

MIDHURST GREEN VOLUNTEERS

SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

1. Introduction.

The objects of the Midhurst Green Volunteers (MGV) are to provide a free service for cutting grass, trimming hedges, cleaning pavements and gutters and generally helping to maintain public areas within the town of Midhurst, and the surrounding villages, to an acceptable and safe standard.

Some of the Volunteers could fall within what are termed Vulnerable Adults. This document sets out the MGV's policy for safeguarding such Vulnerable Adults against abuse.

2. Background.

The characteristics of adult abuse can take a number of 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.

Safeguarding is everybody's business. Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. The Trustees and Volunteers will work together to prevent abuse. If we have concerns that someone is being abused our responsibility to the vulnerable person comes before anything else – our group, other service users, our colleagues and the person's friends and family.

Our duty is not confined to our own activities and services. It is not necessary that abuse takes place during an MGV session, but could be suspected or noted by a Volunteer although perpetrated elsewhere.

Doing nothing is not an option. If we know or suspect that a vulnerable adult is being abused, we will do something about it and ensure our response is properly recorded.

3. Aim of Policy

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

This policy recognises the provisions of the Care Act 2014 including the duty to cooperate with the West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the vulnerable adults who are in one way or another connected with MGV. In compliance with the Care Act 2014 Part 1 Section 45, MGV will provide any information requested under the terms of the Act.

4. Definition

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 mis-user
- Is homeless

5. 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:

- a) Physical abuse e.g. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, neglect or abandonment,
- b) Sexual abuse e.g. involvement in any sexual activity against his/her will, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism,
- c) Emotional/psychological abuse e.g. intimidation or humiliation,
- d) Financial abuse e.g. theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money from pensions or savings etc,
- e) Neglect or acts of omission e.g. being left in wet or soiled clothing, or malnutrition,
- f) Discriminatory abuse e.g. racial, sexual or religious harassment,
- g) Personal exploitation - involves denying an individual his/her rights or forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will,
- h) Violation of rights e.g. preventing an individual speaking his/her thoughts and opinions,
- i) Institutional abuse e.g. failure to provide a choice of meals or failure to ensure privacy or dignity.

6. Reporting Procedures

If an allegation or suspicion of abuse is discovered by a Volunteer then they should inform Kay Graetz, one of the Trustees, as soon as possible.

Kay, where appropriate with the support of the Volunteer, should make a written record of the allegation or suspicion of abuse (see appendix 1) and discuss the situation with the Safeguarding Officer, who will carry out a risk assessment and if considered necessary contact WSCC Adult Services Team.

If a Volunteer 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 WSCC Adult Services Team. However, the gaining of the consent is not essential in order for information to be passed on. Consideration needs to be given to:

1. The scale of the abuse.
2. The risk of harm to others.

3. The capacity of the individual at risk to understand the issues of abuse and consent.

It is important to record the facts of the incident/allegation, as spoken by the victim, without asking prompting questions.

If there is any doubt about whether or not to report an issue to West Sussex County Council Adult Social Care then it should be reported.

In emergency situations (e.g. where there is the risk or occurrence of severe physical injury), where immediate action is needed to safeguard the health or safety of the individual or anyone else who may be at risk, the emergency services must be contacted.

Where a crime is taking place, has just occurred or is suspected, the police must be contacted immediately.

7. Responsibilities

All Trustees and Volunteers have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions that they might have concerning adult abuse.

The Safeguarding Officer responsible for Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adult Protection is the Chairman.

8. Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks

Generally MGV operates as a group so it is not considered necessary for DBS checks to be undertaken by all Volunteers. There are limited situations where two Volunteers are separate from the main group, one of which is transporting Volunteers to and from sessions. DBS checks will be undertaken by individuals responsible for transporting a Volunteer.

9. Contacts

West Sussex County Council - Adult Social Care Helpdesk via:
Contact Centre - 01243 642555

Alternatively use the secure on-line form at: www.westsussex.gov.uk/reportadultabuse

10. Legislation

This policy is informed by, and adheres to the following legislation:

NHS and Community Care Act 1990

Mental Health Act 1983

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Care Standards Act 2000

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2012

The Care Act 2014

This policy was formally approved by the Trustees of the Midhurst Green Volunteers on 9 April 2021 and will be reviewed in April 2023.

Appendix 1

Midhurst Green Volunteers

SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Incident Report Form

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Briefly describe what happened (include times and dates):

Names and contacts of witnesses:

Name of person completing form:

Date:

Name of Trustee responsible for investigation:

Date:

Action taken:

Safeguarding Officer signature:

Date: