



Adult Safeguarding Policy

Aim of this policy

This policy sets out the key elements and overarching principles of Age UK Merton's commitment to safeguarding.

Safeguarding is a term used to describe a range of activity aimed at ensuring that children and adults who need care and support are not abused. This policy is specifically aimed at safeguarding adults.

The Charity Commission asserts that safeguarding policy and procedures are vital for the effective operation of any charity that works with vulnerable groups.

Policy Statement

For Age UK Merton safeguarding encompasses everything we do to protect adults who need care and support, our staff and our volunteers, from abuse.

Safeguarding is a fundamental part of Age UK Merton's work and this commitment is reflected in our achievement of the Age UK Organisational Quality Standards and the values of our organisation, which inform and support all of our safeguarding activity:

To achieve our mission of making Merton a great place to grow old, we want to ensure that everyone in Merton has the opportunity to make the most of later life, whatever their circumstances, wants and needs. Our delivery of this will be guided by three key objectives:

1. To support people in later life in Merton to enjoy life and feel well; to receive high quality health and care; to feel comfortable, safe and secure at home and to participate in their local community
2. To be the voice of people in later life in Merton, influencing decision makers and campaigning on issues which prevent making Merton a great place to grow old
3. To ensure that older people benefit from a well-run, sustainable organisation

This policy and procedure covers all staff, volunteers and areas of work. We recognise that we have responsibilities under the Care Act 2014 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Under the Care Act we must be familiar with the local multi-agency policy and procedures and have internal procedures to direct staff on what to do if they encounter abuse. It must be clear to staff that they must share information in cases of abuse. All staff and volunteers in any organisation who have contact with adults who could be at risk of abuse or neglect have a duty to act if they have any concern that an adult is being abused, neglected or exploited.

Age UK Merton recognises that it is the right of adults who have mental capacity to make their own choices, irrespective of how unwise we may consider certain decisions to be. Age UK Merton adopts the Mental Capacity Act 2005 presumption of mental capacity, unless a person's apparent comprehension of a situation gives rise to doubt. We recognise the right

of people to make their own decisions. The mental capacity of the adult concerned to consent to information being shared is a key element in considering any onward disclosure to another agency. This is important in helping us to take appropriate and proportionate action in response to a concern.

Guiding Principles

There are 2 main elements in Age UK Merton's safeguarding work:

1. **Prevention** – We will put sensible measures in place to prevent abuse, including the use of safe recruitment practices, promoting safe working environments and raising awareness of safeguarding.
2. **Protection** – We will provide policy, procedures, information and training to enable all Age UK Merton staff and volunteers to identify and respond appropriately to concerns about abuse that may be affecting an adult who needs care and support.

Where there are reasonable doubts about the ability of the person raising concerns to obtain the right support for themselves or others, or where allegations concerning Age UK Merton staff or volunteers are raised, more complex responses may be required. Detailed information on how all safeguarding issues should be managed within Age UK Merton can be found in the Age UK Adult Safeguarding Guidance & Procedures.

Roles & Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers

Every individual working for Age UK Merton, irrespective of their role, has a part to play in safeguarding adults who need care and support from abuse. All staff will undertake relevant training and must familiarise themselves with our Safeguarding Policy, Guidance and Procedures.

Trustees

The Trustees of Age UK Merton have responsibility for the general control and management of the administration of the charity. Trustees of charities which work with adults who need care and support have a duty of care to their charity, which includes taking the necessary steps to safeguard those at risk from abuse, managing risk and protecting the reputation of the charity.

Trustees will ensure that safeguarding is included, where appropriate, in the strategic plans, risk assessments, communications and quality assurance processes of the organisation. In some cases they will be required to make decisions in relation to complex or serious safeguarding concerns, in consultation with the Chief Executive.

Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team will receive and scrutinise reports on safeguarding activity via the Designated Persons for Safeguarding. Senior managers will ensure that their staff members are adequately trained to recognise signs of abuse and they should promote the discussion of safeguarding at team meetings and as part of supervision or one to one meetings.

Breaches of Policy

Failure to comply with the Age UK Merton safeguarding policy may be managed in a number of ways, depending on the nature and consequences of any incident. In some cases a combination of responses may be required.

- Disciplinary process – where there are concerns regarding staff misconduct or competence.
- London Borough of Merton coordinated safeguarding investigation – where concerns about the actions or inactions of a member of staff or volunteer necessitate referral to the adult safeguarding team in the area where the abuse is alleged to have taken place. This may also result in referral to Disclosure & Barring Service
- Police led investigation – where the actions or inactions of a member of staff or volunteer appear to be criminal in nature.
- Serious incident reporting to The Charity Commission.
- Additional or repeat training – where the concern does not meet the threshold for the processes outlined above, but does indicate a need for further development of safeguarding competence.

Basic Terms & Definitions

Adults who need care and support

This document does not refer specifically to adults as ‘vulnerable’. It refers instead to adults who need care and support, who may be at risk of abuse. This is the wording used in the Care Act and is the common form of terminology in adult safeguarding practice. It also highlights the fact that a person’s needs for care and support should not, in a civilised society cause them to be inherently vulnerable.

Abuse in relation to adults:

There is no single, universally accepted, definition of abuse in relation to adults who need care and support. For this procedure Age UK Merton has adapted a definition developed by the charity Action on Elder Abuse.

‘A single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an adult who needs care and support’.

There are many different types of abuse. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, sexual, financial or domestic. It may be neglect, discrimination or institutional or modern slavery.

Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it”. Further information can be found in the Age UK Merton Guidance & Procedures for Adult Safeguarding.

Date Implemented:	Future Review Dates					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Date to be reviewed				√		
Date approved By Trustees	√					