will take a decision on whether further investigation is needed under the local authority's safeguarding procedures.

Reporting to the Police

If it is suspected that a criminal act might have been committed, the situation will be reported to the police. Every effort should be made not to interfere with possible evidence.

Action to be Taken in the Absence of Consent

Where there has been an allegation of abuse against a member of the agency's staff the manager will initiate an investigation within its disciplinary policy. The agency will take any necessary steps to safeguard the client by keeping the situation under review in case it becomes possible or necessary to take further action.

Keeping Records

The agency ensure that all details associated with allegations of abuse are recorded clearly and accurately. The records are kept securely and the agency's rules on confidentiality carefully followed. Reports are made as required to other safeguarding agencies.

Training

All staff receive training in recognising abuse and carrying out their responsibilities under this policy. Training is regularly updated.

Recruitment

Trueblue Nurses takes great care in the recruitment of staff, and carries out all possible checks on recruits to ensure that they are of a high standard, and co-operates in all Government initiatives regarding the sharing of information on nurses who are found to be unsuitable to work with vulnerable people.

Trueblue Nurses policy for Safeguarding of Persons from abuse
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