

## VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

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## Policy statement

Trafford Housing Trust believes that every resident has the right to live their life with privacy, dignity, independence and choice and be free from abuse.

Trafford Housing Trust will work in collaboration with all legal and caring agencies to uphold this right and to ensure that our residents are protected from harm through abuse or exploitation at all times.

Trafford Housing Trust aims to provide a responsive housing service to all its tenants and residents. The organisation is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people receive the support and help they need to sustain their tenancy or accommodation successfully.

This policy has been developed in line with the guidance document 'No Secrets' published by the Department of Health.

## Aim of policy

This policy is intended to:

- Set out the values, principles and policies underpinning the organisations' approach to abuse
- Set out the procedure to be followed if abuse is suspected.

## Monitoring

Any allegations of abuse or neglect are recorded within the 'POVA' file located in the Housing Support Officers Office. This information allows managers to calculate how the process was dealt with, where joint working was initiated with other agencies and outcomes of allegations made.

At the Sheltered Housing Forums residents/tenants will annually review particular policies and procedures. It is at this stage residents/tenants will be invited to review current policy.

## Risk and protection

Trafford Housing Trust acknowledge 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. Trafford Housing Trust will work with other agencies to uphold the right of vulnerable adults to protection from harm and exploitation taking constructive use of the law.

## Equal opportunities

This policy and procedure takes account of people's ethnic origins, gender, sexuality, age, and any religious or cultural background.

Trafford Housing Trust will ensure that in our contact with service users and will respect the individual and their individuality.

## Training

All new staff will be trained to recognise abuse, how to deal with incidents and how to report their suspicions.

## Recruitment

When recruiting new staff Trafford Housing Trust will refer to the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Register.

## Review of this policy and procedure

This policy and procedure has been developed and implements in March 2006. It will be reviewed as dictated by circumstances or by March 2008 at the latest.

## I. Definitions

- (i) Abuse
- Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.
  - Abuse occurs in many forms and may consist of a single act or repeated acts.
  - Abuse may also be shown in failure to act in order to prevent abuse from occurring.

- Abuse may or may not result in a person being physically injured or ill.

(ii) Significant harm

Significant harm is taken to be ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment that are not physical), the impairment of, or avoidable deterioration in physical or mental health, and the impairment of physical, emotional, social or behavioural development.

(iii) Children

Defined as those service users who are under 16 years of age.

(iv) Vulnerable Adults

Those aged 16 and over who are, or who may be, in need of support services because of mental or other disability, age or illness and who are, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by others. Individuals who are recognised as most vulnerable include:

- Young people under 18 years of age
- Those who are older and more frail
- Those with a physical disability
- Those with a physical illness including a terminal illness
- Those with mental health needs, or dementia.

(v) Consent

In determining whether or not abuse or significant harm has taken place consent it is crucial to establish whether an act, relationship or situation is abusive of the person concerned. It is always necessary to determine whether the person could and did give informed consent to whatever took place. The person may be unable to give informed consent because of their age, severity of their disability, situation or health issue. This can significantly undermine their understanding of the basic elements of another person's behaviour.

## 2. Employment

### (i) Criminal Records Bureau Checks

The Association is a registered member of the Criminal Records Bureau. Any member of staff that is deemed to be working with vulnerable people must have a Criminal Records Bureau (Enhanced Check) before their employment commences.

### (ii) Protection of vulnerable adults (POVA)

Any member of staff that is deemed to be working with vulnerable people will have checks made against the POVA list. This will be done via the Criminal Records Bureau as part of a Disclosure under the Police Act 1997.

### (iii) Staff members responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that allegations of abuse or suspected abuse are reported. Each case of abuse must be taken forward in accordance with non-discriminatory practice with staff recognising the individual's needs irrespective of race, culture, religion, language, age, disability, gender or sexual orientation.

## 3. Recognition

### (i) Assessment

The seriousness or extent of abuse is often not clear when anxiety is first expressed. It is important therefore, when considering the appropriateness of intervention, to approach reports of incidents or allegations with an open mind. In making any assessments of seriousness the following factors need to be considered:

- The vulnerability of the individual
- The nature and extent of the abuse
- The length of time it has been occurring
- The impact on the individual

- The risk of repeated or increasingly serious acts involving this or other vulnerable adults.

What this means in practice is working through a process of assessment to evaluate:

- Is the person suffering harm or exploitation?
- Is intervention in the best interests of the vulnerable adult and/or in the public's interest?
- Does the assessment account for the depth and conviction of the feelings of the person alleging the abuse?

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults. To this end it is the responsibility of all staff to act on any suspicions or evidence of abuse, assault, neglect, oppression or discrimination and to pass on their concerns or suspicions to the immediate line manager.

(ii) Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to protect confidentiality, unless the adult gives their consent for it to be shared, but this may be overridden by:

- A risk to a child – the protection of children overrides all other interests
- An active police investigation
- A significant risk of suicide
- A significant risk of harm to a third party
- A need to safeguard an adult who has been abused or is at risk of further abuse where that adult lacks the capacity to make an informed choice.

(iii) What to do

In the event where abuse is suspected, witnessed, or reported it is important to take action.

## DO

- Listen and take seriously
- Offer reassurance, comfort and support
- Ask straightforward, non-leading questions simply and without making any judgements in order to establish the facts
- Make sure the adult fully understands the nature of the concerns and the choices facing them
- Consult the Line Manger to decide of what action to take if the adult is unable to give informed consent
- Make careful, factual notes of what is said including time and place as soon as possible and certainly before finishing work for the day
- Take precautions to preserve any forensic evidence and where there is a major injury contact the Ambulance Service and inform medical staff who attend that there injury may have been caused by abuse
- Inform the police where there is an allegation of a criminal act
- Inform the Line manager and ensure that the relevant Statutory Authority is contacted.

## Don't

- Be dismissive of the individual concern
- Assume information
- Be judgemental
- Ask leading questions or investigate beyond that which is necessary to establish basic facts
- Make promises that cannot be kept especially around confidentiality
- Go it alone by investigating the situation without reporting it formally

- Take action without the informed consent of the adult concerned and/or the line manager.

#### 4. Good practice in preventing and reducing abuse

##### (i) Choices

THT employees should ensure that service users exercise as much choice as possible in their daily lives. To this end employees will:

- Ensure that users have adequate information on which to base decisions
- Facilitate users to exercise choice regarding their personal affairs in a context of an agreed notion of what is an acceptable risk
- Ensure that a reasonable balance is achieved between self-determination, degree of risk involved and impact upon people
- Create safeguards to ensure that any limitation place on users' rights to exercise choice are explained, justified and reviewed regularly.

##### (ii) Rights

Employees should ensure that due regard is paid to users' rights by:

- Making certain that they are not subject to inhuman or degrading treatment, whether physical or mental
- Encouraging them to exercise their right to complain, hold opinions, to receive and impart information, particularly regarding any education, support and resettlement
- Respecting their private and family life, confidentiality of personal affairs and personal space
- Ensuring they receive appropriate information and support to enable and encourage them to exercise their rights

- Making sure that they deal discreetly with the affairs of service users and by safeguarding the confidentiality of the information held about them
- Safeguarding individual rights without discrimination on any grounds
- Ensuring that where it is deemed necessary to interfere with or restrict an individual's rights, such actions are recorded, explained to the individual and other interested parties, and reviewed regularly according to an agreed procedure.

### (iii) Independence

Employees should ensure that service users achieve and maintain a level of independence compatible with their abilities and wishes by:

- Consulting regularly with them and their relatives so as to understand their wishes regarding independence
- Help and encourage them to think and act independently as far as this is compatible with their own abilities. Their impact on other people and the risks involved
- Help and encourage tenants to give their views about any proposed changes to their service or accommodation, and to participate in making decisions about such changes in so far as they wish and are able to do so.
- Providing an environment that encourages users to do as much as possible for themselves
- Creating safeguards to ensure that all limitations placed on a user's scope to act independently are explained, justified and reviewed regularly.

### (iv) Dignity

**Trafford Housing Trust employees should recognise the intrinsic value of all users regardless of their circumstances by:**

- Respecting the uniqueness and individuality of people
- Recognising the whole person as they are now in the context of their previous life experiences

- Recognising and catering for cultural needs and norms
- Ensuring that practices are established that relate to the needs of users rather than those of staff
- Ensuring an open access policy is maintained to information kept about them
- Responding sensitively and promptly to any complaints from users, their relatives or other interested parties.

## I. Definition of abuse

Although there is no comprehensive or universal definition of abuse, it is generally agreed that abuse is about the misuse of power, trust, respect, control and/or authority. It violates a person's human and civil rights.

Abuse can be classified under various headings and can be defined as follows;

**“Physical, Sexual, Psychological, Financial, Discriminatory or Institutional”**

It may be intentional or unintentional, or the result of **Neglect**.

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. (DoH, 'No Secrets' 2000)

Action Elder Abuse defines abuse as “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 older person”.

It causes harm to the vulnerable adult either temporarily or over a period of time. It may occur within any setting – domestic or any “collective care” setting: namely care home (residential or nursing home), hospital, training centres, day centres. (Department of Health “No Longer Afraid” 1993 Page 3)

## What are the signs of abuse?

### 1. Physical abuse

This includes falls or injuries that are not satisfactorily explained, or, where the explanation offered is not conducive to the present injuries. It could be hitting, pushing, using inappropriate restraint or misusing medication. It also includes rough handling or the use of restraint that is not in keeping with 'care and responsibility' procedures.

#### Indicators

- Bruises 'finger tip' markings; grasp marks; pinpoint blood spots; outline bruising
- Bruising to soft tissue area, e.g. cheeks, mouth, neck, ears, stomach, chest, lower back, buttocks, genital area and thighs
- Unexplained fractures
- Bite marks
- Unexplained burns or scalding e.g. cigarette burns
- Frequent visits to GP or Accident and Emergency Department
- Changes of GP
- Poor communication, vague, implausible or inappropriate explanations
- Delays in reporting injuries
- Multiple injuries or a history of past injuries, especially falls
- Poisoning.

### 2. Sexual abuse

Sexual activity of any kind where the person does not give, or is not able to give consent. This relates to all forms of sexual activity including non-contact activity such as pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism. All sexual activity involving staff will be deemed as abusive and must be reported immediately.

### Indicators

- Bruises of the genital area, patchy bruising of the inner thighs, buttocks; includes matching bruising caused by forced restraint.
- Genital/urinary irritation.
- Bleeding including evidence of bleeding on clothing.
- Sexually transmitted disease.
- Unexplained difficulty walking.
- Appearing to be unable to sit comfortably.
- Reluctance to be alone with another person.
- Sexually disinhibited behaviour.
- Obsessive behaviour i.e. washing/dressing.
- Reluctance to be toileted, or any routine involving genital area being revealed.
- Bites.
- Self harm.

There may be indicators from a sudden alteration of personality e.g. mood swings, or display fear, sudden onset of confusion, or becoming withdrawn; obsessive behaviour or unwillingness to comply with personal care routines, i.e. washing of certain parts of the body. On occasion sexual abuse may result in excessive washing.

Predetermined factors include:

- A known history of incest
- Living with someone with a history of sexual offences
- A martial situation where sexual abuse has occurred previously.

Abuse may also be occurring as a result of several individuals abusing a vulnerable adult as in the case of 'gang rape'.

### 3. Emotional/Psychological abuse

The provocation of fear through threats of force, intimidation, humiliation or emotional blackmail. It can include verbal abuse, humiliation, bullying, the use of threats, socially isolating the individual, or denying them choice, e.g. through preventing them receiving services.

#### *Indicators*

- Insomnia/excessive sleep.
- Weight loss/change in appetite.
- Mood swings, i.e. displays of emotion.
- Low self esteem.
- Withdrawal/apathy.
- Agitation.
- Confusion.
- Paranoia.
- Deterioration in physical capabilities.
- Subservience.
- Difficulty of the professional to gain access.

### 4. Financial abuse

Taking money or property without permission or the denial of access of the individual to money, benefits, property and possessions, through acts of omission or commission, or the extortion of such through threats.

#### *Indicators*

- Unexplained withdrawal of monies.
- Inability to meet commitments or make purchases.

- Disparity between the apparent lifestyle and assets.
- Refusal to pay for services when it does not appear that finance is an issue.
- Family interests in the individual's finances.
- Sudden disappearance of favourite or valuable possessions.
- Loss of financial documents such as pension books, building society books.

## 5. Neglect

Causing a vulnerable adult to suffer by the withholding of adequate care for daily living, whether intentional or unintentional. This includes nutrition, heating, treatments, or administering an inappropriate level of treatment. This could also involve non-intervention to prevent harm to an individual who is not considered to have sufficient capacity to appreciate risk.

### *Indicators*

- Being left in wet or soiled clothing/inappropriate clothing.
- Malnutrition.
- Dehydration.
- Unexplained weight loss.
- Pressure sores/ulcers.
- Untreated medical problems/non-compliance with medication, or over sedation.
- Movement restricted due to aids being moved out of reach.
- Reduction in physical capabilities.
- Isolation, i.e. being left in a room.
- Depression.
- Lack of attention to personal hygiene needs.

- In a residential setting being treated differently from other residents, e.g. isolated in a room.
- Poor skin conditions and poor resistance to infection and disease.

**Discriminatory abuse** - Involves treating a person in a way that does not respect their race, culture and ethnic background, age, sex, disability and sexuality.

#### **Indicators**

- Unequal treatment.
- Verbal abuse.
- Inappropriate use of language.
- Slurs.
- Harassment.
- Deliberate exclusion.

**Institutional abuse** - Occurs when routines and rules make a person alter his/her own preferred lifestyle and culture to fit the needs of an institution (such as residential and nursing homes, hospitals, schools, colleges, housing schemes, etc).

#### **Indicators**

- Dirty clothing and bed linen only changed when staff considers it necessary.
- Lack of personal clothing and possessions.
- Deprived environment and lack of stimulation.
- Inappropriate nursing or medical procedures (e.g. enemas or catheterisation).
- Illegal confinement or restriction.
- Inappropriate use of power or control.
- People referred to or spoken to with disrespect.
- Inflexible services based on needs of provider rather than the person receiving the services.
- Service user removed from their home without discussion with other appropriate people or agencies because staff are unable to manage their behavior.

In supported and Sheltered Housing indicators include:

- Staff using master keys without due cause
- Staff entering flats/rooms without permission or not waiting for reply after knocking
- Breaches of residents confidentiality
- Restrictive practices in the use of communal facilities

### Common causes of abuse

There is research evidence that suggest that the following factors can cause abuse by family members:

- When the abuser is dependent on alcohol or drugs; suffers from mental illness; or is dependent on the victim emotionally or financially (e.g. for housing)
- Where abusive behaviour, learned in childhood, becomes a pattern
- When the stress of caring for a physically and/or mentally frail adult with inadequate support can lead to abusive behaviour towards the adult
- Where the abuser gains from their abusive behaviour.

There is evidence that the likely causes of abuse by paid staff include a combination of the following factors:

- Stress
- Poor supervision and management
- Poor terms and conditions
- Poor or non-existent training
- Poor or non-existent policies, procedures and guidance
- Working in isolation.

Factors can be associated with abuse by carers where care givers:

- Have suffered an enforced, unplanned change in lifestyle which has affected personal ambitions, career, etc
- Are or feel exploited by other family members and/or by professional workers
- Have been unable to express or have had difficulty in making other family members and or professional workers understand their stress and provide the services which they and the vulnerable adult need
- Suffer physical or mental illness
- Suffer severe stress or are exhausted through lack of sleep and/or heavy physical demands
- Have to live with a person who shows major behavioural disturbance
- Lack support and social contacts
- Are isolated and lack other adult relationships with satisfy emotional needs
- Have financial difficulties
- Are dependent on the vulnerable adult for money, housing or emotional needs
- Have drug or alcohol related problems
- Have a long standing history or relationship difficulties
- Lack understanding of the aging process/progressive illness/needs of the vulnerable adult
- Make frequent contact with statutory or voluntary agencies without any resolution
- Have other dependents who make conflicting demands
- Have no personal space
- Are subject to abuse by the vulnerable adult
- Are in a role reversed relationship i.e. are caring for an individual who used to care for them

- Live in poor and/or overcrowded housing
- Lack knowledge regarding how to offer adequate care
- Experience a change of cultural expectations
- Have a poor relationship with the victim
- Have a sense of unfairness, resentment or of being victimized
- Feel hostile or aggressive towards helping agencies
- Have a sense of not being cared for or respected themselves

## Procedure for staff who have concerns that abuse may be occurring;-

### 1. Introduction

Trafford Housing Trust has a duty of care to report any concerns that abuse may be happening.

This duty of care is governed by:

- A moral duty to care for those in our supported housing schemes or properties who are vulnerable
- A contractual responsibility as an employee of Trafford Housing Trust
- A professional duty to always act in the best interests of the resident or member of their household.

All staff have a duty to report concerns or allegations of abuse. Reporting abuse and suspected abuse, even when a colleague or the staff or another organisation may be involved is essential. Staff reporting allegations of abuse will be treated confidentially and the report will be treated as a protected disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

The failure to report abuse in circumstances where staff are aware that abuse is, or may be taking place, may constitute a disciplinary offence.

Staff reporting concerns have the right to expect that allegations are treated seriously and are acted upon. Where staff feel that appropriate action has not been taken by the investigating Manager they have a duty to report to a more Senior Manager.

Where staff have acted within procedural guidelines they will be fully supported by Trafford Housing Trust irrespective of the outcome of the abuse investigation.

Staff will be provided with training and supervision with the implementation of this procedure.

## 2. Procedure

- (i) Where abuse has taken place or is suspected staff must in the first instance ensure that where possible and appropriate the alleged victim is safe, supported and protected from further abuse.
- (ii) In circumstances of serious abuse e.g. child abuse or where a criminal act has taken place, Social Services and/or the Police must be contacted at the earliest opportunity to ensure the victim is protected. Consideration should be made whether the victim requires urgent medical attention. You should liaise with a more senior member of staff if you require support and assistance to determine the need to involve other agencies at this stage.
- (iii) Staff must **not** have discussions about the alleged abuse with the individuals involved or with other staff or residents, without a Manager's express permission in advance.
- (iv) If the alleged perpetrator is in the vicinity, do not confront them about the incident.
- (v) Staff should complete the Report of Suspected Abuse Form. On the form record clearly state what your concerns are and why you have them. Be clear, factual and concise and date and sign your report form. Where other agencies have been contacted staff should ensure that this information is clearly recorded.
- (vi) The Report of Suspected Abuse Form must be forwarded to your Line Manager as soon as possible. In their absence, or if the abuse involves your manager or a more senior manager the next most senior manager should be contacted. In the case of the Chief Executive the Chair of the Board should be contacted. It is the responsibility of the staff member reporting abuse to ensure that the manager involved receives the report form.

- (vii) If you suspect that physical or sexual abuse has taken place recently try not to allow the victim to have assistance to wash, bathe. (i.e.: home care staff, family members).
- (viii) The investigating manager will contact you in the event that further information is required from you.
- (ix) Staff will be offered effective support by the manager receiving the report should they require this. Staff should raise with their manager if they feel unable to continue with their duties as a result of dealing with the abusive incident.

## Capacity and self-determination

Adults should be free to determine their own lives, take risks and make their own decisions except in certain prescribed circumstances. Legally, there is a presumption of capacity unless demonstrated otherwise. The fact that someone suffers from dementia does not automatically mean they lack capacity. In some cases, capacity can fluctuate. An individual can be deemed to have capacity to take responsibility for some decisions and not others. Therefore in a situation of suspected, alleged or actual abuse an individual's capacity to understand and make decisions should be assessed.

Very often, an individual's capacity to make key decisions is determined by GP's and mental health teams. However, in order to make a referral for such an assessment the vulnerable adult's consent needs to be obtained. If consent is withheld, an initial judgement needs to be made on whether refusal of consent should be respected or whether the individual lacks the capacity to make that decision.

Considering the following questions may help the employee to reach a conclusion:

### I. The capacity for self-determination

- Is the person aware of the choice/decision they are making?
- Are they able to make their own decision and choices and do they wish to do so?
- Do they have the capacity to understand the implications of their situation and to what they are consenting?
- Do they have the capacity to refuse, or to assert and communicate their will?

In order to make a sound assessment of this the vulnerable adult's emotional, physical, intellectual and mental capacity in relation to self-determination and consent should be considered.

Where a vulnerable adult appears to be able make informed decisions and choices, and is not being intimidated, the available options should be explored with them. Their wishes should be respected unless these conflict with a statutory duty to intervene or unless another person(s) is considered to be at risk.

## 2. Consent

- Did the person, subject to the apparent abuse, give their consent?
- Did they give consent freely and willingly?

Action with which the vulnerable adult does not agree, or where they do not understand what they are agreeing to, may be abuse.

Consent is a critical issue in defining when sexual and financial transactions might be deemed abusive, and in determining whether to intervene. Both ability to understand and freedom from pressure or intimidation are essential components in assessing this question.

## 3. Risk

- Does the vulnerable adult appreciate and understand the nature, extent and consequences of any risk they may be subject to?
- Do they willingly accept such risk?

All people have a right to make choices, insofar as they are able and maintain their independence even if this involves a degree of risk. Where an individual chooses to accept this risk, their wishes should be respected within their capacity to anticipate and understand the level of risk and possible consequences.

There is a need to balance the right to self-determination and risk taking against the capacity to understand these rights freely and with understanding and awareness. The greater the risk, the more important it is to be sure that capacity and freedom from pressure exist in exercising these rights.

## Procedures for managers investigating allegations of abuse

The Report of Suspected Abuse Form must be completed as fully as possible by a member of staff (Housing Support Officer, Scheme Domestic, Mobile Housing Support Officer, Home Care Staff, Maintenance Person) and passed to the Line Manager, or in her/his absence the next available Line Manager.

Where the allegation relates to a manager their Line Manager must be notified of the allegation. The report will contain very sensitive information and only two copies should exist, one held by the investigating Manager and a copy for the relevant and appropriate Head of Service/Director/Chief Executive, etc.

The manager receiving the referral must take responsibility for ensuring that the allegation is investigated in accordance with this procedure.

The manager must obtain as much information as possible regarding:

- The individual who may be the victim of abuse, including clarifying whether or not he/she is aware of the referral
- The nature of the alleged abuse
- The alleged abuser
- Other family members
- Whether other agencies have already been made aware of the allegation

The procedure to be adopted to investigate an allegation will vary depending upon whether a staff member is the perpetrator of the abuse. In these circumstances the manager must refer to the Whistleblowing procedure and consult with the Head of Organisational Development/HR Advisor to determine the appropriate investigation procedure and whether any immediate sanction should be imposed on the alleged perpetrator.

In the event that the Whistleblowing procedure is not the appropriate procedure for investigating the allegation, for example where the alleged perpetrator is a resident, the following procedure must be adopted.

Where the allegation indicates that a possible criminal act or domestic violence has taken place the manager must contact the Police. If the Police decide that they wish to be involved, they should take the lead in the investigation and all interviews.

Where the allegation indicates that a child has been abused the matter must be referred to the Social Services Department and/or other Inspection Agency to determine the lead agency to conduct an investigation.

The manager must not interview the alleged victim or anyone other than the staff member making the initial referral until after the Police, Social Services or other agency have decided on their need to be involved.

The manager receiving the referral must ensure that the matter is investigated. In circumstances where another agency had agreed to undertake the investigation the manager must keep in regular contact with the agency to ensure Trafford Housing Trust is updated and aware of progress. In some cases the manager may agree to participate in a joint investigation with other agencies as appropriate.

In circumstances where there is no immediate evidence to warrant the manager discussing the allegation with other agencies, the manager is responsible for conducting an internal investigation into the allegation. The investigation must involve two managers, with any other specialist staff being brought in as and when required.

The manager will ensure that:

- The alleged victim and any witnesses are interviewed as soon as possible after receiving the referral
- One interviewer should ideally be known to the individual
- Accurate recording of the investigation takes place
- Consideration is given to the choice of venue for the interview.

The aim of this interview is to:

- To ascertain the facts to enable an assessment regarding the allegations to take place
- To explain the purpose of the interview and outline possible future action
- To identify the needs and wishes of the alleged victim
- To obtain any agreement with the individual to involve other agencies
- When abuse has occurred, to protect the individual and prevent further abuse

When conducting the interview:

- The alleged victim should be asked if they want anyone present during the meeting
- The individual must never be interviewed in the presence of the alleged abuser
- The individual must be informed of their right to self-determination. Their wishes and opinions must be respected and consent must be obtained for anyone else to be consulted/informed
- Staff must ensure the individual understands what is taking place and give consideration to the mental capacity of the individual
- Staff must take regular notes and explain the purpose of these
- If it becomes apparent that the Police or social services should become involved, consent should be obtained for this.
- **If consent is withheld then consideration must be given to making a genuinely anonymous referral if there is an over-riding need to protect the interests of other vulnerable persons**
- If there are any injuries consent should be obtained for medical treatment from a GP or the hospital
- The individual will be informed of possible options to deal with the situation to help them to decide what they wish to happen.

## Outcome of Interview

The manager conducting the investigation must decide whether or not abuse is indicated at any stage of the procedure. Dependent upon the circumstances the manager may decide to speak to the Police or social services during the investigation although the needs and wishes of the individual must be respected at all times.

The following outcomes will result from the investigation: -

**If abuse indicated and consent obtained for further consultation or action:**

- Police or Social Services to be consulted as appropriate
- Arrange any immediate support services, including alternative accommodation when appropriate, when required to reduce the risk to the individual
- Undertake a more comprehensive assessment or support needs and risks involving other agencies involved in the individual's care
- Co-ordinate review meeting with other agencies as appropriate.

**If abuse is not indicated:**

- The reason for reaching this decision must be recorded and signed by the two managers conducting the investigation
- This decision should be communicated to the person making the allegation to include recourse to the complaints procedure should they continue to feel dissatisfied.

**If abuse is indicated but the individual has indicated that they do not want any further action to be taken:**

- The reasons for reaching this decision is recorded and signed by the two managers conducting the investigation
- Notify person making the allegation of the decision
- Managers should consider the circumstances of the allegation, for example child abuse, criminal offence or personal safety which override the abused wish for confidentiality and result in further action being taken
- Consideration should also be given to any evidence of threats to the victim, any duress, threats to public interest, safety issues and damage to Trafford Housing Trust's reputation which may also override the client's wishes.

The manager must ensure that all copies of all correspondence relating to the referral, investigation, outcomes and decisions are passed to the Line Manager who will ensure records are stored securely to protect confidentiality and to be used for ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of the procedure.



*This document was reviewed in February 2009 and will be re reviewed in one year or as circumstances dictate.*

### Report of suspected abuse

Record clearly what your concerns are and why you have them. Be clear, factual and concise and date and sign your report form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Staff member completing this form:

\_\_\_\_\_

Position & Place of Work:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name and address of Person Suspected of being abused:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of alleged abuser: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Please give reasons why you suspect abuse could have or is taking place and if any abuse has been observed by yourself or another person (please give the details below)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Who is this report to be handed to?

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Has any other agency such as the police or social services been contacted.  
If yes, please give details

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**Managers report of suspected abuse**

Record clearly what your concerns are and why you have them. Be clear, factual and concise and date and sign your report form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Manager completing this form:

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Name and address of Person Suspected of being abused:

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Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of alleged abuser: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: THT employee/other professional/family member/friend/other

Is the Whistleblowing Procedure appropriate? Yes/No

Has a Criminal Act or Domestic Violence taken place? Yes/No

If yes

Date police notified \_\_\_\_\_ Officer Details \_\_\_\_\_

Is referral to Social Services appropriate? Yes/No

Justify decision

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Give respect Get respect



business for neighbourhoods



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



If yes

Date of notification \_\_\_\_\_ Officer details \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview with Complainant \_\_\_\_\_

Interview notes attached? Yes/No

If no, state location of interview notes

\_\_\_\_\_

Outcome of Interview:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

