Selsey Community Forum
Adults at Risk Protection Policy

Policy Statement
Every person has the right to live a life free from abuse, neglect and fear and safeguarding adults at risk is everyone's business and responsibility. Selsey Community Forum is required to take reasonable measures to protect adults at risk when they use the Charity's services such as community services, activities or events run by Selsey Community Forum. This policy outlines the steps that must be taken when staff or volunteers working on behalf of Selsey Community Forum come into contact with adults at risk in order to minimise any potential risk situations and covers the reporting of any concerns they may have regarding an adult at risk.

Definition
Adult at Risk (formerly Vulnerable Adult) means any person aged 18 years or over who is receiving or may need community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

In respect of this Policy, the term 'adult at risk' can include people with learning disabilities, people with reduced physical or mental capacities due to advanced age, people with physical or sensory disabilities, people with mental ill health, people with certain physical illnesses or people with drug or alcohol problems. It also includes those adults at risk because of their caring role or family responsibilities or their experience of domestic violence/abuse, substance misuse or homelessness.

Adult abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Adult abuse can consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological; it may be an act of neglect or failure to act or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

Harm and Significant Harm are the two terms within Adult Safeguarding used to determine how serious or extensive abuse must be to justify intervention.

Harm is defined as:
- Ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment that are not physical)
- The impairment of development and/or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health
- The impairment of physical, emotional, social or behavioural development or the impairment of health
- Unlawful conduct which appropriates or adversely affects property, rights or interests (for example theft, fraud, embezzlement or extortion)

Significant Harm is defined as:
The impact of harm upon a person will be individual and depend upon each person's circumstances and the severity, degree or effect of this upon that person. The concept of 'significant harm' is therefore relative to each individual concerned.

Scope

This Policy relates to all Selsey Community Forum Trustees, staff and volunteers who regularly come into contact with vulnerable adults in the course of their work. This policy also relates to others carrying out duties on behalf of Selsey Community Forum and to those agencies and contractors working on Selsey Community Forum's behalf.

Safeguarding adults at risk is everyone's business and responsibility. All persons acting on behalf of Selsey Community Forum must take all reasonable steps to safeguard and protect the rights, health and well-being of adults at risk who take part in activities, events and other services organised by Selsey Community Forum.

Context

If there are any concerns, they should be reported by the Chair of the Trustees to the Local Adult Safeguarding Board, which is a multi-agency partnership, made up of a range of statutory, independent and voluntary agencies and organisations. As part of this, there may be a requirement to share information, co-operate in adult protection cases, contribute to serious case reviews where appropriate and generally promote co-operation between the organisations in safeguarding adults.

Staff who are in regular contact with adults at risk have the responsibility to be aware of the possible signs of abuse. They are in a position to observe outward signs of neglect or abuse. Selsey Community Forum staff have a responsibility to be proactive, and to refer suspected cases of neglect or abuse. It is important that any concern or allegation is taken seriously and the appropriate people are alerted. It is important to remember that there may be concerns that have been raised by others that you are not aware of and this can enable serious abuse or harm to be prevented from happening or from escalating.

Legislation

Department of Health 'No Secrets' 2000 requires that a multi-agency framework is set up led by Adult Social Care but also including the health service and police with each agency having a lead manager for the issue. It is required to develop policies for responding to allegations, carrying out investigations and balancing confidentiality and information sharing. The aim is for all local agencies to work together to prevent, investigate and take action with regards to abuse and neglect of adults at risk. 'No Secrets' says the first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of adults at risk. To this end, it is the responsibility of all staff to act on any suspicion of abuse or neglect and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person/agency (see also the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998). The 'No Secrets' 2000 report was reviewed in 2009.

Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 provides legal protection and assistance to victims of crime, particularly domestic abuse. It brought in new rules for trials for causing the death of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 protects people's right to make their own decisions in any situation where they are able to do so.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 enabled the setting up of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) to prevent unsuitable people form working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. The ISA makes decisions about who should be on the barring lists that are part of the Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS).

Care Act 2014 is the primary legislation in England for the support and protection of adults. It put people and their carers in control of their care and support. The legislation sets out how people's care and support needs should be met and introduces the right to an assessment for anyone, including carers and self-funders, in need of support. The act's "wellbeing principle" spells out a local authority's duty to ensure people's wellbeing is at the centre of all it does with greater emphasis on outcomes and helping people to connect with their local community.

There are legal requirements on statutory bodies under the Care Act 2014, and statutory guidance **Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2018** applying to the voluntary sector across England, for organisations to do everything they can to recognise and report abuse quickly and appropriately to keep adults safe, and to prevent such abuse from happening in the first place.

Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2018 on safeguarding vulnerable adults. The Key Principles of the Guidance when working with Adults at Risk are shown at Attachment 4.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse and places duties on local authorities to assess the need for accommodation-based support for victims of domestic abuse and their children within its area. This would include refuges and short-stay accommodation. A Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board made up of local authorities, victims and their children, domestic abuse charities or voluntary organisations and others advise the local authority on their support to victims of domestic abuse.

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 defines the duty of care is a general legal duty on all individuals and organisations to avoid carelessly causing injury to persons.

Policy Standards

General

The emphasis in Selsey Community Forum's work with adults at risk is to promote the empowerment and well-being of them through the services it provides and to act in a way which supports the rights of the individuals to lead a life based on self-determination and personal choice as well as to recognise people who are unable to take their own decisions and protect themselves and their assets.

Selsey Community Forum provides activities, events and services for adults at risk. This policy sets out the principles and guidelines staff should follow to minimise the potential of an adult at risk being harmed by an accident, neglect or abuse, or of staff exposing themselves to allegations of causing such harm. Managers or project leads responsible for organising an activity or event must complete a risk assessment prior to it taking place based on the guidelines provided in this policy.

A balance is required between providing adults at risk with the chance to fully participate and taking appropriate measures to minimise risk. Some procedures or guidelines may require adaptation depending on the situation.

Procedures

Managing staff, volunteers, contractors and partners relationships

Good management is essential to protecting adults at risk from harm. Managers should ensure that those staff or volunteers under their management have good supervision. This should prevent and detect harm or abuse. This will be achieved by meeting each member of staff or volunteer on a regular basis to review work.

Selsey Community Forum will ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the Charity. Managers may, where they are concerned and are not directly involved in the event, want to observe members of staff or volunteers while they are working with adults at risk. If managers have any concerns, they should speak to the Chair of the Trustees immediately.

It is the responsibility of managers using contractors to decide whether DBS clearance is required or not before work is allowed to begin. Where DBS clearance is required the contractors concerned must obtain this. In some circumstances Selsey Community Forum can submit clearance applications on behalf of contractors. Existing valid DBS clearance certificates may be accepted if they are no older than 12 months and the original certificate would need to be authenticated and copied by the manager concerned. Only when these checks, where needed, have been completed and are satisfactory can any work proceed.

Partners or contractors working for, with, and on behalf of, Selsey Community Forum will be required to meet the requirements of Selsey Community Forum's Adults at Risk Policy. Evidence of this will be requested as part of the contractual negotiation or tendering process.

Hiring out of Selsey Community Forum's Premises

Selsey Community Forum is required to take reasonable measures for the protection of adults at risk when activities are subject to Selsey Community Forum regulations and jurisdiction. This applies not only to activities, events and other services run by Selsey Community Forum or on its behalf, but also to those taking place on Selsey Community Forum premises and open spaces.

The hirer must undertake a risk assessment for the event and ensure that all participants and contractors comply with all relevant health and safety legislation, or any other relevant guidelines, at all times during the event and while preparing and clearing the event venue.

For any event, the hirer should, in developing their risk assessment, ensure that appropriate steps are taken to safeguard the welfare of adults at risk at the event. Selsey Community Forum requires there should be no physical contact by any staff or volunteers used by the hirer in the running of the event with adults at risk, unless the nature of the activity requires it (such as assistance with safety equipment).

Good recruitment and selection practices

Employing good recruitment and selection practices is essential in minimising the risk to adults at risk. The following procedures should be followed when recruiting staff or volunteers working with this group.

Independent Safeguarding Authority and Vetting and Barring Scheme

The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) was created as part of the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 to help prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable adults and other groups. It works in partnership with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to help ensure that there is 'no known reason' why individuals who work or wish to work or volunteer with vulnerable adults should not do so.

Selsey Community Forum has a duty to refer to the VSA information about individuals working with vulnerable adults where they consider them to have caused harm or pose a risk of harm.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Disclosure must be sought from the DBS for all new and existing staff and volunteers working with adults at risk. The DBS disclosure will need to be renewed every 3 years (Enhanced) or such other time intervals as decided by management. New members of staff or volunteers must not commence any activities involving adults at risk until the disclosure records providing clearance have been received from the DBS unless accompanied at all times by a colleague who has received DBS clearance. The Manager is responsible for ensuring that this happens. This should apply for a limited period only whilst DBS clearance is being awaited. The level of DBS Disclosure for persons working with adults at risk is Enhanced.

Role of Trustees

Trustees whose duties involve them regularly working with vulnerable adults, as defined by the DBS criteria covering this, must be DBS checked. The Trustees must assess each member's role and responsibilities to establish if they meet the DBS criteria for vetting.

Where it is deemed appropriate to DBS check a Trustee, then the Chair will discuss with that individual the DBS process. If a Trustee decides not to submit a DBS application then they will not be able to carry out any duties that involve working with adults at risk. Any matters of concern arising from the DBS check will be discussed with the individual concerned by the Chair of the Trustees. Any other criminal disclosures not relevant to working with adults at risk will be disregarded. All DBS checks will be handled in confidence by nominated staff in the organisation.

Acting on concerns

It is not the responsibility of staff or volunteers to decide whether or not neglect or abuse has taken place. However, it is the responsibility of everyone to report immediately any concerns that they may have.

If an event or activity takes place during working hours, the manager or project lead must then report the incident without delay to the manager or in their absence one of the Charity's Safeguarding Officers, that is the Chair of the Trustees, the Operations Lead or the Strategy Lead and take such steps as necessary with the service concerned to ensure the safety of the adult at risk.

If an event or activity takes place outside of normal working hours then the person in charge of the event must report his or her concerns to the manager or in their absence one of the Charity's Safeguarding Officers, that is the Chair of the Trustees, the Operations Lead or the Strategy Lead the next working day.

A safeguarding alert will be sent to the adult social care team at West Sussex County Council. Upon receipt of the Alert, Adult Social Care will determine if the concern raised needs to be investigated under the safeguarding procedures or if the concern may be best addressed in another way. Attachment 2 gives details of the investigation procedure that will be followed by WSCC when investigating the Alert.

The person notifying the incident will be required to complete a Safeguarding Adults Incident Form giving details of their concerns, which is shown as Attachment 3. They may also want to discuss their concerns with Selsey Community Forum's Chair of Trustees.

Action that may be taken regarding a complaint

If any member of staff or volunteer has concerns about the behaviour of any other member of staff or volunteer, in relation to an adult at risk being in danger of harm, they should report their concerns immediately to their manager or project lead.

Where there is a complaint from any source against a member of staff or a volunteer, depending on the nature of the allegation, the following confidential investigations may take place:

- An internal investigation in accordance with Selsey Community Forum's disciplinary procedure. This may result in the staff member or volunteer being suspended from duty whilst investigations take place.
- An investigation by Adult Social Care at West Sussex County Council.
- A criminal investigation by the police.

If the allegation is clearly about poor practice, then the Chair of the Trustees will consult with the line manager about what action to take, such as further training, disciplinary action. If it is a serious allegation, then the Chair of the Trustees will refer the matter to the police or Adult Social Care at WSCC.

Selsey Community Forum will make every effort to ensure confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information must be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. All information must be stored in a secure place in line with data protection requirements.

Selsey Community Forum strongly encourages concerns about adults at risk to be raised. However, if allegations made against any persons are found to be malicious or wilfully vexatious this will be treated with the utmost seriousness. Those making such allegations, if employees, would normally be managed under Selsey Community Forum's formal disciplinary procedure. If they were non-employees action would be taken as appropriate in conjunction with the relevant external agencies.

Responsibility of line managers

Managers and project leads are responsible for ensuring that all activities and events are carried out safely and that a risk assessment is completed before the event.

Any manager whose staff are involved in working with adults at risk must ensure:

- that they receive appropriate training or guidance.
- have received a copy of this policy and had it explained to them.
- that staff and volunteers sign the policy stating that they fully understand it.
- that they report immediately any concerns to the Chair of the Trustees.
- that an enhanced DBS check is completed for applicable staff and clearance is received.

Responsibility of staff

It is the responsibility of staff to report immediately to their line manager any concerns that they have regarding adults at risk. It is important for staff who are not directly involved in working with adults at risk, but due to the nature of their work come into frequent contact with the public, to remain vigilant and report any concerns that they have.

Designated Senior Officer for Allegations Management (DSO)

The Manager of Adult Services is responsible for leading all investigations into alleged adult at risk allegations against Selsey Community Forum staff and members of the public.

Once an allegation has been made the Manager will decide, in conjunction with one of the Charity's Safeguarding Officers, that is the Chair of the Trustees, the Operations Lead or the Strategy Lead whether it is necessary to raise a safeguarding adult concern (Alert) to Adult Social Care at West Sussex County Council. In all such allegations the Council's internal Safeguarding Adults Incident Form (Attachment 3) must be completed.

Other Matters

All staff and volunteers are to be provided with appropriate induction training.

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Staff and Volunteers Handbook and is applicable to all the activities in which Selsey Community Forum is or becomes involved; it is to be reviewed and updated as necessary at least annually.

Attachments:

1. Fact Sheet
2. Investigation Procedures
3. Incident Form
4. Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2018 - Key Principles when working with Adults at Risk

Version Control

Version Number	Date of Update	Amendments
1.0	October 2025	Annual Review
2.0	October 2026	Reviewed and updated in line with current guidance

Attachment 1 - Fact Sheet

Adults at Risk
Neglect and abuse are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may neglect or abuse an adult at risk by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Adults at risk may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger.

Types of Abuse
Physical abuse can include hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint, withholding care or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual abuse means involving a vulnerable adult in sexual activity when they do not, or are not able to, give their consent, or where the other person is in a position of power or authority.

Psychological abuse including emotional abuse can include threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliating, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or unjustified withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Financial or material abuse can include theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect and acts of omission can include ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. These failures do not have to be deliberate.

Discriminatory abuse involves treating a person in a way that does not respect their needs including race, culture and ethnic background, age, sex, religion, disability and sexuality.

Institutional abuse can include the practice of an abusive regime or culture which denies an adult or group of adults the care, support, dignity and respect to which every human has a right.

Where does abuse happen?
Abuse can happen anywhere, including:
At home,
In day care, residential or nursing home care,
In hospital or at a GP's surgery,
At work or in education,
In a public place.

Who abuses?
Anyone could be an abuser, including:
A partner, child or other relative,
A friend or neighbour,
A health, social-care or other worker,
A volunteer worker,
A stranger,
Another adult at risk.

Attachment 2

Investigation procedures carried out by West Sussex County Council as part of the Adults Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

When they are told that someone may be abused, harmed or neglected this is called an Alert. A trained Investigation Manger is then put in charge of the investigation. They will be employed either in Adult Social Care or in Mental Health Services for older people.

The Investigation Manager will decide if the Adults Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are the most suitable way of investigating the Alert. It may be that the reported adult is not at risk or there may be other more suitable ways of dealing with the situation, for example using processes for dealing with domestic violence or managing care.

The Investigation Manager will decide what level of investigation to use. There are four levels which help to provide an appropriate response to different situations and make consistent decisions.

Level 1 Investigation: This is a 'one-off' isolated incident, ie. it has not occurred previously to this or another adult in the same setting, that it has taken place in a provider service setting, or involving a provider service and has adversely affected the physical, psychological or emotional well-being of the adult. Harm has occurred or significant harm could have occurred.

The Investigation Manager will ask the manager of this service to investigate the matter.

Level 2 Investigation: The physical, psychological or emotional well-being of the adult has been adversely affected. Harm has occurred and/or significant harm could have occurred. A practitioner with relevant skills, for example a social worker, will be asked to investigate concerns for Level 2 investigations, usually in conjunction with an assessment/review of needs of the adult at risk or carer.

Level 3 Investigation: The physical, psychological or emotional well-being of the adult has been adversely affected by the alleged incident. Significant harm has occurred and/or a criminal offence may have been committed.

Level 4 Investigation: A number of adults have experienced significant harm relating to the concerns/allegations identified. Institutional abuse may be indicated.

No matter what decision is made, the person reporting or alerting the concern will be advised whether an investigation will take place under the adults safeguarding procedures.

Attachment 3

Incident Form

Staff or volunteers should use this form if they have witnessed an adult at risk being abused, they suspect it or they are otherwise made aware of it, or an adult at risk has disclosed that they are being abused. Please refer to the Adults at Risk Protection Policy before completing this form.

Please use the back of this form to provide additional information.

Name of person reporting the incident and contact details (including phone number):
Name of adult at risk:
Date of birth of adult at risk (if known):
Address of the adult at risk:
Date and time of allegation or suspicion:
Short description of the allegation or suspicion:
Observation of the adult at risk's emotional state (or physical state if appropriate):

Record of what the adult at risk has said: Continued
Any other comments:
Name of staff/volunteer:
Signature: Date:

Attachment 4

Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2018

Key Principles when working with Adults at Risk:

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.