

RASA SAFEGUARDING ADULTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

VERSION CONTROL

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Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure

Introduction

RASA are committed to providing confidential services to anyone who has experienced, or is experiencing, sexual violence. RASA Merseyside aims to ensure that all staff and volunteers who have contact with people at risk (children and/or adults), and who in the course of their work may become aware of situations involving actual or potential abuse or neglect, are able to act competently, confidently and lawfully to safeguard individuals from harm.

This policy is underpinned by the Care Act 2014 and the policies and procedures of the Sefton, Liverpool and Wirral Safeguarding Adults Partnerships. Safeguarding practice within RASA is guided by a trauma-informed, person-centred approach that promotes dignity, choice and control wherever possible.

1. Purpose

This policy aims to ensure that:

- No act or omission by staff, volunteers or services provided by RASA places a service user at risk of abuse or neglect.
- Systems are in place to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of adults at risk;
- Staff understand their responsibilities to recognise, respond to and report safeguarding concerns appropriately.

Safeguarding adults at risk is a shared responsibility. Effective safeguarding relies on partnership working between organisations and professionals with different roles and expertise. RASA is committed to working collaboratively with statutory and voluntary agencies to reduce risk and prevent harm.

In line with the Care Act 2014 safeguarding principles, RASA's approach to safeguarding is:

- Person-led and outcome-focused (Empowerment);
- Preventative wherever possible (Prevention);
- Proportionate to the level of risk (Proportionality);
- Protective of those most at risk (Protection);
- Based on partnership working (Partnership);
- Clear, transparent and accountable (Accountability).

2. Definition

2.1 Adults at Risk

RASA uses the term adult at risk in line with the Care Act 2014. An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not these are being met), and
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- As a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves from the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

This definition focuses on situational risk, rather than personal characteristics.

Adults at risk may include individuals who:

- Have physical or mental health needs;
- Have sensory impairments.
- Have physical or learning disabilities.
- Have reduced independence, including those for whom English is not their first language.

Reasonable adjustments will be made in all cases to ensure accessibility and equity.

3. Safeguarding Principles (Care Act 2014) in Practice

RASA embeds the six safeguarding principles throughout all safeguarding activity:

- **Empowerment:** Adults at risk are supported to make informed decisions and express desired outcomes wherever possible. Consent is sought before sharing information unless there is a lawful reason not to.
- **Prevention:** Staff are expected to identify early indicators of abuse or neglect and act to reduce risk before harm escalates.
- **Proportionality:** Responses are the least intrusive necessary to manage risk while respecting autonomy.
- **Protection:** Where adults are unable to protect themselves, RASA will take action to ensure appropriate protection and support.
- **Partnership:** Safeguarding concerns are managed collaboratively with local authorities, police, health services and other partners.
- **Accountability:** Safeguarding responsibilities are clearly defined, decisions recorded, and practice overseen by the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

4. Abuse of Adults at Risk

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It may consist of single or repeated acts and can occur in any relationship or setting.

Types of abuse recognised under the Care Act 2014 include:

Physical abuse	including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, and misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
Sexual abuse	including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
Psychological abuse	including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
Exploitation	either opportunistically or premeditated, unfairly manipulating someone for profit or personal gain.
Financial or	Including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills,
Material abuse	property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.
Neglect and acts of omission	including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care, or education services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating.
Discriminatory abuse	including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment. There are different types of discrimination including age, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, having a disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Institutional abuse including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting like a hospital or care home, for example. This may range from isolated incidents to continuing ill-treatment.

Domestic abuse any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Self-Neglect Is a behavioural condition in which an individual neglects to attend to their basic needs, such as personal hygiene, appropriate clothing, feeding, or tending appropriately to any medical conditions they have. Extreme self-neglect can be known as Diogenes syndrome.

Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence

RASA understand forced marriage and honour-based abuse to be a form of abuse and a breach of human rights. It is, therefore, important to safeguard any child, young person or adult subjected to a forced marriage or honour-based abuse. Forced marriage refers “a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties, where some element of duress is a factor” (Pan Merseyside Forced Marriage Protocol, 2019). The National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) define honour-based abuse as: ‘an incident or crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion or abuse (including psychological, physical, financial or emotional abuse), which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of an individual, family and / or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and / or community’s code of behaviour’ (NPCC 2015).

County Lines and Cuckooing

'County lines' is a term used when drug gangs from big cities expand their operations to smaller towns, often using violence to drive out local dealers and exploiting children and vulnerable people to sell drugs. These dealers will use dedicated mobile phone lines, known as 'deal lines', to take orders from drug users. Heroin, cocaine and crack cocaine are the most common drugs being supplied and ordered. In most instances, the users or customers will live in a different area to where the dealers and networks are based, so drug runners are needed to transport the drugs and collect payment.

The [National Crime Agency \(NCA\)](#) has more information about county lines and how to spot the signs that it's happening, as well as how to report concerns.

The best advice is to trust your instincts. Even if someone isn't involved in county lines drug dealing, they may be being exploited in some other way, so it's always worth speaking out.

Professional criminals are targeting the homes of adults with care and support needs so that the property can be used for drug-dealing – a process known as 'cuckooing'.

Reporting any suspicious drug-related behaviour may assist in making your neighbourhood a safer place as professional criminals are using the homes of victims to manufacture and sell drugs.

These criminals are very selective about who they target as 'cuckoo' victims and are often entrepreneurial. A lot of the time victims are lonely, isolated, frequently drug users themselves and are already known to the police. Dealers often approach the victim offering free drugs to use their home for dealing.

'Cuckooing' means the criminals can operate from a discreet property, which is out of sight, making it an attractive option. They can then use the premises to deal and manufacture drugs in an environment under the police radar, usually staying for just one day.

When the criminals use the victim's property for criminal enterprises, the inhabitants become terrified of going to the

police for fear of being suspected of involvement in drug dealing or being identified as a member of the group, which would result in their eviction from the property.

Below are some important signs to look out for:

- usually takes place in a multi-occupancy or social housing property
- an increase in the number of coming and goings
- offenders will often have new vehicles outside the property, frequently use taxis or hire cars
- possible increase in ASB activity in and around the property
- disengagement with support services
- professionals visiting may be aware of new unidentified persons in the property
- the property may become to appear almost sparse of valuable possessions inside and go into a state of disrepair

Modern Slavery Modern Slavery is the term used within the UK and is defined within the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Act categorises offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking (the of which comes from the Palermo Protocol).

These crimes include holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude forced or compulsory labour or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after. Although human trafficking often involves an international cross-border element, it is also possible to be a victim of modern slavery within your own country.

It is possible to be a victim even if consent has been given to be moved.

Children cannot give consent therefore the element of coercion or deception does not need to be present to prove an offence.

Prevent Duty 2015 The Prevent strategy, published by the Government in 2011, is part of the overall counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. In the Act this has simply been expressed as the need to “prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

Hate Crime

Any crime that is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be racist, homophobic, transphobic or due to a person's religion, belief, gender identity or disability is a hate crime.

Hate crime is a form of exploitation which occurs when a person is harmed or taken advantage of by someone they thought was their friend.

Hate crimes can include:

- physical attacks - physical assault, damage to property, offensive graffiti, neighbour disputes and arson
- threat of attack - offensive letters or emails, abusive or obscene telephone calls, groups hanging around to intimidate you and unfounded, malicious complaints
- verbal abuse or insults - harassment over the phone, by text or face to face, abusive gestures and remarks, bullying and threats
- Mate crime is a form of disability hate crime, where vulnerable people, such as those with autism, are bullied or manipulated by people they consider to be friends

They can happen anywhere - at home, school, work or on the street. It can be frightening for the victim and witnesses.

5. Statement of Principles

RASA is committed to protecting and promoting the wellbeing, dignity, autonomy and safety of adults at risk. Safeguarding practice will always be trauma-informed, respectful and centred on the individual's needs and wishes wherever possible.

6. Equality, Diversity and Culture

In line with RASA's Equality and Diversity Policy, all service users will receive services free from discrimination. Safeguarding responses will be culturally sensitive and inclusive.

7. Specific Related Issues

7.1 Accountability

The people ultimately accountable for safeguarding adults at risk within RASA are the Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Contact details:

- Lorraine Wood – Lead DSO
Lorraine.wood@rasamerseyside.org | 07760 764421
- Sarah Wood – Deputy DSO
sarah.wood@rasamerseyside.org | 07436 800150

7.2 Training and Competence

The Designated Safeguarding Officer is responsible for ensuring staff and volunteers are competent to comply with this policy. All relevant staff will undertake safeguarding training in line with local Safeguarding Adults Partnership requirements, supported by regular in-house training and supervision.

7.3 Safer Recruitment

RASA operates safer recruitment practices. All staff and volunteers undergo Enhanced DBS checks and receive induction, training, supervision and regular review. All receive monthly clinical supervision.

7.4 Whistleblowing

RASA promotes openness and accountability. Staff and volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns without fear of victimisation, in line with the Whistleblowing Policy. Concerns may include criminal activity, safeguarding failures, or unethical behaviour relating to adults at risk.

7.5 Allegations Against Staff

RASA ensures all staff and service users understand the procedure for managing allegations against staff. Concerns are managed in line with the Allegations Against Staff Policy and, where relevant, referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

7.6 Staff Safety and Lone Working

RASA is committed to staff safety. All staff must adhere to the Code of Conduct and Lone Working Policy, taking reasonable precautions to protect themselves and others.

8. Responsibility and Referral Process

Concerns about an adult at risk must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy. Information should be shared lawfully, proportionately and on a need-to-know basis.

9. Implementation and Dissemination

All staff and volunteers will receive this policy during induction and whenever updates are approved by the operational management team.

10. Monitoring and Compliance

Compliance will be monitored through supervision, training and management oversight.

11. Legislation and Guidance

- Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Prevent Duty Guidance
- Rape Crisis National Service Standards
- Criminal Exploitation of Children and Adults at Risk: County Lines (2018)

12 Appendices:

- Adult Safeguarding Flowchart
- This Policy is to be used in conjunction with:
 - RASA Self-harm Policy
 - RASA Suicide Policy
 - RASA Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence Policy
 - RASA Female Genital Mutilation Policy
 - RASA Managing Allegations Policy
 - RASA Whistle Blowing Policy
 - RASA Information Sharing Protocol
 - RASA Confidentiality Policy
 - RASA Data Protection Policy
 - RASA Code of Conduct
 - RASA Lone Working Policy

Adult Procedure Safeguarding Flowchart – Appendix A

When a concern is raised about an adult at risk this should be brought to the immediate attention of The Designated Safeguarding Officer (Lorraine Wood) and in her absence the Deputy Safeguarding Officer (Sarah Wood), who will ensure immediate safety has been considered for the adult at risk and all other vulnerable people.



If possible, assess the mental capacity of the vulnerable adult and their ability to consent. To have capacity a person must be able to:

- understand the information that is relevant to the decision they want to make
 - retain the information long enough to be able to make the decision
 - weigh up the information available to make the decision
- communicate their decision by any possible means, including talking, using sign language, or through simple muscle movements such as blinking an eye or squeezing a hand. (*Mental Capacity Act 2005*)



It is the responsibility of the worker who received the disclosure, to make an initial contact with adult social care in the area that the adult resides:

Sefton Council Contact Centre: 0345 140 0845

<https://www.sefton.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care/adults/raise-a-concern/raise-a-concern-process/>

Wirral Central Advice and Duty Team:

call 0151 606 2006, Monday to Friday 8:50am to 5:00pm

call 0151 677 6557 all other times and on public holidays

email: cadt@wirral.gov.uk

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adult-social-care/safeguarding-adults/reporting-abuse-or-neglect-adult>

Liverpool: 0151 459 2606. If a person is at immediate risk of harm and an urgent response is required please contact the police on 709 6010 (Liverpool Adults only).

<https://liverpool.gov.uk/adult-social-care/professional-referrals/safeguarding-adults/report-an-adult-safeguarding-concern/>

Always dial 999 in an emergency.



Ensure service-user should be kept fully informed of progress at all stages.

The staff member will clearly document the nature of their concerns on the service-users file and record the date of the referral in The Safeguarding Adults Referral Log.