

## RISE UP Safeguarding information

**An adult at risk:** vulnerability in adults is not easy to define. It is helpful to consider whether an adult is vulnerable in the context of a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect themselves from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired, either temporarily or indefinitely, through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress.

Whatever the situation you find yourself in, it is not your responsibility to investigate a safeguarding incident or concern about a child or adult. That is the job of Children's and Adult Social Care Services and where appropriate the Police (or equivalent in jurisdictions outside Britain). What is most important is that you do not keep any such concerns to yourself but pass on information to your Designated Safeguarding Lead (See Appendix 7 for Role Description).

### Domestic Abuse: What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people who are, or who have been in a relationship, regardless of gender or sexuality. Domestic abuse is mainly, but not exclusively, carried out by men against women.

It can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional and financial abuse. For adults in an abusive relationship, such abusive behaviour can result in serious injury, anxiety, mental illness and in some instances death.

The exposure of children to domestic abuse between parents/carers or the partner of a parent/carer, is considered child abuse. Children can be directly involved in incidents of domestic abuse, or they may be harmed by seeing or hearing abuse happening. Children in homes where there is domestic abuse are often also at risk of other types of abuse or neglect.

If you are concerned that a parent, carer or adult participating in a Mothers' Union project or activity is experiencing domestic abuse or discloses to you that they are being abused, it is essential that your first concern is for their welfare and the

wellbeing of any child/children in the household. As with any safeguarding concern, it is important to discuss the situation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and if needs be, the Britain and Ireland Safeguarding Lead.

Whilst respecting the right of a person who is subject to domestic abuse to consent to information being shared about them; please remember that where children are involved in a parental abusive relationship, they are considered to be at risk of harm. In situations where children are involved, if requested by a parent or carer to keep any disclosure of domestic abuse confidential, you cannot agree to do so. It is important that you do not find yourself in a compromising situation where you feel that you cannot disclose important information concerning the safety of a child, because of a relationship that you may have formed with a parent, carer or grandparent. The welfare of a child needs to be recognised as being of paramount importance, whilst also taking account, as far as is possible, of the need to ensure the parent, carer or adult is not placed at further risk.

Whilst confidentiality cannot be promised when children are involved, it is important to take into account the courage on the part of the person disclosing domestic abuse to share this information. Therefore, as with all safeguarding disclosures and concerns, information must only be shared 'on a need to know' basis – i.e. with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the Britain and Ireland Safeguarding Lead, or at times of emergency, Police/Statutory Agencies. This not only ensures that knowledge of sensitive information is limited to those designated to manage safeguarding concerns, but also offers some protection to those making disclosures from risk of further harm.

## Safeguarding Concerns about an adult who may be vulnerable and at risk of harm

If you witness inappropriate behaviour concerning an adult or if you receive a disclosure of abuse concerning an adult who may be vulnerable, please ensure that you take the following action:

- **Important:** If you have information of a safeguarding nature where an adult at risk is in immediate danger or requires immediate medical attention **call emergency services on 999 or equivalent in All Ireland**
- Ensure the adult is in a safe place
- Ask if they wish to speak about the incident
- Do not promise to keep what is disclosed confidential, but explain that you will need to share the information ‘on a need to know’ basis
- Explain that you will need to share information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Britain and Ireland Safeguarding Lead, who may decide it is necessary to make a referral to Adult Social Care Services and/or Children’s Services/and in some circumstances the Police, if any other person may be at risk of harm from the alleged perpetrator. The equivalent statutory agencies should be contacted in jurisdictions outside of England and Wales.
- Whilst the person disclosing the information may not wish to speak with statutory agencies, it is important to remember that Mothers’ Union has a duty to refer safeguarding concerns to the appropriate authorities.
- It is the decision of the person concerned as to whether they wish to speak with statutory agencies, and it is their right not to do so
- Allow the person time to talk and listen to what they have to say
- Explain that you have to make a careful, factual note of what is being disclosed
- Read back to the person making the disclosure what you have noted, so that it can be agreed for accuracy purposes
- Complete a SCIR Form and send it to your Designated Safeguarding Lead, copying in the Britain and Ireland Safeguarding Lead
- Always, note the time, date and sign the form
- The Britain and Ireland Safeguarding Lead, in discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide if the safeguarding threshold is met to send a copy of the SCIR Form to statutory agencies.
- Send a copy of the SCIR form to the Diocesan Designated Safeguarding Adviser, or equivalent outside the jurisdiction of the Church of England.

- If you are affected by what you have witnessed do not keep this to yourself, speak to your project/activity lead.

## Action required by the Britain and Ireland Safeguarding Lead on receipt of a safeguarding concern:

- When contacted, advice will be offered to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as to follow up action
- Following discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Britain and Ireland Safeguarding Lead a decision will be made as to whether the safeguarding threshold is met to refer the matter/send a copy of the SCIR Form to Adult Social Care, or equivalent statutory authority.
- Where the safety and wellbeing of an adult is at immediate risk, it is not necessary to seek the consent of the adult that a referral is being made to statutory agencies. It is however good practice to inform them. Where a situation concerns a child, it is good practice to inform a parent or carer that a referral is being made to statutory agencies. BUT this should only be done if the safety of the child or adult is not compromised by doing so.
- In England and Wales, where appropriate, the Local Authority Designated Officer will be informed.
- Support will be offered to the child, family and/or adult who has been subject to abuse/alleged abuse.
- Mothers' Union is a registered Charity and the Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees are required by the Charity Commission to be informed of serious safeguarding concerns arising .
- Similarly, the Board of Trustees is responsible for reporting a Serious Incident concerning safeguarding to the Charity Commission.
- Should an allegation of the abuse of a child or adult come to the attention of the media, it is important that the Britain and Ireland Safeguarding Lead is made aware and that a response is agreed in collaboration with statutory agencies, the Director of Communications Mary Sumner House and the Board of Trustees.

## Lone Working: Looking After Yourself

In most situations it is best practice to have at least two people, which can be a member of staff or volunteer, present in activities involving children or adults who are vulnerable/at risk. This is to ensure that if an incident occurs or a concern arises, for example an emergency medical situation, there is another person available.

Sometimes it may be appropriate or necessary for a member of staff or volunteer to have one-to-one contact with a child or supervise a small group of children on their own. This could happen, for example if a child or young person, or adult asks to speak to you alone. In these instances, always make sure that you inform your line manager or a colleague what is happening, and if necessary, seek their agreement.

If you have any concerns for your safety about being alone with a parent/carer or adult always let your line manager and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead know. **Do not put your own safety at risk.**

Inappropriate, abusive behaviour towards children and adults is difficult, and at times can be traumatic to witness and to listen to accounts/disclosures. This Policy and the safeguarding training you have undertaken will enable you to recognise a safeguarding concern and to know what action to take. However, if you have been affected by what you have seen or heard you can speak to your line manager, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the Britain and Ireland Safeguarding Lead.

Any such discussions will be confidential and will seek to offer a sympathetic listening forum to reflect on what has happened, its outcome and the impact on those involved.

**Your wellbeing is of the utmost importance to us. We are here to ensure that you feel supported and valued for the work you do on behalf of Mothers' Union.**