

Kew Neighbourhood Association (charity number 1034340)

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures: guidance for our volunteers.

2nd edition, January 2021

1. Kew Neighbourhood Association (KNA) and safeguarding

Safeguarding is a legal requirement for all organisations working with people. It is about protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. All our safeguarding documents are on the KNA web site. This leaflet explains how safeguarding affects you as one of our valued volunteers. **Please confirm that you have read and understood this document either by post, or by email to mail@kna.org.uk**

2. What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is a legal requirement for all organisations working with people. **Safeguarding is aimed at people with care and support needs who may be in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of abuse or neglect** (Government Fact Sheet 7 on Care Act 2014). The word 'safeguarding' was first used in relation to children who were at risk of harm – violence, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional abuse – from adults responsible for their care – notably parents and residential carers. During the 1970s, scandals in some residential settings, including hospitals, for older people and adults with learning disabilities, led to greater concern about the safeguarding of 'vulnerable adults'. Since then, further scandals, particularly those arising from the Jimmy Savile case, have resulted in far greater awareness. Also, research into the abuse of older people has shown that a small minority experience abuse of different kinds, including financial exploitation. The UK government has responded by passing a number of laws both to try to prevent and then, if prevention fails, to address these issues.

3. What do we mean by abuse and neglect?

The abuse, or mistreatment, of adults, can occur in many different ways. While sexual and physical abuse invariably make the headlines, the more common forms of abuse for adults are emotional/psychological abuse (bullying, shouting, harassing, ignoring, coercing), neglect (failing to address basic needs of care) and financial exploitation (where someone takes advantage of another person to steal their money or belongings). Self-neglect (if someone is seriously failing to look after themselves) is also included.

4. Who are the people at risk of abuse or neglect?

Safeguarding is relevant to all ages, but people aged 85 and over are a core group who may be in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of abuse or neglect. This is because, after the age of 85, we are more likely to suffer from physical frailty, sensory limitations (eyes and ears) and mental incapacity (the onset of dementia to a greater or lesser degree). We are also more likely to be living on our own or caring for a partner, and to be dependent on family members or staff from a care agency. Here are two examples of abuse. In an unhappy marriage, emotional abuse may occur if a husband has dementia and is aggressive, but his wife is now particularly vulnerable because of a heart condition and osteoporosis. Or, if we are thinking of financial abuse, you discover how the companion you visit is now always going out to, and paying for, meals with his nephew, but to your knowledge, he has only recently ever seen his nephew. The nephew's motive could be to persuade your companion to part with his money – or even to change his will in his nephew's favour.

Although these examples use family members, it is important to know that paid staff can be guilty of abuse and neglect and financial exploitation. Indeed, so can volunteers! And, it is possible that the abuse can happen the other way round – you, as the volunteer, are treated aggressively or manipulated to do something that you know you should not be doing.

5. How would I recognise abuse?

You may notice changes in someone you have been in touch with regularly – they are 'not themselves' – a cheerful person becomes quiet and depressed. Or someone else says to you, 'I am concerned about Muriel, her husband is always shouting at her'. Or another user says that they are afraid that the new home carer is taking money from their friend's purse when she does her shopping. Or your companion accuses you of stealing from them. Obviously, none of these things in themselves mean anything, but if you are uneasy or worried, it is important for you to share that concern.

6. What should I do?

There are two essential things:

1. be **aware** that abuse can and does happen;
2. **share any concerns** that you have with KNA's nominated safeguarding person, Abi, or our nominated safeguarding trustee, Claudine McCreadie. NEVER think, 'oh this is my imagination; no-one will believe me' or 'it is nothing to do with me, I am only a driver'. It is OUR concern, as a local charity and we need to know if you are worried. We will not need to use your name as the source of our concern except in the very unlikely event of having to refer the matter to the local authority or the police.

7. What should I NOT do?

In no circumstances should you get involved, beyond the **very important** task of sharing your concerns. Whatever your task is as a volunteer, stick to that and **do not** try to 'sort out' a situation that is worrying you.

8. What will happen if I report my concerns?

KNA staff will follow our safeguarding procedures. Our responsibility will always be to serve the best interest of the 'vulnerable person'. This may involve talking with the user or with the local authority, but we will not be naming you, except in the most unlikely event that the local authority initiated an enquiry, or, if a criminal offence is concerned, the police.

9. Contact details

Nominated Safeguarding Person (NSP): Abi, KNA Co-ordinator
mail@kna.org.uk **07951 293 319**

Nominated Safeguarding Trustee (NST): Claudine McCreadie, 020 8241 7627

Abi and Claudine are very happy to answer any questions that you may have.
Please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please confirm that you have read and understood this document either by post, or by email to mail@kna.org.uk

KNA Volunteer Signature (handwritten or electronic):

Print Name:

Date: