

People

First

a voice for people with learning difficulties



Safeguarding Adults Policy Statement

Title of Policy	Safeguarding Policy
Date of Policy	October 2019
Review dates	October 2021 - completed October 2023
Scope of Policy	This policy applies to all People First staff and volunteers. It also applies to anyone working on behalf of People First Self Advocacy. It applies to all activities.
Purpose of Policy	This policy will outline the rules about how we as an organisation must safeguard the people we work with from harm. It will lay out procedures and how staff should work to this policy.



People First believes that it is every person's right to live in a safe environment, free from abuse, and that it is everyone's responsibility to protect adults at risk within society.



Who are adults at risk?

This is any person aged 18 years and over who is or may be in need of the community care services, who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against harm or bad treatment'

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.



What is adult abuse?

Abuse is: "A single or repeated act or lack or appropriate action, occurring within any relationship, where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an adult at risk".



Types of Abuse:

Physical abuse, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication or being stopped from doing things.

Psychological abuse, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or not helping when needed, not allowing contact with other people, making you look stupid or blaming you, controlling you and making you do something you do not want to, and verbal abuse.

Financial abuse, including theft and taking things from you such as property, benefits or personal possessions. Talking you into giving or signing things that you do not understand or do not want to.

Sexual abuse, including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, could not consent or was pressured into consenting.



Neglect, where a person is deprived of food, heat, clothing, comfort or essential medication, ignoring medical or physical care needs;

Failure to provide access to good health, social care or educational services. This may include not having proper food, medication or heating.



Discriminatory abuse, including racist, disability or sexuality. Calling them bad names or similar treatment.



Why does adult abuse occur?

There are many reasons why people are abused and it may range from a one-off act to a regular and deliberate terrorising of a vulnerable adult.

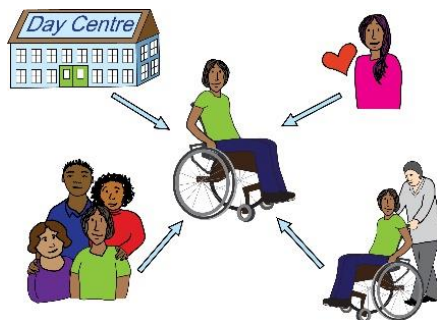
Vulnerability places people at risk. For example, if someone else must deal with a person's financial affairs the possibility of abuse is introduced.



Likewise, if a person with caring responsibilities has a drink or drug problem, or is under stress as a result of the caring task, he or she may respond inappropriately, either accidentally or deliberately.



Some adults' independence and wellbeing would be at risk if they did not receive health and social care support, but often being in the care system makes people depend on others.



Those at risk of abuse or neglect should be able to access support which enables them to live a life free from violence and abuse.



It is becoming increasingly common for advocates and supporters to get involved in safeguarding work because of the vulnerable situations that people find themselves in. Vulnerability places people at risk.



Who may abuse?

- Relatives and family members
- Professional staff
- Paid care workers
- Volunteers
- Other people with learning difficulties
- Neighbours
- Friends and work colleagues
- Strangers



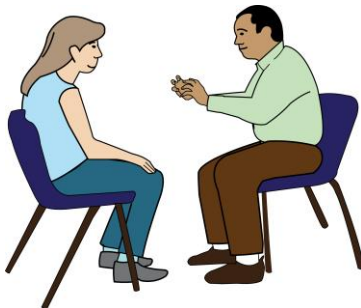
In what circumstances may abuse occur?

It may occur when an adult at risk lives alone or with a relative; it may also occur in the workplace, within nursing, residential or day care settings, in hospitals or in public places.



What should you do if you suspect or hear of alleged abuse?

If a People First worker suspects something is wrong, or is told that something is wrong, they must act. Doing nothing is not an option.



The People First worker should make an immediate assessment of the situation and consider:

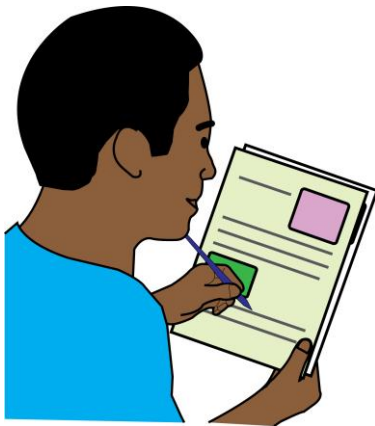
- How urgent it is
- How extreme it is

In an emergency, for example where you think someone is injured or in immediate physical danger, you must contact the police and/or other appropriate emergency services without delay.

If a People First worker is presented with allegations of abuse by anyone, they must not express any view on whether the allegations are true or even likely to be true.

It is important to say that such matters are taken very seriously, and that these issues will be dealt with appropriately.

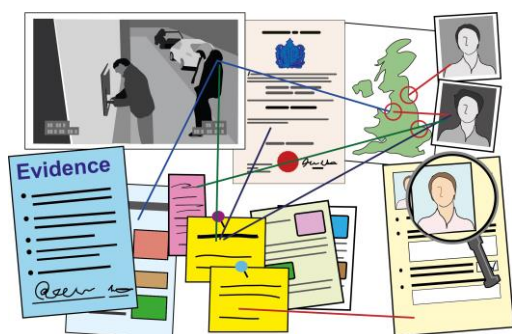
If the situation is not urgent or severe as to require emergency services' intervention, the People First worker should:



- In the first instance record their concerns by writing them down. Making a note of the date and time, and all the circumstances surrounding them, as well as anything that has been said by anyone related to the matter. If a person at risk has disclosed abuse, the worker should, where possible, use their own words in the report.
- The matter should then be taken immediately to the Director of People First, to decide how the issue should be taken forward. The director should examine any information s/he already has so that the decision about the way forward is fully informed.

After making sure that the person is not a risk, the Director may take one of two courses of action.

1. The Director may decide that they do not have sufficient information, that the information is not clear, that there is conflicting



information, or that there is other information which has to be taken into account.

If this is the situation the Director will carry out an investigation. This investigation may then recommend that there is a formal alert to the local authority's Adult Social Services Department. If this is not the case then other recommendations will be made.

2. The Director may decide that the matter should be taken as a formal alert to the local authority's Adult Social Services Department. If this is the case the Director will consult with the Chair of People First before making the formal alert, and the safeguarding alert should then be made immediately.

The person at risk should be kept fully informed of the actions taken by People First.



It should be made clear that People First has a duty to act without consent from the individual i.e. that this constitutes an area where confidentiality must be breached.

If you alert Adult Social Services by telephone you must also confirm it in writing within 48 hours and include a request for acknowledgement of receipt. The local authority Adult Social Services department should acknowledge receipt of this, but if this is not received within three working days, the alerter must contact them again.

Advocacy organisations, like People First, do not have a duty of care to respond in the same way as statutory agencies, like Local Authorities. An advocate or supporter is not responsible for proving that abuse or neglect has occurred and whilst it is not an advocate's role to carry out their own investigation, the nature, circumstances and seriousness of the abuse should be taken



into account before confidentiality is breached.

For example, if the abuse was something that happened many years ago, there is no immediate urgency to report the matter, or if the abuse is less serious in nature and the person is not in immediate danger, there may be other ways to deal with the situation, such as looking to see if other People First policies or practices can help.



In an advocacy situation the advocate or supporter should not interrogate their advocacy partner about facts and detail, as this may influence any further investigations that could take place at a later stage should the police or other agency have to become involved.



As above, wherever possible, good practise would indicate that the person at risk should be involved and informed of the actions of People First in relation to the safeguarding



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alert; however, it should be made clear that in safeguarding matters, People First has a duty to act with or without consent from the individual i.e. that this constitutes an area where confidentiality must be breached.

The advocate or supporter should seek guidance from their line manager or other senior manager.

Adult Social Services Departments have a responsibility for the protection of adults at risk and for ensuring that investigations are carried out.

People First as a registered charity will support the safeguarding process by making sure that this policy is carried out; ensuring a proper investigation is carried out, if this is required; and that safeguarding alerts are made if appropriate, and at the earliest opportunity.



Monitoring the Overall Process

The management committee is responsible for making sure that this policy is adhered to, and that the process of safeguarding alerts is monitored. An outside agency or organisation can be brought in to support this process, or any changes or training that needs to take place.



Staff must ensure that any safeguarding alerts are fully documented, including details of people who have been contacted, along with times and dates.



In all cases staff should not discuss allegations with anyone else outside People First or the local authority Adult Social Services department.



Disclosure & Barring Service

People First uses an 'umbrella body company' to do Disclosure and Barring Service checks on our behalf. All staff have DBS checks that are refreshed every 2-3 years.

Safeguarding Officer

Andrew Lee
Director

Telephone: 07887 995 437

Email: Andrew.director@peoplefirstltd.com

