

SWANSEA WOMEN'S AID

SAFEGUARDING OF VULNERABLE ADULTS (SOVA) POLICY & PROCEDURE

Related Policies:

2.09 Confidentiality, Data Protection and Sharing Information Policy

1.08 Confidential Reporting/Whistle Blowing Policy

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Some actions of Swansea Women's Aid (SWA) are governed by the Care Standards Act 2000 which contains the POVA (Protection of Vulnerable Adults) legislation.
- 1.2 As from 20th January 2009 all new referrals to SOVA, in line with POVA legislation, are to be made to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).
- 1.3 The ISA will be determining new referrals to SOVA in accordance with the provisions of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act under which there is no provisional listing.
- 1.4 SWA still has a duty to make referrals where a support worker has harmed a vulnerable adult (or put them at risk) and the support worker has been dismissed or has otherwise left the employment.
- 1.5 The importance of careful documentation is emphasised.
- 1.6 SWA safeguarding leads are Lynne Sanders, Chief Executive and Ann Collins, Trustee

2.0 Legislation

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019
Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
Domestic Abuse (Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.
Care Standards Act 2000

3.0 AIMS

- 3.1 This policy seeks to achieve the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse and
 - Ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults

- Promote the health and well-being of vulnerable adults
- Enhance the quality of life of vulnerable adults
- Improve the identification of adult abuse
- Improve the way we respond to adult abuse
- Work to prevent vulnerable adults being abused
- Train staff to recognise, respond and work to prevent abuse
- Monitor how we do this to improve the recognition, response and prevention of adult abuse

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 SWA recognises that abuse is a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action and can take a physical, sexual, financial, emotional or psychological form. It can also be neglect.
- 4.2 SWA recognises that the term 'vulnerable adult' refers to any person aged eighteen years and over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of herself, or unable to protect herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.
- 4.3 The main categories of people who are covered by this definition include:
- People who have a learning disability,
 - People who have a physical or sensory disability,
 - People who have a mental illness, including dementia,
 - People who are old and frail.
- 4.4 SWA recognises that there may be other groups of people who may be considered vulnerable and who may have experienced abuse, including those who have problems with alcohol and drugs. Their problems may be symptomatic of their abuse.

5.0 PREVENTION

- 5.1 Wherever possible, abuse must be prevented. There are numerous steps that agencies can take to reduce the likelihood of abuse occurring. This should include the following:
- Recognising the importance of screening job applicants so that unsuitable workers are less likely to be recruited,

- Training and supporting workers effectively
- Ensuring that services that are provided meet specific high standards and are monitored and supported to maintain these standards.
- Assisting vulnerable adults such as people with learning disabilities and their advocates to become more aware of their rights and recognise when these are being infringed.
- Discouraging abuse by encouraging workers to be alert and to feel confident about reporting concerns and supporting and protecting workers who “whistleblow”.
- Promoting environments in which abuse is less likely to occur.
- Use of risk assessments.
- Wherever possible avoiding placing workers in 1 to 1 working situations which create opportunities for abuse to occur and which also leave workers open to allegations of abuse.
- Supporting workers and providing services that help them to avoid reaching breaking point.
- Ensuring that occurrences of abuse are monitored and lessons learned.
- Increasing professional and public awareness of abuse
- Achieving prosecution of criminal acts as a deterrent to potential abusers.
- Deterring abuse by ensuring that allegations of abuse are investigated and dealt with in a professional, effective manner.

6.0 WORKERS CONCERNS

- 6.1 Workers are expected to report any concerns regarding the abuse of a vulnerable adult by another worker on any SWA scheme to their line manager, or to a review group in writing who will then inform the safeguarding lead. If necessary, a worker may take the issue directly to Social Services department or the police.
- 6.2 Once the concerns have been notified to Social Services or police duty officer, this constitutes a referral.

7.0 DISCLOSURES

7.1 If a service user discloses possible abuse, the worker should:

- Listen patiently rather than asking questions, and accept what is said
- Not press for details
- Never stop the person from freely recalling events
- Not promise who will and will not be told
- Not contaminate or remove possible forensic evidence
- Make a note of exactly what was said, as soon as possible, and the context in which it was said, taking care to record the time, setting and persons present
- Not confront the alleged abuser
- Record all subsequent events.

7.2 The Chief Executive or designated SOVA Co-ordinator in SWA must notify Social Services department or police of the disclosure, which then constitutes a referral.

7.3 Referral of personal information to the Social Services department or police should, wherever possible, be made with the service user's consent.

7.4 SWA will seek to ensure that vulnerable adults accessing SWA services are fully informed and consulted with regards to any decisions or referrals being made in relation to their wellbeing.

7.5 Under exceptional circumstances, referral may be made without the service user's consent i.e.:

- When the service user is considered to be unable to give informed consent
- In the public interest, where the benefits to an individual or to society outweigh the person's interest in keeping the information confidential e.g. when failure to do so may expose the person or others to risk of significant harm and/or may assist in the prevention or detection of a crime.

7.6 If disclosure is made in the public interest without the consent of the person, generally they should be informed that this course of action is being taken.

8.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 8.1 Workers must respect confidentiality and not divulge information given in confidence unless justified by assessed risk to the vulnerable adult or required under contract with Social Services or agreed through inter-agency protocols.
- 8.2 Swansea Women's Aid cannot give assurances of absolute confidentiality in cases where there are concerns about abuse, particularly in those situations when other vulnerable people may be at risk.
- 8.3 Please refer to Swansea Women's Aid Confidentiality Policy - Confidentiality, Data Protection and Sharing Information Policy – 2.09 for further details.

9.0 RISK & PROTECTION

- 9.1 Swansea Women's Aid acknowledges individual's rights to independent lives sometimes involving a degree of risk. Where an individual chooses to accept this risk, their wishes should be respected within the context of their capacity to anticipate and understand the risk. Where a number of individuals are at risk, a decision may need to be made to protect others, which goes against an individual's wishes.

10.0 WORKERS' TRAINING

- 10.1 All workers of Swansea Women's Aid will undergo appropriate training about the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse.

11.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 11.1 Sometimes people are the victims of abuse because they belong to a particular group in society. This policy takes into account ethnic origins, gender, sexuality, age, disability, religious and cultural background and is designed to counteract the abuse, whatever the underlying motivation.

12.0 POLICY REVIEW

SWA will review this policy every three years as per agreed deadlines or if there should there be a cause for concern with its implementation, or impact.

CONTACT DETAILS:

To report suspected abuse, contact Social Services - Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults at;

Tel: (01792) 636854

Email: adult.safeguarding@swansea.gov.uk
Website : [http:// www.safeguarding.wales /](http://www.safeguarding.wales/)

To report to SWA safeguarding leads, contact;

Lynne Sanders, Chief Executive
Tel: (01792) 644683
Email: lsanders@swanseawa.org.uk
or
Ann Collins, Trustee
Tel: (01792) 233694
Email: anncollins@practisetc.co.uk

Please refer to:

The Wales interim policy and procedure for the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse – January 2013
Safeguarding adults City and County of Swansea Factsheet 054/October 2013
Western Bay Professional Concerns Policy - revised 2019

These documents are stored on the SWA server – SWA Organisational – Safeguarding – SOVA.