

Simeon Centre Counselling Service

Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults

Introduction

This document outlines the Simeon Centre's policy on protecting vulnerable adults from abuse. These procedures will be followed by all staff and volunteers, and promoted by those in the position of leadership within the organisation.

The Simeon Centre Counselling Service is open to all members of the local community aged 16 years and above. However, the vast majority of its clients are adults (18 years and over).

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all staff and volunteers understand the appropriate course of action should they discover or suspect a client, or other vulnerable adult, is at risk of harm or is being harmed by others.

Definition of a Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 years or above who is unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation. This could be due to mental ill health, physical disabilities, age or illness.

Staff and volunteers should be mindful that any individual seeking counselling could potentially be classed as vulnerable.

What is Abuse

Abuse is behaviour towards a person that either deliberately or unknowingly, causes him or her harm or endangers their life or their human or civil rights.

Abuse includes physical, sexual, psychological, financial, discriminatory abuse and acts of neglect and omission. It includes domestic violence and institutional abuse.

Abuse can be passive or active. It can be an isolated incident or repetitive. It may occur as a result of a failure to undertake action or appropriate care tasks.

Anyone can be a perpetrator of abuse. It can occur in any relationship. An individual, a group, or an organisation may perpetrate abuse. Therefore all staff and volunteers within the Simeon Centre need to be alert to abuse both from statements made by clients and also from other sources including abuse by members of our own organisation.

What to do if a client talks to you about abuse

A client or service user may decide to share information about abuse with you. In such situations you must:

- Always treat the client's disclosure seriously.
- Explain that it is policy to report this to the Manager.
- Make an accurate record of the disclosure using the Disclosure Record form (see Appendix). Take care to record any timings, the setting and people present. Use the client's own words but do not press for more information than offered.
- Ask client to sign and date the Disclosure Record form.
- Explain that we will do everything we can to respect their confidentiality but we may have to share some information in order to protect them or others from significant risk of harm.
- Report the disclosure to the Manager at the earliest opportunity.

Emergencies

Where immediate action is needed to safeguard the health and safety of vulnerable adults and the manager is unavailable, contact the emergency services. Ensure you explain that the adult is "vulnerable".

Consulting about any concerns

The purpose of consultation is to discuss your concerns in relation to a vulnerable adult and decide what action is necessary.

If you are concerned about an adult you must share your concerns. Initially you should raise your concern(s) with the Manager/Co-ordinator as soon as possible. If this person is implicated in the concerns you should discuss your concerns directly with Social Services.

You should consult externally with your local Social Services Department in the following circumstances:

- when you remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether valid concerns exist
- when there is disagreement as to whether valid concerns exist
- when you are unable to consult promptly with the Manager/Co-ordinator
- when the concerns relate to any member of the organising committee

Consultation is not the same as making a referral but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Social Services or the Police should progress.

Making a referral

A referral involves giving Social Services or the Police information about concerns relating to a vulnerable adult in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency followed by any necessary action.

All referrals will be made by the Manager/Co-ordinator. If s/he is unavailable the Superintendent Minister of the Victoria Hall will make the referral. If neither are contactable, and only in an emergency, counsellors may contact Social Services or the Police directly. The Manager/Co-ordinator and/or Superintendent Minister must be informed at the first opportunity.

In certain cases the level of concern will lead straight to a referral without external consultation being necessary. Clients should be informed if a referral is being made. However, inability to inform clients for any reason should not prevent a referral being made.

Information required

Be prepared to give as much of the following information as possible (in emergency situations all of this information may not be available).

Unavailability of some information should not stop you making a referral.

- Your name, telephone number, position and request the same of the person to whom you are speaking.
- Full name and address, telephone number of the adult concerned.
- Gender, ethnicity, first language, any special needs.
- The names of professionals' known to be involved with the adult e.g.: GP, Health Visitor etc.
- The nature of the concern(s); and foundation for them.
- An opinion on whether urgent action is needed to make them safe.
- Whether consent from the client has been given to make the referral.

Action to be taken following the referral

- Inform the Superintendent Minister of the Victoria Hall that a referral has been made.
- Ensure you keep an accurate record of your concern(s) made at the time.
- Put your concerns in writing to Social Services following the referral (within 48 hours).
- Accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for this decision.

Appendix

Simeon Centre Disclosure Record

Date of disclosure:

Time:

Location:

Counsellor's name:

Client name/ref:

Please write factually the words of the client's disclosure.

If more space is required please use the reverse ensuring client signs and dates both sides.

We do everything we can to maintain each clients' confidentiality. However, on this occasion your counsellor feels that this information needs to be passed on to the relevant agency.

Please sign below to indicate that the details listed above are an accurate record of your disclosure.

Client's signature

Date

Counsellor's signature

Date

Please tick this box if you would like a copy of this completed form

Useful contacts

Simeon Centre Counselling Service

Victoria Hall
Knowsley Street
Bolton
BL1 2AS

Office Tel: 01204 387 363

Email: counselling@simeoncentre.org.uk

Simeon Centre Manager/Co-ordinator

Gary Jones

Mobile: 07958 250421

Email: gary@simeoncentre.org.uk (office hours only)

Emergency Duty Team (after 6pm)

Bolton Council

Tel: 01204 337777

Police Domestic Violence Unit

Tel: 0161 856 5788

To report a crime to the police

Tel 0161 872 5050