

Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Victoria Dental Practice

Introduction

Our practice is committed to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm. Our dental team accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

Aim of Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all staff members are clear about their responsibilities.

This document may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements, and to ensure that business needs are met. You will be consulted and advised of any changes as far in advance as possible of the change being made, unless the change is required by statute.

Definitions

A **child** is anyone under the age of 18. A **vulnerable adult** is a person aged 18 years or over, who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

This **may** include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental illness including dementia
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless

Rights of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Children and vulnerable adults have the right to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Be happy and to achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Have economic wellbeing
- Be protected from abuse

All members of society have a responsibility to protect children and vulnerable adults. All members of staff have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions that they might have concerning adult abuse. They are not responsible for diagnosing abuse but have an obligation to share any concerns.

Recruitment and Training

Victoria Dental Practice will ensure that all staff whose roles include working with children and vulnerable adults are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. This will include obtaining *Disclosure and Barring checks in England and Wales, Access NI checks in Northern Ireland and PVG checks in Scotland (delete as appropriate)*.

All members of the team are expected to carry out CPD in Safeguarding, Data Protection, Confidentiality and Mental Capacity, in line with guidelines.

Other Policies relevant to safeguarding include...*[please add, delete, amend as appropriate]*

- Confidentiality Policy
- Consent Policy
- Equality Policy
- Adverse Incidents
- Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Dealing with allegations against people who work with children and vulnerable adults

Identifying Abuse

The characteristics of abuse can take many forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s). Victims may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach with their worries.

There may be some situations where victims are unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this information to others.

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take a number of forms:

- **Physical abuse** e.g. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, neglect or abandonment
- **Domestic abuse**
- **Female Genital Mutilation**
- **Sexual abuse** e.g. involvement in any sexual activity against his/her will, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism
- **Sexual exploitation**

- **Grooming**

- **Emotional/psychological abuse** e.g. intimidation or humiliation
- **Financial abuse** e.g. theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money from pensions or savings, etc.
- **Neglect or acts of omission** e.g. being left in wet or soiled clothing, or malnutrition
- **Discriminatory abuse** e.g. racial, sexual or religious harassment
- **Personal exploitation** – involves denying an individual his/her rights or forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will
- **Trafficking** – facilitation of travel with a view to exploitation and **Modern Slavery** – holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude, or forced compulsory labour.
- **Violation of rights** e.g. preventing an individual speaking his/her thoughts and opinions
- **Institutional abuse** e.g. failure to provide a choice of meals or failure to ensure privacy or dignity
- **Bullying and cyberbullying**
- **Online abuse**
- **Non-recent abuse**

Abuse or neglect may be suspected as a result of:

- A direct allegation made by the individual, parent or other person
- Signs and symptoms suggestive of abuse or neglect
- Observations of behaviour and interactions with parents/carers
- Failure to be brought to appointments

Record Keeping

Good record keeping is essential in order to identify possible abuse. All accidents and injuries should be recorded in the patient's record in a way that helps to identify unusual patterns.

At Victoria Dental Practice we have implemented "Was Not Brought" and use the flow chart available from the BDA (see below) to follow up all missed appointments.

- <https://bda.org/dentists/advice/Documents/Flowchart.doc?Web=1>

Reporting Procedures

All those making a complaint, allegation, or expression of concern, whether staff, service users, carers or members of the public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will usually be treated confidentially but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
- If they are 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 an allegation is made to a member of staff or there is a suspicion of abuse then the member of staff should discuss this with *Safeguarding Leads* – Jayne Coe, Rachel Ellison, or Helen Holguin.

If you all remain concerned (*Safeguarding Lead*) you can seek informal advice from the local social services.

It should be noted that if an adult discloses that they have had FGM, their daughters are at risk and you should seek advice from local social services.

If the decision is made to refer then Helen Holguin will make a written record of the allegation or suspicion of abuse and contact the **Darlington Adult Safeguarding Team**.

- Contact number for referral is 0845 8505010 Weekdays 9am-5pm
- Out of Hours contact number for referral is as above.
- Or email www.durhamiscb.gov.uk
- Modern Slavery Helpline is 08000 121 700
- Some areas have an online reporting form. If so, insert a link here email as above

If the person is injured or in immediate physical danger, then the Police and other appropriate emergency services should be contacted on **999**.

The non-urgent contact telephone number for the Police is 0345 606 0365.

If a staff member has been told about the allegation of abuse in confidence, they should attempt to gain the consent of the person to make a referral to another agency. However, the gaining of the consent is not essential for information to be passed on.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- The scale of the abuse
- The risk of harm to others
- The capacity of the victim to understand the issues of abuse and consent

If there is any doubt about whether to report an issue to the Safeguarding Team, then it should be reported.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups

Covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the ISA is undergoing a thorough review of its remit and scale. The ISA was established to ensure that people known to pose a possible threat to children or vulnerable adults were prevented from working with these groups. A key element of the ISA scheme was to be a register of all those cleared to work with children or vulnerable adults. The need to register covered the whole dental team. Whether there will still be a register and whether it will include the dental team following the review is not yet clear. For further information, please see: www.isa-gov.org.uk

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland)

In order to work with children and vulnerable adults, members of the dental team should join the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) membership scheme. This is managed and delivered by Disclosure Scotland. It helps to make sure that people whose behaviour makes them unsuitable to work with children and/or protected adults, can't do 'regulated work' with these vulnerable groups.

If you're already a member of the PVG scheme, you should update your record with Disclosure Scotland when you start a new job or voluntary role which involves regulated work.

For more information, details on how to apply and details for new employers of scheme members go to: <https://www.mygov.scot/pvg-scheme/>