

Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

Introduction

Our practice is committed to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm. Our dental team accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

Aim of Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all staff members are clear about their responsibilities.

This document may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements, and to ensure that business needs are met. You will be consulted and advised of any changes as far in advance as possible of the change being made, unless the change is required by statute.

Definitions

A **child** is anyone under the age of 18. A **vulnerable adult** is a person aged 18 years or over, who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

This **may** include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental illness including dementia
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless

Rights of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Children and vulnerable adults have the right to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Be happy and to achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Have economic wellbeing
- Be protected from abuse

Responsibilities

All members of society have a responsibility to protect children and vulnerable adults. All members of staff have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions that they might have concerning adult abuse. They are not responsible for diagnosing abuse but have an obligation to share any concerns.

Recruitment and Training

Tyrone House Dental will ensure that all staff whose roles include working with children and vulnerable adults are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. This will include obtaining *Disclosure and Barring checks in England and Wales, Access NI checks in Northern Ireland and PVG checks in Scotland (delete as appropriate)*. All members of the team are expected to carry out CPD in Safeguarding, Data Protection, Confidentiality and Mental Capacity, in line with guidelines.

Other Policies relevant to safeguarding include:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Consent Policy
- Equality Policy
- Adverse Incidents
- Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Dealing with allegations against people who work with children and vulnerable adults

Identifying Abuse

The characteristics of abuse can take many forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s). Victims may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach with their worries.

There may be some situations where victims are unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this information to others.

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take a number of forms:

- **Physical abuse** e.g. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, neglect or abandonment
- **Domestic abuse**
- **Female Genital Mutilation**
- **Sexual abuse** e.g. involvement in any sexual activity against his/her will, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism
- **Sexual exploitation**
- **Grooming**
- **Emotional/psychological abuse** e.g. intimidation or humiliation
- **Financial abuse** e.g. theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money from pensions or savings, etc.
- **Neglect or acts of omission** e.g. being left in wet or soiled clothing, or malnutrition
- **Discriminatory abuse** e.g. racial, sexual or religious harassment
- **Personal exploitation** – involves denying an individual his/her rights or forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will
- **Trafficking** – facilitation of travel with a view to exploitation and **Modern Slavery** – holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude, or forced compulsory labour.
- **Violation of rights** e.g. preventing an individual speaking his/her thoughts and opinions
- **Institutional abuse** e.g. failure to provide a choice of meals or failure to ensure privacy or dignity
- **Bullying and cyberbullying**
- **Online abuse**
- **Non-recent abuse**

Abuse or neglect may be suspected as a result of:

- A direct allegation made by the individual, parent or other person
- Signs and symptoms suggestive of abuse or neglect
- Observations of behaviour and interactions with parents/carers
- Failure to be brought to appointments

Record Keeping

All major accidents and injuries are recorded in a way that helps to identify unusual patterns.

Reporting Procedures

All those making a complaint, allegation, or expression of concern, whether staff, service users, carers or members of the public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will usually be treated confidentially but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
- If they are service users, they will be given immediate protection from the risk of reprisals or intimidation
- If staff, they will be given support and afforded protection

If an allegation is made to a member of staff or there is a suspicion of abuse then the member of staff should discuss this with (*Safeguarding Lead*).

If you both remain concerned (*Safeguarding Lead*) you can seek informal advice from the local social services.

It should be noted that if an adult discloses that they have had FGM, their daughters are at risk and you should seek advice from local social services.

If the decision is made to refer then Aquil Rajabali/ Kuresh Lokat -*Safeguarding Lead* will make a written record of the allegation or suspicion of abuse and contact the **appropriate services**.

If the person is injured or in immediate physical danger, then the Police and other appropriate emergency services should be contacted on **999**.

The non-urgent contact telephone number for the Police is **101**, if **hearing or speech impairment use textphone service on 018001 101**

If a staff member has been told about the allegation of abuse in confidence, they should attempt to gain the consent of the person to make a referral to another agency. However, the gaining of the consent is not essential for information to be passed on.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- The scale of the abuse
- The risk of harm to others
- The capacity of the victim to understand the issues of abuse and consent

If there is any doubt about whether to report an issue to the Safeguarding Team, then it should be reported.