

Vulnerable Adults at Risk Policy

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Part 1: Policy

1: Introduction

This policy document will apply to CommUNITY Barnet and all its subsidiary services including Healthwatch Newham, Barnet Wellbeing Service, Enfield Connections, Young People Thrive, Brent HEPS. Organ and Blood Donation, Barnet Friends, Neighbourhood Watch, Traded Services which will be collectively referred to in this document as CommUNITY Barnet.

This policy compliments CommUNITY Barnet's Code of Conduct.

1.1 Statement of Intent

CommUNITY Barnet values and encourages the involvement of people who may be vulnerable, both in its own work and in the work of other organisations. Through its *Vulnerable Adults At Risk Policy*, CommUNITY Barnet is committed to promoting their well-being and enjoyment and protecting their health, safety and general welfare while in the company or care of CommUNITY Barnet staff or volunteers.

Vulnerable people may be involved with CommUNITY Barnet either as volunteers or as general service users. As a membership organisation CommUNITY Barnet also has members who work with vulnerable people. In promoting this policy CommUNITY Barnet is keen to take reasonable steps to

- provide a welcoming, secure and comfortable environment for the benefit of vulnerable people
- keep them safe from harm while in the care of its staff or volunteers
- comply with relevant statutory requirements
- support and protect the interests of staff and volunteers who have contact with, or access to, people who may be vulnerable.
- promote good practice within its membership

CommUNITY Barnet as an infrastructure organisation will also work in partnership with others, including the Adult Safeguarding Board to ensure that good practice is implemented.

1.2 Content

This policy has been compiled as a reference guide to CommUNITY Barnet policy and practices affecting vulnerable people. To help clarify the content, the document has been broken down into:

Policy: the guiding principles, definitions of those affected and the manner of implementation

Guidelines: instructions for best practice based on the guiding principles, which must be followed.

Although detailed, this policy is not intended to be comprehensive and as such does not attempt to deal with **all** the issues of working with people who may be vulnerable. Instead they are intended as a practical guide for staff and volunteers involved with them.

1.3 Legal Frameworks

Data Protection Act 1998
Human Rights Act 1998
Freedom of Information Act 2000
Care Standards Act 2000
Caldicott Principles
Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
National Health Service Act 1997
National Health Service Act 2006
Mental Capacity Act 2005
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups 2006
Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
The Care Act 2014
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards [amendment to the Mental Capacity Act]
Making safeguarding Personal [Care and Support Statutory Guidance revised 2017]
London Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures.

2: Scope of the policy and those affected

2.1 CommUNITY Barnet personnel affected

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers (including Trustees), and others representing CommUNITY Barnet who have contact with vulnerable people. This includes all projects which CommUNITY Barnet runs at any one time.

2.2 Vulnerable people

A vulnerable adult is anyone aged 18 or over who is, or maybe, unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protection him or herself against significant harm or exploitation (Lord Chancellors Department). They also need, or may need, extra support such as community care because they are elderly and frail or someone with a physical or learning disability or someone with a mental health problem.

It should be recognised that people who are vulnerable are able to cope in many situations, so sensitivity and common sense should be exercised.

2.3 Activities affected

Activities and involvement within the scope of this policy include:

- interviewing vulnerable volunteers or service users
- holding meetings with vulnerable volunteers or service users
- supporting and working with vulnerable people volunteering with CommUNITY Barnet
- working with vulnerable people in a residential setting
- working with vulnerable people during CommUNITY Barnet advice sessions

- working with vulnerable people during training sessions
- organising events or activities which involve vulnerable people
- any other activity that might involve substantial, unsupervised access to vulnerable people
- applications for membership of the organisation from groups that work with vulnerable people.

3: Guiding principles

3.1 In welcoming and working with people who are vulnerable CommUNITY Barnet aims to:

- provide a safe and trusted environment which safeguards anyone who comes into contact with it including beneficiaries, staff, and volunteers
- Set an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding so it is safe for those affected to come forward and report incidents and concerns with the assurance that they will be handled sensitively and properly
- provide a friendly welcome for them and promote their general welfare
- recognise their rights as individuals and treat them with dignity and respect
- consistently apply fair and objective methods of selecting employees, volunteers, and contractors
- plan activities involving vulnerable people with care to minimise risks to their health and safety
- raise awareness of the dangers to which vulnerable people may be susceptible
- develop appropriate procedures for responding to accidents, incidents and alleged or suspected harm including reporting to the relevant authorities and the Charity Commission.
- promote good practice amongst its members in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults
- record, store and use information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance.

Guidelines for good practice under each of the points listed above are set out in Part 2.

4: Implementation of the policy

4.1 Distribution of copies

Full copies of this policy will be distributed as a detailed reference guide to:

- Trustees
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Freelancers

The policy will be included in induction packs for all CommUNITY Barnet trustees and in the staff handbook. CommUNITY Barnet volunteers will receive a summary copy of this policy within their induction packs.

4.2 Training

A training programme to support the policy and good practice will be delivered to appropriate Trustees, staff, and volunteers.

New Trustees, staff and volunteers will receive training as part of their induction into CommUNITY Barnet.

CommUNITY Barnet will also assist its members and other local organisations working with vulnerable adults to access introductory and advanced training in safeguarding vulnerable people.

Part 2 – Guidelines

1: Welfare paramount

The fundamental principle, both in law and good practice, is that whenever the interests of a adult at risk are involved, their welfare must always be paramount. CommUNITY Barnet recognises this, and all staff and volunteers should seek to implement this principle.

2: People as individuals

CommUNITY Barnet recognises the need to be aware of each person's needs and capabilities when working with vulnerable volunteers or other service users.

Where practical, time should be taken to get to know each person individually in order to make their experience with CommUNITY Barnet more rewarding. It also enables CommUNITY Barnet to be more responsive should a adult at risk be suffering harm.

3: Recruitment and Selection of employees and volunteers

CommUNITY Barnet uses a safer recruitment checklist (Appendix 1) to support its recruitment and selection process.

CommUNITY Barnet works from the premise that **anyone** who applies to work or volunteer with CommUNITY Barnet may have the potential to cause harm, whether they are a member of staff, a volunteer, service user, or other.

In the light of this CommUNITY Barnet has in place thorough recruitment and selection procedures for positions, both paid and unpaid, which could involve unsupervised access to any vulnerable groups. This probably the most effective way of assessing a person's suitability, and acts as a deterrent to potential abusers.

3.1 New appointments

CommUNITY Barnet will rigorously apply the following procedures with applicants for all employee or volunteer posts that involve substantial unsupervised access to vulnerable people.

3.2 Job / task description

A job description will be drawn up for all employees within CommUNITY Barnet. Volunteers will have a volunteer task description outlining their role and general duties.

Person specifications will also be drawn up for all CommUNITY Barnet employees and volunteers will have a list of 'particular skills/qualities required' for any opportunities which involve working with vulnerable adults.

3.3 Application form

All applicants will be asked to complete an employee application form/volunteer application form as applicable.

These ask applicants to provide:

- details of previous experience with the relevant client group, either voluntary or paid
- details of two referees, one of which should be familiar with the applicant's previous experience of work with the relevant client group
- details of any 'unspent' convictions
- details of 'spent' convictions, where the role necessitates an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- consent for a DBS check to be undertaken.

3.4 Parental Consent forms

If anyone under the age of 18 applies to become a volunteer, then a consent form should be completed by the parent/guardian. This form will request details of any medical conditions or special needs.

3.5 Interview

Applicants for paid posts within CommUNITY Barnet involving work with vulnerable people will be interviewed by at least two CommUNITY Barnet employees/Trustees. Ideally one of these will have experience of working with the client group.

All applicants for voluntary positions will be interviewed by a minimum of two staff members. Ideally one of these will have experience of working with the client group.

In both instances the interview will explore information contained in the application form. Particular care will be taken over any previous job/volunteering history connected with vulnerable people and why the applicant left. Any gaps in work history will be investigated and motives for working with the client group discussed carefully.

If there are concerns about the identity of an applicant, they will be asked to provide two forms of identification, for example a driving licence, passport, or other form of identification should be checked.

3.6 References

All applicants, whether paid or voluntary, will be asked to provide names of two independent referees. References will be sought before the applicant is formally offered a position within CommUNITY Barnet.

Potential employees' references should be provided by an ex-employer or professional person who can comment, from first-hand knowledge, on the applicant's experience and suitability for working with vulnerable people.

The referees will be contacted to confirm their references.

Wherever possible individuals applying for voluntary positions within CommUNITY Barnet should also be asked to provide professional references.

In instances where this may not be possible a character reference is acceptable. However, this should not be a member of their immediate family.

Written references will be read carefully for ambiguities or hidden meanings. If there is anything that raises doubts about the applicant, the referee will be contacted to discuss the matter further.

All applicants will be made aware that any appointment, whether paid or voluntary, is subject to satisfactory references. References will be treated confidentially and stored securely.

3.7 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

All trustees, staff and volunteers are routinely DBS checked.

Volunteers who may be working with vulnerable people must not be left unsupervised. They should also be checked by the DBS to assess their suitability where appropriate.

All applicants should be made aware that any appointment, whether paid or voluntary, is subject to satisfactory DBS checks and references. Information gathered through this process will be treated in the strictest confidence.

3.8 Probation / settling-in period

For employees, written confirmation of appointment will state that the position is conditional upon the successful completion of a specified probation period, usually three months. Occasionally, appointments may be short term in which case the person should be supervised as if undertaking a probation period.

During the probation period a new employee should be supervised closely, especially if they have never worked with vulnerable people before. They must not be left unsupervised or be working alone with a adult at risk/people during their probationary period.

At the end of the probationary period a formal review should be carried out and written confirmation given that this has been carried out.

A probation period is also recommended for volunteers as they too will require time to settle into a new role and ensure they are suited for the role and responsibilities. At the end of the probationary period there should be an informal review.

During the probationary period volunteers should not be working in an unsupervised setting or working alone with anyone who is vulnerable.

3.9 Irrelevant matters

Certain information revealed by the selection procedures may be immaterial to the prevention of harm to vulnerable people. Assurances will be given that information will be dealt with confidentially. This judgement will be made by the Head of Community Services in discussion with the CEO and supported by the Trustee Safeguarding Lead and Chair of the Board.

An applicant may disclose, for example, a minor offence that may have no relevance to their current lifestyle or behaviour. Having a conviction should not automatically eliminate someone without first considering its relevance and age, whether there is a pattern of convictions and if their circumstances have changed since the offence was committed.

3.10 Training

Awareness training will be offered to employees, Trustees, and volunteers in relation to this policy.

3.11 Support, supervision, and personal development

All employees will receive regular formal support and supervision sessions with their line manager. For those employees who are working with vulnerable people, time will be taken to explore their working practice and to check that this complies with the good practice as defined in this policy.

Support and supervision sessions and appraisals will give either party the opportunity to identify training needs and discuss any areas of concern in relation to the employee's work with vulnerable adults.

Support and supervision sessions and appraisals will be recorded in writing and both parties will be given a copy.

Volunteers will also receive regular, informal support and supervision from the designated staff member.

This should provide both parties with the opportunity to discuss any concerns or problems the volunteer may be experiencing and to identify any training needs they may have.

4: Planning activities to minimise harm

4.1 Risk assessments and other general considerations

Health and safety requirements in accordance with CommUNITY Barnet's policy and practice must be carefully considered when planning and carrying out activities involving people who may be vulnerable. CommUNITY Barnet's Health and Safety Policy applies to volunteers as well as employees.

All employees and volunteers must carry out thorough risk assessments prior to undertaking events/activities with vulnerable people. By doing this any problems can be addressed before any accident or harm takes place. Risk assessments should consider:

- the suitability of the task to be tackled/activities to be undertaken
- the suitability of premises, tools and equipment
- the provision of appropriate clothing (e.g. wet weather clothing, footwear)
- the provision of safety information to all staff, volunteers and participants
- the provision of first-aid facilities
- communications and emergency procedures, including action in the event of an accident
- fire precautions

- the provision of appropriate training
- whether non-CommUNITY Barnet employees/volunteers will have access to the client group

4.2 Planning and supervision

CommUNITY Barnet's guidelines on appropriate planning and supervision need to be observed to reduce the risk of harm. This applies whenever an employee or volunteer works with people who may be vulnerable (whether or not carers remain ultimately responsible).

- Activities involving vulnerable people should be carefully planned to ensure the maximum protection is provided at all times
- Particular attention should be paid to health and safety requirements as outlined in CommUNITY Barnet's Health and Safety Policy, the Violence at Work Policy, and the relevant section of these guidelines
- Those who are involved in an activity organised by CommUNITY Barnet should be supervised and supported wherever possible, ensuring that the appropriate ratio of employees is present. This will depend on the nature of the activity, the number and age range of the people involved and whether anyone involved has any special needs
- A common-sense approach should be adopted regarding the supervision of vulnerable adults. When deemed appropriate vulnerable adults may be left unsupervised. However, each situation should be judged on its own merit. At all times staff should know where they are and what they are doing
- Wherever possible at least two workers (paid or unpaid) should be present to protect workers from allegations of abuse
- Wherever possible both female and male employees/volunteers should be present when working with mixed gender groups.
- Consent forms should be completed by anyone who is particularly vulnerable and who wishes to participate in a residential, or in a particularly hazardous activity, (e.g. abseiling).

4.3 Code of conduct

Some actions, no matter how well intentioned, may be misinterpreted and leave all parties vulnerable. The following is a quick reference guide to appropriate behaviour when working with those who may be vulnerable.

Employees and volunteers **should**:

- remember they are a role model and provide an example for those they work with to follow
- bear in mind that some actions, no matter how well-intentioned, may be easily misinterpreted and so leave all parties vulnerable
- be alert to any potential harm or inappropriate behaviour by people who are vulnerable
- aim for separate sleeping accommodation for males and females during residential activities
- ensure they have adequate training if supervising sports or games (e.g. football)
- respect individuals' rights to privacy
- provide access for vulnerable people to discuss any concerns they may have
- speak to their line-manager if they have concerns about an individual's safety

Employees and volunteers **should not**:

- arrange to see vulnerable people in circumstances unconnected with their work

- be left alone for substantial periods of time with anyone who is vulnerable. Where one-to-one work is necessary they should inform another staff member where they are going, with whom, for and how long. They should report in at end of the meeting if not returning to the office after the visit.
- permit abusive behaviour by others or engage in it themselves (e.g. ridiculing and bullying)
- show favouritism to, or become too closely associated with an individual, nor should they get drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour (e.g. crushes)
- allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching of a kind which could be misunderstood
- promise to keep secrets
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- do anything which might undermine CommUNITY Barnet's good reputation for providing a safe environment
- hesitate to share concerns on any of these matters with the appropriate CommUNITY Barnet representative.

4.4 CommUNITY Barnet Membership Procedures

On its membership application forms CommUNITY Barnet requires that all its potential members working with adults at risk have in place the relevant adult protection policies. At the discretion of the Board of Trustees, organisations without a policy in place may be granted membership status subject to their producing and presenting appropriate policies to CommUNITY Barnet within a three-month period.

5: Raising awareness of dangers

5.1 Types of harm

- **Physical** – where vulnerable people receive physical hurt or injury
- **Neglect** – where adults fail to care for vulnerable people and to protect them from danger, seriously impairing their health, well-being, or development
- **Emotional** – where vulnerable people are harmed by a constant lack of love and affection or intimidated by threats or taunts
- **Sexual** – where vulnerable people are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual activity by adults or children. This also includes the use of sexualised language
- **Financial** – where an individual's funds or resources are being inappropriately used by a third person. It included withholding money or inappropriate use of a person's money or property
- **Discriminatory** – this is when values, beliefs, or culture result in a misuse of power that denies mainstream opportunities to some groups or individuals. This denial is motivated by prejudice and discrimination
- **Institutional** – this occurs in group settings such as residential, nursing or day care and involves the mistreatment of an individual by a regime or individual within an institution. It can include inadequate care, neglect, or poor professional practice
- **Modern slavery** – including forced labour and human trafficking. Modern Slavery is a serious and brutal crime in which people are treated as commodities and exploited for criminal gain. The true extent of modern slavery in the UK, and indeed globally, is unknown - see Home Office

[How to Identify a Victim of Modern Slavery or Human Trafficking](#) / [Modern Slavery Flowchart](#)

- **Domestic violence** – including all types of abuse between family members or partners; so called ‘honour’ based violence
- **Self-neglect** – neglecting to care for your own health, hygiene, or surroundings. This can include hoarding

Common sense should be relied upon to recognise the warning signs. However, it is essential to rely on facts rather than opinions and not jump to conclusions.

5.2 Who can harm

An abuser is often known to the person being abused, whether a parent, sibling, other relative, family friend or neighbour. Not only adults can harm. There is no certain way of identifying a would-be abuser. They can be people of any background and do not appear different from the rest of society.

6: Responding to accidents, incidents, and harm

Appendix 2: Pro forma for recording disclosures or signs of abuse witnessed

6.1 Responding to accidents / incidents

In the event of an accident to an individual, first-aid should be administered, preferably by a trained first aider and the situation managed to ensure the welfare of the individual and the safety of others. The emergency services should be called for where appropriate.

An Accident/Incident Report Form must be completed. Where appropriate the circumstances to the accident should be investigated to establish the cause and to identify what remedial action should be taken to minimise the possibility of a recurrence.

Fatal accidents, major injuries and dangerous occurrences must be notified without delay to the appropriate line manager, after alerting the appropriate authorities.

Where an accident/incident involving vulnerable people has been narrowly avoided, employees and volunteers should detail its nature and pass the information on to the appropriate line manager or CommUNITY Barnet’s Health and Safety Lead who is the Head of Business Development.

6.2 Responding to alleged or suspected harm

If a person wants to talk about harm

If a adult at risk wants to talk about harm, it is essential that the employee or volunteer:

- listens carefully to what the person says, keeping calm and looking at them directly
- lets them know that to help them someone else must be told
- reassures them that they are not to blame
- is aware that they may have been threatened
- does not push them for information
- reassures them that they are right to talk about it and what they say is accepted
- let them know what will happen next and undertakes to let them know the outcome.

Dealing with alleged or suspected harm

If a person who may be vulnerable has talked about harm, or harm is suspected, the employee or volunteer **must** do two things:

1. **Write down accurately what the person has said using the proforma for recording disclosures or signs of abuse witnessed** (see Appendix 1).
2. **Notify the appropriate CommUNITY Barnet representative, giving them the completed proforma/written information.**

It is vitally important that employees and volunteers notify the appropriate CommUNITY Barnet representative, so that they can then inform and liaise with the relevant authorities depending upon which borough the service is being delivered in. CommUNITY Barnet's representatives are, in the first instance the Chief Executive and in their absence the Head of Community Services.

Where a nominated representative is unavailable, and the adult at risk is in imminent danger, employees or volunteers should contact the relevant authorities themselves. They should then inform the representative as soon as possible on their return.

Dealing with incidents of harm is difficult for any individual so employees and volunteers **should not**:

- act alone
- start to investigate; or
- make any assumptions about the persons involved.

6.3 Dealing with alleged or suspected harm involving an employee or CommUNITY Barnet volunteer

Where it is suspected that an employee or volunteer may be involved in the abuse, employees and volunteers should let the appropriate representative know as soon as possible. The employee or volunteer should be immediately removed from access to vulnerable people but be assured that no presumptions have been made and that the allegation will be fully investigated by the relevant authorities. Where it is suspected that the Chief Executive may be involved in the abuse, employees and volunteers escalate their concerns as soon as possible to the

If gross misconduct is reasonably suspected, it may be appropriate to ask them not to attend the office or property at all while the matter is under investigation (suspended on full pay if an employee). Once the relevant authority's enquiry has concluded, the Board should decide what further action is appropriate in conjunction with other relevant policies. (For example, policies on Grievance, Discipline and Complaints for employees and Volunteer Policy for volunteers).

6.4 Serious Incident Reporting

The following must be reported:

- Harm to the charity's beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, or others who come into contact with the charity through its work.
- Harm to the charity's work or reputation

The following examples should be categorised as serious safeguarding risks:

- Incidents of abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual) of beneficiaries of the charity which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and:
 - this happened while they were under the care of the charity
 - someone connected with the charity, for example a trustee, staff member or volunteer, was responsible for the abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual).
- Other incidents or abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual) of people who come into contact with the charity through its work, which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and are connected to the charity's activities.
- Breaches of procedures or policies at the charity which have put people who come into contact with it through its work at significant risk of harm, including failure to carry out relevant vetting checks which would have identified that person is disqualified in law from holding their position within the charity. This might be, for example, because they are disqualified under safeguarding legislation from working with adults at risk.

6.5 Accurate notes

Full and accurate notes (i.e. **word for word**) must be written as soon as possible, using CommUNITY Barnet's pro forma if available (Appendix 1). Where a pro forma is unavailable notes should include:

- the date and time of the alleged incident or disclosure
- the parties involved
- what was alleged; and
- the action taken.

Records should be as accurate as possible as they may be invaluable to the investigation and used as evidence in court. They must also be signed and dated. A copy will be kept by the appropriate BVSC representative.

6.6 Confidentiality and sensitivity

When dealing with personal and emotive details of this nature, confidentiality must be maintained at all times since the allegations or suspicions may prove to be unfounded. Notes and records should be kept in a secure place and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

A sensitive approach should be taken with the accused to explain why an investigation has to take place and to reassure them that the matter will be handled discreetly and even-handedly by CommUNITY Barnet.

No assumptions of guilt should be made unless and until an actual conviction has been obtained in the proceedings. Impartial contact will be maintained by a nominated CommUNITY Barnet staff member during this process.

6.7 Reporting Suspected Abuse to the Authorities

Appendix 3: Flow chart for dealing with disclosures or signs of abuse witnessed

It is not the responsibility of CommUNITY Barnet to investigate any allegations of abuse, only to ensure that the appropriate agencies are informed.

During Office Hours

The CommUNITY Barnet representative is responsible for alerting social services. They should contact during normal working hours (9-5.30pm)

For adults at risk:

Raising a Safeguarding concern

About a child/ young person	About a vulnerable adult	About a trustee	About a member of staff
<p>Complete Online report: Barnet: online form Newham: online form Enfield: Single Point of Entry Brent: Child concern form Harrow: Child Protection Talk to us</p>	<p>Complete online report to: Barnet: social care direct Brent: safeguarding adults form Enfield: safeguarding adults alert form Newham: Reporting abuse or neglect for adults Harrow: Safeguarding adults service</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Report to the trustee safeguarding lead</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Anita.harris592@btinternet.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Report to the local authority designated officer</p> <p style="text-align: center;">- Trustee Safeguarding Lead - CEO</p>

If someone is at immediate risk – dial 999 and ask for Police assistance

Where the allegations or concerns are with regard to another professional who is not an employee of CommUNITY Barnet they should also be shared with the CommUNITY Barnet representative and then reported to the relevant Safeguarding Children Officer or Adult Protection Co-ordinator.

The designated Safeguarding Lead for CommUNITY Barnet is Anita Harris who sits on the Board of Trustees.

Out of Hours

If you need to contact someone out of hours regarding a concern or to make an emergency referral for vulnerable adults then contact the relevant Duty Social Worker

7: Trustee Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees should take the following action to ensure good safeguarding governance:

1. Ensure that safeguarding is a key governance priority.
2. Regularly review and check that Safeguarding and Code of Conduct policies and procedures are adequate, up to date and fit for purpose.

3. Identify possible risks, including risks to beneficiaries or others connected to CommUNITY Barnet and any emerging risks.
4. Consider how to improve the safeguarding culture within CommUNITY Barnet
5. Ensure that everyone involved with CommUNITY Barnet know how to recognise, respond to, report, raise and record a safeguarding concern.
6. Regularly evaluate any safeguarding training provided ensuring it is current and relevant.
7. Review which posts can and must have a DBS check.
8. Adopt a risk assessment process for posts which do not qualify for a DBS check, but which still have contact with adults at risk.

Part 3 – Summary

CommUNITY Barnet has a detailed policy and set of guidelines on working with people who may be vulnerable which **must** be read and understood by all employees and volunteers in appropriate posts. It is important however that **all** employees and volunteers are encouraged to read this summary code as an essential and quick reference guide.

1 Welfare paramount

CommUNITY Barnet values and encourages the involvement of vulnerable service users within its work and activities. Through this policy CommUNITY Barnet is committed to promoting their well-being, as well as protecting their health, safety, and general welfare whilst in the company of CommUNITY Barnet employees or volunteers.

2 Health and safety

Health and safety requirements, in accordance with CommUNITY Barnet's Health and Safety Policy, must be carefully considered when planning and carrying out activities with anyone who is vulnerable. These should include:

- undertaking thorough risk assessments prior to activities/events
- ensuring adequate supervision and support is available from CommUNITY Barnet employees and volunteers.

3 Code of conduct

It is important that all CommUNITY Barnet employees and volunteers remember that they are role models for others. They should also be aware that some actions, no matter how well intentioned, may be misinterpreted and as a result leave all parties vulnerable.

Employees and volunteers should not:

- arrange to see vulnerable people on circumstances unconnected with their work

- be left alone for substantial periods of time with an adult at risk
- permit abusive behaviour by others, or engage in it themselves, including making suggestive remarks, inappropriate gestures, etc
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- promise to keep secrets
- hesitate to share concerns on any of these matters with the appropriate CommUNITY Barnet representative
- do anything which might undermine CommUNITY Barnet's good reputation for providing a safe environment.

4 Dealing with alleged or suspected harm

All CommUNITY Barnet employees and volunteers should be aware of the types of harm that vulnerable people can suffer from. These include physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect.

If a adult at risk wants to talk about harm to any CommUNITY Barnet employee or volunteer, the employee or volunteer should do the following:

- **write down accurately what the person has said, (i.e. word for word) using the pro forma for recording disclosures or signs of abuse witnessed (appendix 2).**
- **notify the appropriate CommUNITY Barnet representative, giving them the completed pro forma/written information**

It is vitally important that employees and volunteers notify the appropriate CommUNITY Barnet representative, so that they can then inform and liaise with the relevant authorities. CommUNITY Barnet's representative is, in the first instance, the Chief Executive.

In the absence of a nominated CommUNITY Barnet representative, and where a adult at risk is in imminent danger, employees or volunteers should contact the relevant authorities themselves, (ie Social Services or Police). They should then inform the CommUNITY Barnet representative as soon as possible on their return.

Where it is suspected that an employee or volunteer may be involved in the abuse, employees and volunteers should inform the BVSC representative as soon as possible.

Dealing with incidents of harm is difficult for any individual so employees and volunteers should not:

- act alone
- start to investigate
- make any assumptions about the persons involved.

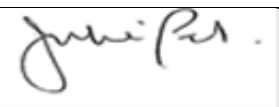
Any employee or volunteer who is involved in a disclosure of abuse may feel that they need to speak to a professional to reassure themselves that they have done the right thing. The NSPCC operates a 24-hour help line for anyone concerned about an individual. It is primarily for use by adults and can be used anonymously: **0800 800500**.

Document details

Author: Diane Cuff, Health and Social Care Manager
Organisation: CommUNITY Barnet
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 Updated: July 2022

Policy Review

Review date:	Reviewed 22 June 2020 Reviewed 9 June 2021 Reviewed July 2022 Reviewed July 2023
Name:	Jeni Osbourne
Signed:	
Next review due:	July 2024

Appendix 1: Steps to safer recruitment:	Achieved	Developing	Not in place	Prioritised actions for quality improvement: (What needs to happen?)
Planning and advertising:				
Clear job description in place This states: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main duties of the post; • The extent of contact/responsibility for children and young people; • The individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the children/young people. 				
Personal specification in place This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The essential and desirable qualifications and experience; • Other requirements needed to perform the role in relation to working with children and young people; • The competencies and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate. 				
Post advertised as widely as possible				
Advert states: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to safeguarding children; • The need for the successful applicant to undertake an enhanced criminal record check; • That proof of identity will be required. 				

Final date stated for applications and interview date if known				
Advert states that referees will be contacted prior to interview				
<p>Standard application form used obtain a common set of core data</p> <p>It seeks to obtain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, current address and National Insurance Number; • N.B. To comply with the Equality Act 2010, recruiting bodies may wish to adopt a practice that the date of birth should not be included on the main application form, but added to a diversity monitoring form, which can be retained by HR/Personnel and not made available to those involved in the short-listing process; • A statement of any academic and/ or vocational qualifications with details of awarding body and date of award; • A full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education/training and part-time and voluntary work as well as full time employment, with start dates, explanations for periods not in employment or education/training and reasons for leaving employment; 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of referees. One referee should be the applicant's current or most recent employer/line manager, not a colleague. Normally two referees should be sufficient; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Where an applicant is not currently working with adults at risk, but has done so in the past, it is important that a reference is also obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children in addition to the current or most recent employer; ➤ References are not accepted from relatives or friends. • A statement of the skills and abilities, and competencies/experience that the applicant believes are relevant to his/her suitability for the post and how s/he meets the person specification; • There is an explanation that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974; • Information is requested about any previous - including spent - convictions, cautions, reprimands, warnings or bind-overs. 				
<p>Information pack sent to applicants</p> <p>The pack includes a copy of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application form, and explanatory notes about completing the form; • The job description and person specification; 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant information about the organisation and the recruitment process; • The organisation’s Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct; • A statement of the terms and conditions relating to the post. 				
Permission sought to obtain references prior to interview				
Scrutinising and shortlisting:				
Shortlisting is undertaken by a minimum of two people				
At least one member of the panel has undertaken safe recruitment and selection training				
The same selection panel both short list and interview the candidate				
Applications are reviewed against essential and desirable criteria				
Information is checked for consistency and discrepancies				
Gaps in employment/training or a history of repeated changes of employment are identified and noted so that they are taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short list the applicant, or to ask the applicant for further explanation at interview				
Incomplete applications are not accepted				
Referees contacted for all shortlisted candidates before interview				
Interview:				

<p>Consideration given to what assessment methods as well as interviews may be used</p>				
<p>Interview panel established of a minimum of two people</p>				
<p>All interviews are face to face meetings (subject to govt guidance)</p>				
<p>Candidates asked at interview about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any anomalies, discrepancies identified on their application form; • any gaps in their employment history; • criminal convictions and/or concerns/allegations/investigations; • their motivation for working with children; • their understanding of the roles safeguarding responsibilities; • any issues arising from their references. 				
<p>List of questions prepared that assess the merits of each candidate against the job description and person specification</p>				
<p>Clear notes are recorded of the candidates' responses at interview and stored securely</p>				
<p>The interview stresses that the identity of the successful candidate will be checked thoroughly and, that where a Disclosure and Barring Service check is appropriate, prior to appointment there will be a requirement to complete an application for a Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure</p>				

<p>All candidates bring with them documentary evidence of their right to work in the UK and their identity. Evidence should be as prescribed by UK Visas and Immigration and the Disclosure and Barring Service, and can include a current driving licence or passport including a photograph, or a full birth certificate, and a document such as a utility bill or financial statement that shows the candidate's current name and address (please note that these latter two are time-limited and must be no more than 3 months old), and where appropriate change of name documentation. Some form of photographic ID is seen</p>				
<p>Candidates bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualification(s). If this is not possible, written confirmation is obtained from the awarding body</p>				
<p>A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity and qualifications are kept for the personnel file</p>				
Offer of employment:				
<p>Candidates are informed that any offers of employment are conditional and dependant on checks</p>				
References:				
<p>Professional references for the preferred candidate taken up if not already done prior to interview. Once received it is scrutinised and any concerns resolved satisfactorily before the person's appointment is confirmed</p>				
<p>A copy of the job description and person specification is included with all reference requests</p>				
<p>References include one from the candidate's current employer from their line manager or HR department</p>				

References obtained from a previous employer involving childcare if the candidate is not currently working in childcare to confirm details of their employment and reason(s) for leaving				
Character references (from friends or relatives) are not accepted				
'Open-ended'/'To whom it may concern' references are not accepted				
References are sought on all short listed candidates, including internal ones				
Checks are made that any written references are from the named referee				
Reference proforma in place to obtain objective verifiable information				
<p>Requests for references ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The referee's relationship with the candidate, e.g. did they have a working relationship and how long has the referee known the candidate; • How they have demonstrated that they meet the person specification; • Whether the referee is satisfied that the person has the ability and is suitable to undertake the job; • Whether the applicant has been the subject of any disciplinary sanctions and whether the application has had any allegations made against them or concerns raised, which relate either to the safety and welfare of, or 				

<p>the applicants behaviour towards, children and young people. Details about the outcome of any such concern is sought;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the referee is satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children/young people/Adults at Risk. If not, for details of the referee's concerns and the reason why the person might be unsuitable; • Confirmation of details of the applicant's current post, salary and sickness record; • Specific verifiable comments about the applicant's performance history and conduct. <p>Requests remind the referee that they have a responsibility to ensure that the reference is accurate and that relevant factual content of the reference may be discussed with the applicant.</p>				
<p>On receipt of references:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are checked to ensure all questions have been answered satisfactorily; • Prior to the confirmation of an appointment, referees are telephoned to confirm their views on the candidate and to ensure information provided by the candidate is accurate; • Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations is considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago or an allegation determined to be 				

<p>unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions, and in which no further issues have been raised, are less likely to cause concern than more serious or recent concerns, or issues that were not resolved satisfactorily. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time should give cause for concern.</p>				
Pre-employment checks:				
<p>An offer of appointment to the successful candidate is conditional upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receipt of at least two satisfactory written references, where possible confirmed by telephone; • Verification of the candidate's identity; • A satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosure at the appropriate level (unless the Disclosure and Barring Service Update Service applies); • Evidence of permission to work for those who are not nationals of a European Economic Area (EEA) country; • Verification of the candidate's medical fitness; • Verification of qualifications; • Verification of successful completion of statutory induction / probationary period where appropriate. 				
<p>All checks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmed in writing; 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented and retained on the personnel file (subject to restrictions on the retention of information imposed by Disclosure and Barring Service regulations); • Followed up where they are unsatisfactory or where there are discrepancies in the information provided; • Recorded on the DBS log detailing the date when the disclosure was obtained, by whom, level of disclosure and unique reference number. 				
<p>Risk assessment procedures in place to determine whether or not the individual is suitable to undertake the role where a DBS disclosure trace is returned giving consideration to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of the appointment; • The nature of the offence; • The age at which the offence took place; • The frequency of the offence. <p>Where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate is found to be on the Barred Lists, or the Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosure shows they have been disqualified from working with children by a Court; • The applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, their application; • There are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children. 				

<p>These facts are reported to the police and/or Disclosure and Barring Service (if they are not already aware). Anyone who is barred from work with children is committing an offence if they apply for, offer to do, accept or do any work which constitutes Regulated Activity. It is also an offence for an employer knowingly to offer work in a regulated position, or to procure work in a regulated position for an individual who is disqualified from working with children, or fail to remove such an individual from such work.</p>				
Starting employment:				
<p>In relation to each member of staff appointed a record is kept to show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written references obtained and confirmed by telephone; • Gaps in employment history checked; • A satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service /Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate obtained, with unique reference number and date; • Reasons/decision to appoint despite criminal convictions (i.e. a Risk Assessment); • Evidence of proof of identity (this will have been provided for the Disclosure and Barring Service check); • Evidence of qualifications; • Details of registration with appropriate professional body; • Confirmation of right to work in UK; 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of interview questions and answers. <p>Records are signed and dated by appointing manager/chair of the interview panel</p>				
<p>Thorough induction procedures in place which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and information about the organisation's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. This training is at a level appropriate to the member of staff role and responsibilities with regard to children; • Supporting individuals in a way that is appropriate for their role; • Confirming the conduct expected of staff; • Providing opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities; • Enabling the line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately; <p>The person receives written statements of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding; • The identity and responsibilities of staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities; • Safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected; 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other relevant personnel procedures e.g. whistle blowing, disciplinary procedures. 				
Supervision and staff review and development:				
Regular and ongoing staff reviews are embedded in practice They:				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff are up to date with current safe practices; • Identify and support areas for development; • Openly address any concerns about behaviour and attitudes; • Provide an opportunity to raise concerns about key children; • Support staff well-being; • Put in place action plan and arrangements for review. 				
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Supporting information and further guidance:

Equality Act 2010

[Care Act 2014](#)

Disclosure and Barring Service website

Statutory guidance: Regulated Activity (children) - supervision of activity with children which is regulated activity when unsupervised

Care Quality Commission – Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

CommUNITY Barnet – Code of Conduct

Appendix 2: Pro forma for recording disclosures or signs of abuse witnessed
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To be completed by person receiving disclosure or witnessing signs of abuse.

Name of person disclosing or displaying signs of abuse:

Date and time disclosure received / signs of abuse witnessed:

Day	Month	Year	Time
			: am/pm

Is the person disclosing...

Male Female

What is their date of birth? (if known):

Day	Month	Year

What is their address? (if known):

Please detail what the person said (word for word) or signs of abuse witnessed:

Name of representative:

Date and time form received:

Day	Month	Year	Time
			: am/pm

Action taken and date:

Appendix 3: Flow chart for dealing with disclosures or signs of abuse witnessed

