

Harrow Shared Lives Scheme Policy & Procedure No. 35

Safeguarding against Abuse and Neglect

You have a right to friendships and a variety of other kinds of relationships with people. These are essential for everyone's health and well being and are usually positive experiences. However, there are sometimes risks associated with being in relationships including the risk of abuse or neglect so sometimes this has to be balanced with your right to expect to be safe and to be protected and safeguarded from harm. The Harrow Shared Lives Scheme ensures that Shared Lives (SL) Carers and SL Workers are alert to the possibility of abuse and neglect and can take action to safeguard you and/or other people if necessary.

How would this happen?

In all areas there will be a locally agreed, multi-agency policy and procedure for 'Safeguarding Adults'. This will always be followed and the guidance in this Scheme document is therefore complimentary. If you would like to know more about the multi-agency policy and procedure, your SL Worker will be able to provide information about this.

Abuse can take many forms – e.g. financial/physical/sexual/psychological/discriminatory/institutional, etc. It usually takes place between people who have a relationship of some sort – e.g. nurse and patient/worker and person using a service/appointee and person in receipt of welfare benefits/employer and employee/parent and son or daughter, etc. In this document the word 'relationship' is used to describe all these different sorts of connections (rather than simply implying a sexual connection).

To reduce the risk of abuse, one of the most important things we can do is give you information about what is or is not appropriate in different sorts of relationships and to ensure you have the power to say 'no' when you want to. In Shared Lives arrangements you will be supported to be in control of your life.

If you are in a situation of actual or potential abuse or neglect, we will help you to understand what is taking place and the harm that it may cause. We will also help you access information about the options that are open to stop the abuse or neglect or to reduce harm. If you do not have the capacity to give consent to the relationship or to make informed decisions about this, we will work with your family and/or representative and/or other professionals to make sure decisions and actions are

taken in your best interests and in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice. (There is more information about this in our policy on Making Choices and Decisions.)

Information about you is not generally shared with other people without your agreement. However, in certain very particular circumstances, it may be necessary to override this principle – i.e. when it is essential for your own health or safety or welfare or the health or safety or welfare of others. (There is more information about this in our policy on Confidentiality.) We will tell you if we have to share information about you with other people (unless this puts you at even greater risk) and the reasons for this.

All incidents or concerns about abuse or neglect will be referred to the local multi-agency ‘Safeguarding Adults’ procedure. The extent and type of information-gathering or investigation will depend on the assessed risks to you and other people, your own wishes about this and decisions taken within the local ‘Safeguarding Adults’ procedure. In all cases careful records will be kept of the process, information gathered and decisions and outcomes. You will be kept informed about what is happening throughout this process (unless this puts you at even greater risk) and about the outcomes.

If SL Carers or SL Workers become aware of an incident of abuse, or concerned about the possibility of abuse, they will use their judgement to take any action that is immediately required to protect you and/ or meet your immediate needs for assistance and support. They will report the matter to the Social Workers who will report to the Manager of the SL Scheme straight away, or if it is out of office hours, to the Social Services Department and/or the parent organisation’s Emergency Duty Team.

The Manager will take responsibility for making sure a referral to the local multi-agency ‘Safeguarding Adults’ procedure is put in place; also for informing any other relevant health or social care authorities (including the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to find out if they wish to be involved in investigating the matter or to take separate action and whether and how they are kept updated as the situation develops. The Police will always be informed if a crime has been committed and the health or safety or welfare of other vulnerable adults or children is at risk. Any internal investigation will be co-ordinated with a Police investigation or other forms of ‘Safeguarding Adults’ investigations, when required.

The Manager will work internally and with other professionals to ensure that the local multi-agency ‘Safeguarding Adults’ procedure is followed. This will include making sure that: -

- you are safe;
- the risks to you are properly assessed;
- you can say what action you would like taken, if any;

- issues around consent, capacity and confidentiality are considered;
- medical attention is obtained, if necessary;
- a decision is made about whether to inform the Police;
- any forensic evidence is kept, if necessary;
- any risks to other vulnerable adults or children are evaluated and further action taken if necessary;
- your family / representative is informed, if appropriate;
- your rights to information, advocacy and support are met;
- a plan is put in place to safeguard you in the future.

We will take positive action to safeguard you through our procedures for assessment of your needs and for completing your Service User Plan. If any risks to your safety are identified, a risk assessment and risk management plan will be completed and regularly reviewed. This will also happen if your own behaviour sometimes causes risks of abuse towards other people.

We will also take positive action to safeguard you through our recruitment and training for SL Carers, SL Workers and volunteers. They will be selected carefully, with references and other necessary safety checks followed up before they begin working in this service. Before or soon after joining the service, they will receive training so that they understand and recognise the different types of abuse and know how to respond if they are concerned this may be happening to you. This aspect of their work will continue to be developed and monitored through supervision, review and ongoing training. They will also receive information and training about how to protect themselves against allegations of abuse, through safe working practices.

If an allegation of abuse is made about a SL Worker, the Manager will make sure: -

- that a decision is made about whether she/he should continue with their work during the investigation;
- that her/his right to information, advocacy and support are met;
- that a referral is made Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)/(in accordance with the relevant Safeguarding legislation and procedures), when appropriate;
- that if the allegation is upheld, the Scheme's disciplinary procedure will be followed.

If an allegation is made about a SL Carer, the Manager will make sure: -

- we will consult with you to decide whether or not it is appropriate for the arrangement to continue;
- that alternative arrangements are made for you when necessary;
- that the SL Carer's rights to information, advocacy and support during the investigation are met;
- that a referral is made to Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)/(in accordance with the relevant Safeguarding legislation and procedures) when appropriate;
- that the work and approval of the SL Carer are reviewed after the investigation has been completed, if the allegation is upheld.

You have a right to lead a life that is free from abuse and neglect. Failure to report an incident or suspicion of abuse or neglect could therefore result in disciplinary proceedings for SL Workers and in a review of approval for SL Carers.

The Scheme keeps a record of any allegations of abuse or neglect, which is available for inspection by the CQC and other regulatory bodies.

See these other policies and procedures and documents for further information on:

- Safe friendships and relationships
- Risk assessment and risk management
- Making choices and decisions
- Confidentiality
- Health and safety
- Recruitment and employment of workers and managers in the service
- Recruitment and assessment of SL Carers
- Working with volunteers
- Whistleblowing

- Personal care
- Management of people's money, valuables and financial affairs
- Restrictive physical intervention
- Restriction of liberty
- Working with and responding positively to people who challenge services
- Harassment and bullying
- Handling medicines
- Disciplinary procedure (for workers and managers in the service)
- Assessment of needs
- Service User Plan
- Individual planning, monitoring and review
- Record keeping
- Supporting and reviewing SL Carers
- Carer Agreement
- Approval Panel
- Training and development