

Tor Support Services (TSS)

Vulnerable Adults Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the policy of Tor Support Services in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults.

Definition

A vulnerable adult may be regarded as anyone over the age of 18 years who may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, harm or exploitation, which may be by reason of illness, age, mental illness, disability or other types of physical or mental impairment.

Recognising Concerns, Signs and Indicators of Abuse

Safeguarding concerns include emotional, physical, sexual abuse and neglect but also risks of significant harm to self or others and criminal activity. Abuse can take place in any family, institution or community setting, by telephone or on the internet. It is important to know the indicators of abuse and to be alert to the need to take further advice or action. See Appendix for information on type of abuse and indications that abuse might be occurring

Procedure for Counsellors in the Event of a Safeguarding Concern, Allegation or Disclosure

Where abuse of a vulnerable adult is suspected, the welfare of the client takes priority. In deciding whether to disclose concerns to a third party or other agency the counsellor will assess the risk to the client. Ideally the matter should be discussed with the client first, and an attempt made to obtain consent to refer the matter to the appropriate agency. Where this is not possible, or in the case of emergency where serious harm is to be prevented the counsellor will balance the need to protect the client with the duty of confidentiality before deciding whether to refer. The client should usually be informed that the counsellor intends to disclose information, and advice and support should be offered.

Where time permits the counsellor should consult the client's GP or relevant professional worker.

In assessing risk to an individual the following factors should be considered:

- Nature of abuse and severity
- Chance of recurrence and when
- Frequency
- Vulnerability of the adult
- Those involved - family, carers, strangers etc
- Whether other third parties are also at risk e.g. other members of the same family

Consideration will be given to:

- Report to social services
- Report to police
- Report to mental health services
- Report to GP

Policy Review

This Policy, its organisation and arrangements will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1

Types of Abuse

Neglect - ignoring mental or physical needs, care, education or basic life necessities or rights.

Bullying - family, carers, friends.

Financial - theft or use of money or possessions.

Sexual - assault, rape, non-consensual acts (including acts where unable to give consent), touching, indecent exposure.

Physical - hitting, assault, man-handling, restraint, pain or forcing medication.

Psychological - threats, fear, being controlled, taunts, isolation.

Discrimination - abuse based on perceived differences and vulnerabilities.

Institutional abuse - in hospitals, care homes, support services, including inappropriate behaviours, prejudice and lack of essential safe-guards.

Abuse may be deliberate or as a result of lack of attention or thought and may involve combinations of all or any of the above forms. It may be regular or an occasional or single event basis; however it will result in some degree of suffering to the individual concerned. Abuse may also take place between one vulnerable adult and another.

Indications that Abuse Might be Occurring

Bruising

Burns

Falls

Apparent lack of personal care

Nervousness or being withdrawn

Avoidance of topics of discussion

Inadequate living conditions or confinement to one room of their own home

Inappropriate controlling by carers or family members

Obstacles preventing one to one discussion

Sudden changes in personality

Lack of freedom to be on their own

Lack of access to own money

Lack of mobility aids when needed.