Kingston Women's Centre

Safeguarding Adults Policy

Reviewed June 2025

Introduction

Kingston Women's Centre KWC) is committed to Safeguarding Adults in line with national legislation and relevant national and local guidelines.

We will safeguard adults by ensuring that our activities are delivered in a way which keeps all adults safe.

KWC is committed to creating a culture of zero-tolerance of harm to adults which necessitates: the recognition of adults who may be at risk and the circumstances which may increase risk; knowing how adult abuse, exploitation or neglect manifests itself; and being willing to report safeguarding concerns.

KWC is committed to best safeguarding practice and to uphold the rights of all adults to live a life free from harm from abuse, exploitation and neglect.

Policy Statement

KWC believes everyone has the right to live free from abuse or neglect regardless of age, ability or disability, sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status.

KWC is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.

KWC acknowledges that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and is committed to prevent abuse and neglect through safeguarding the welfare of all adults involved.

KWC recognises that health, well-being, ability, disability and need for care and support can affect a person's resilience. We recognise that some people experience barriers, for example, to communication in raising concerns or seeking help. We recognise that these factors can vary at different points in people's lives.

KWC recognises that there is a legal framework within which we need to work to safeguard adults who have needs for care and support and for protecting those who are unable to take action to protect themselves and will act in accordance with the relevant safeguarding adult legislation and with local statutory safeguarding procedures.

Actions taken by KWC will be consistent with the principles of adult safeguarding ensuring that any action taken is prompt, proportionate and that it includes and respects the voice of the adult concerned.

Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of KWCto safeguarding adults and to ensure that everyone involved in KWCis aware of:

- The legislation, policy and procedures for safeguarding adults.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding adults.
- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult within the organisation.

Scope
This safeguarding adult policy and associated procedures apply to all individuals involved in KWC including Trustees, Staff, Supervisors, Counsellors and Assessors and to all concerns about the safety of adults whilst attending counselling.

Commitments
In order to implement this policy KWC will ensure that:

- Everyone involved with KWC is aware of the safeguarding adult procedures and knows what to do and who to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult.

- Any concern that an adult is not safe is taken seriously, responded to promptly, and followed up in line with KWC Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures.

- The well-being of those at risk of harm will be put first and the adult actively supported to communicate their views and the outcomes they want to achieve. Those views and wishes will be respected and supported unless there are overriding reasons not to (see KWC Confidentiality Policy).

- Any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm.

- Confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored in line with our Data Protection Policy and Procedures

- KWC acts in accordance with best practice advice, for example, from the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

- KWC will cooperate with the Police and the relevant Local Authorities in taking action to safeguard an adult.

- All Board members, staff, officials and volunteers understand their role and responsibility for safeguarding adults and have completed and are up to date with safeguarding adult training and learning opportunities appropriate for their role.

- KWC uses safe recruitment practices and continually assesses the suitability of volunteers and staff to prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals in this organisation.

- Actions taken under this policy are reviewed by the Board and senior management team on an annual basis.

- This policy and related policies are reviewed no less than on a two yearly basis and whenever there are changes in relevant legislation and/or government guidance as required by the Local Safeguarding Board and the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) or as a result of any other significant change or event.

Implementation
KWC is committed to developing and maintaining its capability to implement this policy and procedures. In order to do so the following will be in place:

- A clear line of accountability within the organisation for the safety and welfare of all adults.
- Access to relevant legal and professional advice.
- Regular management reports to the Board detailing how risks to adult safeguarding are being addressed and how any reports have been addressed.
- Safeguarding adult procedures that deal effectively with any concerns of abuse or neglect, including those caused through poor practice.
- A Safeguarding Lead – the Counselling Co-ordinator is the Safeguarding lead
- Arrangements to work effectively with other relevant organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults.
- Risk assessments that specifically include safeguarding of adults.
- Policies and procedures that address the following areas and which are consistent with this Safeguarding Adults policy.

  - ✓ Child Protection
  - ✓ Confidentiality Policy
  - ✓ Equality, diversity and inclusion
  - ✓ Concerns, Complaints and Compliments
  - ✓ Discipline and grievance
  - ✓ Safe recruitment and selection (staff and volunteers)
  - ✓ Information policy, data protection and information sharing

Supporting Information
Key Points

- There is a **legal duty on Local Authorities** to provide support to 'adults at risk'.

- **Adults at risk** are defined in legislation

- The safeguarding legislation applies **to all forms of abuse** that harm a person's well-being.

- The law provides a framework for good practice in safeguarding that makes the overall **well-being** of the adult at risk a priority of any intervention.

- The law emphasises the importance of **person-centred safeguarding,** (referred to as **'Making Safeguarding Personal'**).

- The law provides a framework for making decisions on behalf of adults who can't make decisions for themselves (**Mental Capacity**).

- The law provides a framework for all organisations to **share information and cooperate** to protect adults at risk.

Safeguarding Adults Legislation
Safeguarding Adults is compliant with United Nations directives on the rights of disabled people and commitments to the rights of older people. It is covered by:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018

The practices and procedures within this policy are based on the relevant legislation and government guidance:

- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, and
- The Care Act 2014.

These laws establish the framework for safeguarding, including reporting requirements, DBS checks, and the duty to protect individuals from abuse and neglect.

Definition of an Adult at Risk

An **adult at risk** is an individual aged 18 years and over who:

(a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) AND;
(b) is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, AND;
(c) as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. Any or all of the following types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence, omission or ignorance.

There are different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and different circumstances in which they may take place.

Types of abuse:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Psychological
- Neglect
- Financial

Abuse can take place in any relationship and there are many contexts in which abuse might take place; e.g. Domestic Abuse, Forced Marriage, Sexual Exploitation.

Abuse or neglect can be carried out by:

- A spouse, partner or family member
- Neighbours or residents
- Friends, acquaintances or strangers
- People who deliberately exploit adults they perceive as vulnerable

Often the perpetrator is known to the adult and may be in a position of trust and/or power.

Signs and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

An adult may confide to a counsellor or the counsellor may suspect that this is the case. There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. There may be other explanations, but they should not be ignored. The signs and symptoms include but are not limited to:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present.
- Person has belongings or money going missing.
- Person is not attending / no longer enjoying their sessions.

- Someone losing or gaining weight / an unkempt appearance.
- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person.
- Self-harm.
- A fear of a particular group of people or individual.
- They may tell you / another person they are being abused – i.e. a disclosure

Wellbeing Principle
The concept of 'well-being' is threaded throughout UK legislation and is part of the Law about how health and social care is provided. Our well-being includes our mental and physical health, our relationships, our connection with our communities and our contribution to society.

Being able to live free from abuse and neglect is a key element of well-being.

The legislation recognises that statutory agencies have sometimes acted disproportionately in the past. For example, removing an adult at risk from their own home when there were other ways of preventing harm. In the words of Justice Mumby '*What good is it making someone safe when we merely make them miserable?'* What Price Dignity? (2010)

For that reason any actions taken to safeguard an adult must take their whole well-being into account and be proportionate to the risk of harm.

Person Centred Safeguarding/ Making Safeguarding Personal
The legislation also recognises that adults make choices that may mean that one part of our well-being suffers at the expense of another – for example we move away from friends and family to take a better job. Similarly, adults can choose to risk their personal safety; for example, to provide care to a partner with dementia who becomes abusive when they are disorientated and anxious. None of us can make these choices for another adult. If we are supporting someone to make choices about their own safety we need to understand 'What matters' to them and what outcomes they want to achieve from any actions agencies take to help them to protect themselves.

The concept of 'Person Centred Safeguarding'/'Making Safeguarding Personal' means engaging the person in a conversation about how best to respond to their situation in a way that enhances their involvement, choice and control, as well as improving their quality of life, well-being and safety. KWC works to support adults to achieve the outcomes they want for themselves. The adult's views, wishes, feelings and beliefs must be taken into account when decisions are made about how to support them to be safe. There may be many different ways to prevent further harm. Working with the person will mean that actions taken help them to find the solution that is right for them. Treating people with respect, enhancing their dignity and supporting their ability to make decisions also helps promote people's sense of self-worth and supports recovery from abuse.

The Principles of Adult Safeguarding
The Care Act 2014. The Act's principles are:
- **Empowerment** - People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.

- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Reporting safeguarding concerns
Counsellors will report instances of abuse, or matters causing serious concern regarding a client's welfare to their supervisor and keep records of the causes of concern. If the abuse is serious enough and/or cannot be resolved the counsellors and supervisor will escalate the matter to the Counselling Co-ordinator, the Safeguarding Lead who may:

- If the risk is immediate call the police or ambulance
- Report to the local safeguarding team
- Gather more information and provide support

(Refer to KWC Confidentiality Policy)

Recording and Information Sharing
KWC(KWC) complies with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (please read in conjunction with KWC's Confidentiality Policy).

Information about concerns of abuse includes personal data. It is therefore important to be clear as to the grounds for processing and sharing information about concerns of abuse.

Processing information includes record keeping. Records relating to safeguarding concerns must be accurate and relevant. They must be stored confidentially with access only to those with a need to know.

Sharing information, with the right people, is central to good practice in safeguarding adults. However, information sharing must only ever be with those with a 'need to know'. This does **NOT** automatically include the persons spouse, partner, adult, child, unpaid or paid carer.

Contact with GPs or other professionals
Client's written permission must be obtained using the Permission to Contact Form before any contact may be made with their GP or other professionals. Letters to GP's or other professionals must be written under the guidance of the Supervisor, who will liaise with the Counselling Co-ordinator, as required, and must be checked with them before being issued. Where there is concern for the client and they have not, or will not, consent, the Supervisor must be informed who will liaise with the Counselling Co-ordinator, as required, and the confidentiality policy must be followed.

Safeguarding Lead	Counselling Co-ordinator-Annabelle Blackhurst (clinical@kingstonwomenscentre.org.uk)
Safeguarding Trustee	Miranda Arya