# SAFEGUARDING ADULTS POLICY

Policy Statement

This Safeguarding Adults policy outlines Women’s Empowerment And Recovery Educators (WE:ARE’s) responsibilities in relation to safeguarding adults at risk. The policy should be read alongside WE:ARE’s values and mission statement and has its foundations in the principles of listening to and believing women’s experience of abuse. The policy seeks to clarify WE:ARE’s role as part of a wider, multi-agency response to safeguarding adults in Birmingham and Solihull in addition to clarifying staff roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

This policy should be read in conjunction with WE:ARE’s Code of Conduct; Confidentiality policy and Whistleblowing policy.

CONTEXT

The development of this policy has been based on:

Principles of Making Safeguarding Personal
Care Act 2014
Safeguarding Adults: Multi-agency Policy and Procedures for the West Midlands 2019

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Ethos

* WE:ARE believes that all women have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, whether this be physical, financial, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect.
* WE:ARE holds a feminist perspective on abuse which places responsibility for the abuse solely on the abuser.
* WE:ARE practices in an empowering way and believes that all women have the right to self-determination and to make choices about how they live their lives. WE:ARE recognises that it may work with service users who may need more support to enable them to make independent choices and will protect their safety as far as is possible and signposting to any other organisations that may be able to provide the appropriate support.

Environment

* WE:ARE will establish and maintain an environment where all women using our services feel secure, are encouraged to talk about their experiences of abuse and are listened to.

Staffing and Service Provision

* WE:ARE will operate the requirements of Safer Recruitment as set out in local safeguarding board procedures.
* WE:ARE will ensure all staff undergo a DBS check that is regularly reviewed (at least every 3 years). This will include a check of the adults barred list.
* WE:ARE will ensure all staff receive training on the protection of adults at risk and that this issue is on the agenda at supervision and team meetings.
* WE:ARE will ensure all staff are familiar with this policy and are trained in its implementation.
* WE:ARE will ensure all staff explain to women using our services about this Safeguarding Adults policy, with particular reference to limitations to confidentiality.
* WE:ARE will ensure that women using our services are clear about who they can go to for help and what action will be taken if they report issues of abuse.
* Where we are asked to provide a service to a woman who has been convicted of offences against adults at risk WE:ARE staff will complete a comprehensive risk assessment to ensure suitability for the programmes.
* WE:ARE will ensure that all staff have access to WE:ARE’s policies on Whistleblowing in order that they can take the appropriate steps should they be concerned that a member of staff is behaving inappropriately towards adults at risk. WE:ARE will fully support any staff member who “blows the whistle” on suspected abuse within WE:ARE in line with the organisation’s Whistleblowing policy.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy WE:ARE considers an adult at risk to be someone over the age of 18 who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

WE:ARE also views victims of domestic abuse as vulnerable adults due to the insidious nature of the abuse that can not only cause physical harm but affect the emotional wellbeing that can present as but is not limited to, depression, anxiety, self-harm, eating disorders, ADHD, alcoholism, drug dependency, and a general lack of self-care.

For the purposes of this policy WE:ARE defines abuse as any behaviour that causes the recipient significant harm. This would include physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial, and online abuse.

Forced Marriage
This may involve vulnerable adults taken out of the UK and forced into marriage overseas. As well as following Safeguarding procedures Birmingham’s Forced Marriage Protocol should be adhered to.

Violent Extremism (the PREVENT agenda)
This may involve vulnerable adults being exploited and coerced into risky and illegal behaviour based around ideology. It is important to be cautious in assessing Violent Extremism to avoid inappropriately labelling or stigmatising individuals because they fit a specific profile.

Honour Based Violence
A term used to describe violence committed within the context of the extended family which are motivated by a perceived need to restore standing within the community, which is presumed to have been lost through the behaviour of the victim. Most victims of HBV are women or girls, although men may also be at risk.

DEALING WITH ADULT SAFEGUARDING ISSUES WITHIN WE:ARE

Everyone within WE:ARE has a responsibility to safeguard the physical and emotional heath of adults at risk however WE:ARE acknowledges the importance of having named personnel that staff members can refer to where possible safeguarding adult at risk concerns arise.

Within WE:ARE, the Project Manager has the lead responsibility around safeguarding, and within this policy is referred to as the designated safeguarding lead.

Debby Edwards is the nominated Board member who has overall responsibility for safeguarding.

PROCEDURES

Responding To Suspicions of Abuse

* Where appropriate, any concerns of this nature should be discussed immediately with relevant colleagues.
* WE:ARE’s designated safeguarding lead should be informed as soon as possible. Where the designated lead cannot be contacted the Trustee safeguarding lead or another Trustee should be approached.
* In consultation with the staff member, the designated safeguarding lead will decide what action will be taken, including a decision on whether to report the matter to the police and/or make a safeguarding referral.
* If the decision is made to make a safeguarding referral this should be communicated with the service user, unless to do so would further increase risk.
* It is not the responsibility of anyone within WE:ARE to conduct formal investigations into the abuse of adults at risk. This is the responsibility of Adult Services and the police.

Responding To Allegations of Abuse Against Persons in a Position of Trust

* Where an allegation of abuse is made against someone in a position of trust the designated safeguarding lead, the designated safeguarding lead, in conjunction with the Trustee safeguarding lead, should decide whether to make a “position of trust referral”. This would be done to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), where appropriate.
* As the LADO role does not currently exist in relation to adults at risk, in the case of an alleged perpetrator working with adults at risk, the designated safeguarding lead, in conjunction with the Trustee safeguarding lead, should decide whether to inform the alleged perpetrator’s employer or the commissioner of services if relevant. This is in line with West Midlands Adult Position of Trust Framework 2018.
* It is not the responsibility of anyone within WE:ARE to formally investigate whether or not an adult at risk is being abused. This is the responsibility of the Adults and Communities Directorate and the police.

Responding To Allegations of Abuse Against a Staff Member

* Information and allegations of this nature should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead and to a member of the Trustee Board as soon as possible in order for a full investigation to be carried out and to enable WE:ARE to follow the relevant local authority procedures.
* Due to the nature of our work WE:ARE will take very seriously any allegations of abuse made against a staff member. It is important that the organisation send out very clear messages about behaviour that will not be tolerated. For this reason, it may be necessary to suspend a staff member against whom an allegation is made whilst an investigation is carried out.
* Full records of any allegation made, and any subsequent investigation should be kept using the appropriate paperwork.
* All allegations of a serious nature and /or where a criminal offence appears to have been committed or if it is felt other people are at risk, will be referred to the police and the Charity Commission informed.
* If a staff member is found to have behaved inappropriately or abusively in any way, in addition to the matter being reported to the police, this will be dealt with in accordance with WE:ARE’s disciplinary procedures and consideration given as to whether a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and other regulatory bodies is required.
* Where a staff member is under suspicion of behaving abusively to an adult at risk, they are encouraged they are encouraged to contact [acas](https://www.acas.org.uk/) for support.
* Where a staff member is concerned about reporting a possible incident of abuse they are encouraged to refer to WE:ARE’s Whistleblowing policy which outlines the protection they are afforded.

Responding To a Woman Abusing Another Woman

* If WE:ARE is engaged in work that brings women together in a group setting and it is discovered that within that group one woman is abusing another WE:ARE staff will investigate and, in extreme cases, may need to terminate the service. Where this abuse involves an adult at risk, this should result in referral to the police and/or the Adults and Communities Directorate. At all times WE:ARE staff will provide support to the abused party.

Recording Information

* The written recording of allegations of abuse, suspected abuse, and actual abuse of adults at risk is vital.
* WE:ARE have a set of recording systems to be used in conjunction with this policy. These systems should be used throughout the whole organisation, thus ensuring consistency of approach.
* When documenting anything in relation to Safeguarding Adults at Risk, staff should only record information, not opinion

Information Sharing

* Where WE:ARE is concerned about the abuse of an adult at risk, staff will consider whether it is in the interest of that person to share information with other agencies. To inform this decision WE:ARE will work within Birmingham and Solihull’s Information Sharing Protocols.
* Sharing of information must be set within a risk assessment framework where the specific safety issues connected with domestic abuse are fully explored including whether inappropriate disclosure may lead to increased risk.
* Before information is shared WE:ARE expects staff to consider the following questions: Is an adult at risk in immediate danger? What is the purpose of sharing a piece of information? Does the vulnerable adult give consent to the sharing of information? If not, why not? What will you do if the service user withholds consent? Will sharing or not sharing information put the adult at risk at increased risk?
* WE:ARE needs to balance its duty to protect adults at risk from harm with organisational ethos regarding an adult’s right to self-determination and choice. In deciding whether to share information on a safeguarding adults at risk issue WE:ARE will consider the following variables: wishes of service user; extent of vulnerability; nature and extent of abuse concerned; length of time abuse has been occurring; impact on the individual concerned; risk of abuse being repeated; risk to other adults at risk.
* WE:ARE will normally only disclose information with consent from the service user. Where the service user withholds consent staff will work with the designated safeguarding lead to assess the appropriateness and necessity of sharing information without consent

MONITORING

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed regularly, after each major incident and at least annually, which will include analysis to ensure there is no detrimental impact on any group of women during its’ implementation.

For further information, including contact details for making a safeguarding referral see:

[Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board](https://www.bsab.org/)