

# LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR

## SAFEGUARDING OF VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE ON ABUSE

This policy is based on the principles contained in the Care Act 2014.

It **must** be read in conjunction with any additional guidance issued by the Local Authority Social Services Department or other responsible body.

Copies of any such guidance are available in the Library and from the Manager.

This policy must be made freely available to residents (individual copies can be provided) and anyone else who has a legitimate interest in the safeguarding of vulnerable people in the home.

### Policy Statement

Our residents have the right to be free from any form of abuse, and to live their lives in an atmosphere of security, peace and mutual respect.

It is the policy of the Little Sisters of the Poor to take all practicable steps to protect residents from any form of abuse, and to deal promptly and firmly with any abuse that does occur.

The Little Sisters of the Poor will take all practicable steps to prevent abuse of any person involved in the life of the home, and to deal promptly and firmly with any abuse that does occur.

While this policy relates to abuse of residents, the Little Sisters acknowledge that Sisters, staff, volunteers and other visitors to the home also have the right to be protected from abusive behaviour.

This policy supports compliance with Regulation 9: Person-centred care, Regulation 10: Dignity and respect, Regulation 12: Safe care and treatment, Regulation 13: Safeguarding service users from abuse and improper treatment.

### Definition of abuse

Abuse may take many forms. It can include physical, psychological, emotional, verbal, financial, sexual, racial abuse, social abuse, chemical abuse or neglect. It can be a single act or repeated a number of times.

- Physical abuse involves harming the physical well-being of an individual. It can include, for example, exposing a person to extreme temperatures or using unnecessary restraint, as well as hitting or slapping them.
- Psychological or emotional abuse involves harming the mental or emotional

well-being of an individual, and can include humiliating, harassing, manipulating or threatening them.

- Verbal abuse involves using aggressive, humiliating, intimidating, disrespectful or abusive language or manner of speaking. It can include making sarcastic remarks, using a condescending tone of voice or using excessive or unwanted familiarity.
- Financial abuse can include the theft or misuse of residents' money or personal possessions, including asking for gifts or loans.
- Sexual abuse includes involving a person in sexual activities to which they have not agreed or which they do not understand. Sexual abuse of this nature is often overlooked in relation to the elderly because they are frequently viewed as being sexually inactive and/or sexually undesirable making it difficult to believe that they might be abused in this way. Sexual abuse can also include actions or words of a sexual nature which undermine a person's dignity or create an environment that they find intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive.
- Racial abuse involves actions or words related to race which undermine a person's dignity or create an environment that they find intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive.
- Social abuse includes unjustifiably denying a person the right to interact with others, denying them access to services to which they have a right, failing to respect their dignity or their privacy, failing to respect their independence or their freedom of choice.
- Abuse by neglect involves failing to take reasonable care to meet a person's needs, when that person is dependent on others for their well-being.
- Chemical abuse involves using medication inappropriately as a form of control or punishment.

## Identifying abuse

Sometimes abuse is easy to identify because there are outward signs of it. At other times it may be hidden. Often the abused person will not say anything about the abuse, either because they fear the repercussions of reporting it or because they do not understand that they are being abused. The person who abuses is often known to their victim. The abuser could be a member of staff, a Sister, another resident, a relative or friend, a volunteer or some other visitor to the home.

Individuals who are being abused may give some or all of the following signs:

- increased agitation
- tearfulness
- unexplained physical injury
- withdrawal
- lack of concentration
- increased sleeplessness or drowsiness.

Symptoms of abuse may also manifest in other ways. It is important for all Sisters, staff and volunteers to be alert to any changes in a resident's behaviour that might indicate abuse.

### Preventing abuse

The most effective way of ensuring that abuse does not occur is for all those involved in the life of the home to appreciate and respect the values of dignity, independence, freedom of choice, privacy, individual rights and personal fulfilment. These values will be stressed to each new resident and their family when the resident first enters the home, and will be reflected in the selection criteria for new recruits and volunteers and in the induction and ongoing supervision of staff and volunteers.

A person may commit abuse for a variety of reasons, including pressures in their home or work life, poor personal or work relationships, a lack of effective communication in the workplace, a feeling of lack of support or appreciation, or frustration caused by inability to carry out a particular task.

The Little Sisters therefore commit themselves to providing an open and supportive working and living environment, to addressing staff's training needs and to giving advice and support to staff members who are under pressure at home or at work.

Where a particular resident has the potential to behave aggressively or offensively or in some other provocative way, steps will be taken to minimise the likelihood of the resident being abused by ensuring that the resident is always cared for by two members of staff.

Reports of accidents and other incidents will be audited by unit Sisters and the Human Resources Department, so that any pattern of abuse can be picked up at the earliest opportunity.

### Standards

1. All residents, visitors, Sisters and staff are protected from abuse.
2. Abuse will be promptly identified.
3. Allegations of abuse are investigated and appropriate action taken.
4. There will be a designated, and appropriately trained, safeguarding

lead (or leads) in each home.

## Procedure

- It is the responsibility of all Sisters, members of staff and volunteers to be alert to the possibility of abuse and to ensure that their own behaviour is not abusive.
- Any staff member involved in abuse, either by committing the abuse or by failing to report it promptly, may be subject to disciplinary action and dismissal.
- Any staff member who has been found to be involved in abuse will be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service for inclusion on the DBS barred list. They may also be reported to the police.
- Any health care professional who commits or ignores abuse is in breach of his or her professional code of conduct and will be reported to the relevant registering body.
- Sisters who commit or tolerate abuse will be moved away from direct care of the residents.
- Volunteers and those on work placements who commit abuse will not be allowed to continue working in the home.
- Volunteers and those on work placements who fail to report abuse may not be allowed to continue working in the home.
- Any volunteer who has been found to be involved in abuse will be referred to the DBS for inclusion on the DBS barred list. They may also be reported to the police.

## Reporting abuse

- Any Sister, staff member, resident, volunteer or visitor to the home who has witnessed abuse, or has reason to suspect that abuse has occurred, must report this at once to the Manager.
- Any resident, relative or friend who reports abuse must be taken seriously and treated with dignity and respect.
- Any individual who needs help with the reporting process, or any other aspect of safeguarding must be supported in this.
- If it is alleged that the Manager is herself involved in the abuse, then concerns should be reported directly to the Mother Provincial, who can be contacted through St Peter's Residence on 020 7735 0788.

- Abuse or suspected abuse must also be reported directly to the Care Quality Commission or the local Social Services Department or the Police. The Commission and local Social Services can be contacted at the following addresses/telephone numbers:

Website: [www.cqc.org.uk/contactus.cf](http://www.cqc.org.uk/contactus.cf)

Telephone 03000 616161

Care Quality Commission  
Citygate  
Gallowgate  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 4PA

*Insert social services contact details*

#### Immediate steps

- If a resident has been abused and is in danger or in need of urgent medical attention, staff must take immediate action to make the resident safe. This may involve calling the police and/or an ambulance.
- If there is likely to be physical evidence of abuse in the area where the resident is, then nothing should be moved or cleaned, and other people should be kept out of the area.
- In all cases of abuse, the resident and, when necessary, his/her relatives or friends, must be given on-going support and reassurance. This must be reflected in his/her care plan.

#### Investigation

N.B. Some local authority guidelines require that all incidents of alleged abuse be reported to them prior to any investigation being instigated by the home.

**In all cases the local authority guidelines must be followed.**

In the absence of local authority guidelines, or when local authority guidelines allow an initial internal investigation to take place the following will apply:

- The Manager will arrange for there to be an immediate investigation of the alleged abuse.
- If, following the initial investigation, the possibility of abuse cannot be ruled out she will inform the Mother Provincial who will co-ordinate any further internal investigation. The Manager will also contact the appropriate external agencies such as the police, social services and the Care Quality Commission

so that they can become involved in the investigation as necessary.

- The source of the allegation may be kept confidential at this stage. But if the investigation results in a decision to bring disciplinary proceedings against an employee, the source of the allegation should be made known to the employee during the course of those proceedings, unless there are good grounds for believing that this will lead to some form of retaliation against the source.
- In some cases, the allegation of abuse may be so serious that, if it were well-founded, the person alleged to have committed the abuse would pose an immediate danger to the physical or psychological well-being of residents. In these cases, steps must be taken to immediately remove the individual against whom the allegation has been made from the home until the investigation is complete.
- If the individual is an employee, they will be suspended on full pay until the investigation and any subsequent disciplinary proceedings have been completed.
- If the individual is a Sister, she will be moved away from duties involving direct contact with residents until the investigation has been completed.
- If the individual is a volunteer, he/she will not be allowed to work in the home until the investigation has been completed.
- A written record must be made of the steps taken in the investigation, including notes on the content of any interviews that take place.

## Action

- Unless there are exceptional circumstances and the local adult protection team and Care Quality Commission have advised and agreed otherwise, the following will apply in all cases where the allegation of abuse has been substantiated:
  - a. If the person involved in the abuse is an employee they will be dismissed as per the disciplinary procedure and dismissal process. They will be referred to the DBS for possible inclusion on the DBS barred list. They may also be reported to the police.
  - b. If the person involved in the abuse is a volunteer, he/she will be told that the home can no longer accept their services. They will be referred to the DBS for possible inclusion on the DBS barred list. They may also be reported to the police.
  - c. If the person involved in the abuse is a Sister, she may need to be moved away from duties involving direct contact with residents. They will be referred to the DBS for possible inclusion on the DBS barred list. They may also be reported to the police.

- d. Individuals who are registered with a professional/regulatory body will be reported to that professional/regulatory body.
- All individuals involved in the alleged or actual abuse will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation.
- The results of any investigation will be used to monitor the home's level of compliance with regulation and inform any necessary changes to practice.

### Confidentiality

- In the normal course of events, all information received on a confidential basis concerning the residents or employees should be kept confidential. However information about abuse must always be passed on and acted upon.
- Any report of abuse must be dealt with in as confidential a way as possible. Information provided must only be given to those who need to know it in order to investigate and deal with the allegation thoroughly and fairly.

### Protection from victimisation

- No individuals will be victimised or discriminated against in any way for reporting genuine concerns about abuse even if, after investigation, it turns out that their concerns are unfounded.
- All practicable steps will be taken to protect anyone who reports abuse from any form of retaliation.
- An employee may be disciplined if it is found that they have acted maliciously by making an allegation of abuse, or by providing information relating to abuse that they know to be untrue.