



## ***INTRODUCTION***

The aim of this policy is to outline the practice and procedures for all staff employed within the Company to contribute to the prevention of abuse of vulnerable adults, through raising awareness and providing a clear framework for action when abuse is suspected.

This policy is intended to give staff a clear understanding of the reporting mechanism of concerns relating to vulnerable adults within the Company and the process to be undertaken.

The Company is fully committed to protecting vulnerable adults we work with by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from neglect, physical, sexual, institutional or emotional harm. Management and staff will at all times, show respect and understanding for the results, safety and welfare of vulnerable adults and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the Company.

We do this by:

- Making sure all our management and staff are carefully selected, trained and as appropriate, supervised.
- Assessing all risks that vulnerable adults come across and taking steps to minimise and manage them.
- Letting family, Next of Kin, and vulnerable adults know how to voice concerns or how to complain about anything they may not be happy with
- Giving family and vulnerable adults, staff information about what we do and what can be expected of us.

To help us do this, we have policies on health and safety, recruitment, training, confidentiality, equality and diversity, complaints, recruitment of ex-offenders, grievance and disciplinary.

Sligo Centre for Independent Living will share this policy with vulnerable adults we work with, their families or carers and our management and staff members. It is applicable to the protection from abuse of all service users covering all types of abuse, and recognises that service users cannot always protect themselves.

The procedures within this policy do not operate independently of other arrangements, such as complaints and disciplinary procedures, and will be implemented concurrently in order to ensure the protection of the service user.

## ***DEFINITIONS***

- a. A 'Vulnerable Adult' is defined as *"a person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, in need of community care services or is resident in a continuing care facility by reason of*

*mental or other disability, age or illness or who is, or may be, unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation.”*

- b. The current definition of abuse used by the Company is *‘The physical, psychological, emotional, financial or sexual maltreatment or neglect of a vulnerable adult by another person. The abuse may be a single act or repeated over a period of time. It may take one form or a multiple of forms. The lack of appropriate action can also be a form of abuse. Abuse can occur in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust and can be perpetrated by a person/persons, in breach of that trust, who have influence over the life of a dependent, whether they be formal or informal carers, staff or family members or others. It can also occur outside such a relationship’*

## **TYPES OF ABUSE**

### **Physical abuse (including inappropriate restraint or misuse of medication)**

Can be any of the following:

- Being restrained in a chair or locked in a room.
- Punching or kicking you.
- Throwing things at you.
- Grabbing, pushing, poking or slapping you.
- Hitting you with an object.
- Pulling hair or biting.
- Tripping you up.
- Sexual abuse
- Can be any of the following:
- Someone touching you where you don't want to be touched.
- People getting too close to you.
- Someone making you feel uneasy and upset.
- Someone hurting you and making you feel scared.
- People not listening when you say no.

### **Psychological and emotional abuse**

Can be any of the following:

- Hurtful criticism.
- Name calling.
- Sulking.
- Pressure tactics.
- Lying to you, or to your friends and family about you.
- Persistently putting you down in front of other people.
- Stopping you from seeing people you want to see, including friends and family.
- Never listening or responding when you talk.
- Monitoring your phone calls, emails, texts and letters.
- Checking up on you, following you, and not letting you go out alone.
- Frightening you into doing things you don't want to do.
- Making you unnecessarily distrustful of other people.
- Upsetting you on a regular basis about things that don't matter to the extent that you may even feel unwell.

### **Financial abuse**

Can be any of the following:

- Someone making you take your money out of the cash machine for them.
- Taking money from you.
- Borrowing money and never giving it back.
- Stealing your belongings.
- Someone getting you to sign something and you don't know what it is.
- Someone taking your pension or other benefit.
- Someone asking for money for visiting you socially.
- Neglect of a vulnerable adult
- Can be any of the following:
  - Not having the help you need to have a bath or shower or full body wash if you are unable to do so by yourself.
  - Not getting enough food or drink.
  - Stopping you from accessing needed care and/or medical services.
  - Not being given the medication that has been prescribed for you.
  - Being given medication to make you sleepy when it has not been prescribed or giving you the medication at the wrong time or in the wrong quantities.
  - Not getting help to stay warm and dry.
- Only having old or dirty clothes to wear.
- People not caring for you properly

### **Institutional abuse**

Can occur when the lifestyles of individuals are sacrificed in favour of the rituals, routines and/or restrictive practices of their home or care setting.

Examples of behaviour: lack of individualised care, inappropriate confinement or restrictions, sensory deprivation, inappropriate use of rules, custom and practice, no flexibility of bedtimes or waking times, dirty clothing or bed linen, lack of personal possessions or clothing, deprived environment or lack of stimulation, misuse of medical procedures.

### **Institutional abuse**

Can be any of the following:

- Neglect.
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Verbal abuse.
- Discriminatory abuse.
- Psychological and emotional abuse.
- Financial abuse.

### **Discriminatory abuse**

Can be any of the following:

- When someone picks on you or treats you unfairly because something about you is different, such as:
  - Your clothes.
  - Your weight.
  - Your race or skin colour.

- Your religion or culture.
- Being a man or a woman.
- Your sexuality.
- Your age.
- Your health or disability.

Multiple forms of abuse may occur in an ongoing relationship or abusive service setting to one person, or to more than one person at a time, making it important to look beyond single incidents or breaches in standards, to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence or ignorance.

**No abuse is acceptable and some abuse is a criminal offence and must be reported to the police as soon as possible.**

### ***RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES***

#### **Responsibilities of Management within the Company**

- To ensure staff are aware of this policy and are adequately trained.
- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected
- To support and where possible secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability
- To do Garda Vetting checks on all staff that have access to or work with Vulnerable Adults.
- To make referral to the appropriate bodies

#### **Responsibilities of staff**

- To be familiar with this policy and its procedures
- To take appropriate action in line with the policies of the Company
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions.

#### **Support for those who report abuse**

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they are staff, service users, carers or members of the general public will be:

- Taken seriously.
- Their comments will be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk.
- If service users, they will be given immediate protection from the risk of reprisals or intimidation.
- If staff, they will be given support and afforded protection if necessary.

#### **The Vulnerable Adult has the right:**

- To be made aware of this policy.
- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously.
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout.
- To be involved in any process as appropriate.
- To receive information about the outcome.

### ***GOOD PRACTICE***

**a. Recruitment of staff**

- The Company will always follow their recruitment procedures and policies, which includes:
- Information and documents required in respect of domiciliary care workers
  - Name, address, date of birth and telephone number.
  - Name, address and telephone number of next of kin
  - Proof of identity, including a recent photograph.
  - Two written references, relating to the person, including a reference from the person's present or most recent employer, if any.
  - Where the person has previously worked in a position which involved work with vulnerable adults, verification, so far as reasonably practicable, of the reason why he ceased to work in that position.
  - Evidence of a satisfactory knowledge of the English language, where the person's qualifications were obtained outside the United Kingdom.
  - Details and documentary evidence of any relevant qualifications or accredited training of the person and, if applicable, registration with an appropriate regulatory body.
  - A full employment history, together with a satisfactory written explanation of any gaps in employment and details of any current employment other than for the purposes of the agency.
  - Details of physical and mental health record, including immunisation status.

**b. Minimum Levels of Training received by all employees.**

Introduction to Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults at induction stage. This includes;

- Protection from abuse;
- Indicators of abuse;
- Responding appropriately to suspected, alleged or actual abuse;
- Reporting suspected, alleged or actual abuse;
- Update training at least every 2 years; and
- Familiarisation with all policies and procedures during induction.

**c. Management and Supervision**

- It is the area manager's responsibility to clarify with the staff their roles and responsibilities regarding their involvement with vulnerable adults, with whom they may have contact with.
- Managers are available at any time should staff require support or advise in regards to a service user.
- Regular supervision for staff will monitor the work and offer opportunity to raise any issues or concerns.

**d. Record keeping**

Written records will be kept by the Company of any allegation of abuse, neglect or other harm and of the action taken in response. These will include

- Contacts made
- Referrals made, including date, time,
- reason and
- Referral agency.

All incidents will be discussed in supervision with Line Managers.

**Designated Safeguarding Officer: Maria Pereira**

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer: Maria Mulligan**

Approved by:

Maria Mulligan, CEO, SCIL

Date: April 2021