



Our vision:

Fulfilling lives
Resilient communities

Our Mission:

To work with women, children, young people and families in our community, recognising their choices, voices and opportunities to develop their potential

Our Values:

Accessibility "Always somebody available to talk to and give advice"

Respect "My decisions were respected and my voice was heard"

Integrity "Venus provide everything you need and stand by their values and principles"

Trust "I believe that if there is no trust people won't feel they can talk"

Fairness "Really fair and just"

Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy v8

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Signed:
CEO

Date: 16/08/2023

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1. Why does Venus have a Safeguarding Adults at risk policy?

Venus is committed to practice that protecting adults at risk from abuse. This policy informs workers and volunteers within Venus what their responsibilities are in terms of recognising and reporting abuse.

Workers and volunteers at Venus are trained to make sure that all of the services we provide are managed with safeguarding in mind in order to stop and reduce the risk of abuse of adults at risk.

Unfortunately, sometimes people who work or volunteer with Organisations such as Venus do so because they intend to those who may be deemed vulnerable. To minimise the risk of this happening within Venus, we have this safeguarding policy.

We use this safeguarding policy along with our wider policy framework to guide the way we recruit and select workers and volunteers. To help us do this, all workers and volunteers must go through an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check.

2. What laws and guidance cover this policy?

Criminal Justice & Court Services Act 2000

Police Act 1997

HM Government. Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and

The Mental Capacity Act 2007

The Care Act 2014

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003

Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007

3. Who are adults at risk?

The term “adult at risk” refers to any person aged 18 and over, who,

“Has needs for care and support and is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect” (The Care Act 2014)

4. What is abuse?

So that we can fully understand safeguarding, it’s important to fully understand what abuse is.

Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human rights. It can be a single act or repeated acts. Forms of abuse can include:

- Physical abuse such as: hitting, pushing, pinching, shaking, misuse of medication, scalding, inappropriate restraint, hair-pulling.

- Sexual abuse such as: rape or sexual assault; sexual acts to which the adult at risk has not or could not have consented, or to which they were pressurised into consenting.
- Psychological or emotional abuse such as: threats of harm or abandonment; deprivation of social or any other form of contact; humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, or harassment; verbal abuse; prevention from receiving services or support.
- Financial or material abuse such as: theft; fraud or exploitation; pressure in connection with wills, property, or inheritance; misuse of property, possessions or benefits.
- Neglect or acts of omission such as: ignoring medical or physical care needs; preventing access to health, social care, or educational services; withholding the necessities of life, such as food, drink, or heating.
- Modern slavery; slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude
- Discriminatory – harassment, substandard treatment due to race, gender, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation and religion.
- Domestic violence/abuse - all forms of abuse can be experienced in a family setting by a partner, family member, or with someone with whom there is an intimate relationship.
- Institutional abuse and poor practice - disrespect and unethical practice, ill treatment and professional misconduct.
- Self – neglect – this can include behaviours such as neglecting their personal hygiene, health or surroundings inclusive of behaviour such as hoarding. This may not automatically constitute a section 42 enquiry (safeguarding enquiry), it will be reviewed on a case by case basis looking at the ability of the adult's ability to protect themselves by controlling their own behaviour.

Any of these forms of abuse can be deliberate, or be the result of ignorance or lack of training, knowledge or understanding. Often, if a person is being abused in one way they may also be being abused in other ways.

Adults at risk may be more susceptible to being “groomed” prior to abuse taking place. This means that someone wishing to abuse them could deliberately befriend them, making an emotional connection with them in order to inflict abuse on them more easily, usually in preparation for sexual activity with the vulnerable adult or other exploitation such as forced labour, prostitution or other trafficking.

5. What to do if you suspect an adult at risk is being sexually exploited

Professionals working with adults at risk need to be aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and note any changes in behaviour that suggest that the adult at risk may be involved in, or at risk of, involvement in sexual exploitation.

Professionals need to take note of adults at risk who may show indicators of being groomed and should also be aware of adults who may be deemed vulnerable in sexual relationships that present as consensual but which may be exploitative.

Importantly, professionals must appropriately share information with others in the adults at risk network or agencies, such as Safeguarding Adults social care team in the Local Authority. It is often only when all information is available that a true picture of the adult's situation comes to light.

6. How could abuse take place in the work Venus carries out?

Whilst we make every possible effort to ensure that the workers and volunteers who work for Venus are thoroughly screened and trained, we recognise that organisations such as Venus can be targeted by individuals wishing to gain access to children, young people and vulnerable adults in order to abuse them.

Venus provides outreach support to individuals and families in their homes. This means that workers and volunteers are visiting sometimes vulnerable people and their families in their homes and there will be many times that the worker or volunteer and the individual in receipt of support are alone.

It is envisaged that through training, education and a robust recruitment process the risk of a staff member or volunteer being a perpetrator of abuse is low, yet it is one we must acknowledge.

7. What could stop adults at risk reporting that they have been abused?

There are frequently very powerful "disincentives" to someone reporting abuse, for example,

- Emotional or psychological threats about retribution that the abuser makes to the person who is being abused.
- Fear that if they report being abused they may lose support services.
- Fear that if they report being abused they will be stigmatised by family, friends and/or the community they live in.
- Not knowing how to report being abused.
- Fear that they will not be believed if they report abuse.
- Feeling that they are powerless to report abuse.

8. What should you do if you suspect someone is being abused?

If you suspect an adult at risk is being subjected to abuse, **it is important that you do not ignore your suspicions**. If the adult at risk concerned has told you about an abusive situation in which they are the victim, you must assure them that you are taking their concerns very seriously.

You should make it clear to the adult at risk that you are unable to keep what they have told you as a 'secret', as you will have to pass this information on to the relevant professionals to investigate the situation. This may seem frightening, as the adult at risk might just want someone to talk to about what is happening to them. They may get angry or upset once you tell them that you have to tell someone. However, if you were to keep the 'secret' then you have become a part of the abusive situation, as you are forced into knowing about a situation and not acting on it. In effect, you are then colluding with it.

Whether you are told of abuse or suspect it due to seeing marks or bruising, hearing comments, witnessing an incident or thinking that someone is trying to communicate through their behaviour, you must not investigate the matter yourself.

It is important that you listen carefully to what is being said to you. You must write down what has been said as soon as you can afterwards, as it is difficult to recall accurately what has been said at a later date.

Please refer to the flow chart at the end of this policy, point 21, for further information regarding the process of making a referral.

9. Forced Genital Mutilation (FGM)

What is FGM

FGM is the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is also known as female circumcision or cutting. FGM is often performed by someone with no medical training who uses instruments such as a knife, scalpel, scissors, glass or razor blade.

FGM can be carried out at various ages such as a female newborn baby, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during pregnancy. It is extremely dangerous and can cause severe pain, shock, bleeding, infections and in some cases death.

There are certain communities who are identified as having an increased risk. The communities are Somali, Kenyan, Ethiopian, Sudanese, Sierra Leonean, Egyptian, Nigerian, Yemeni, Kurdish and Indonesian.

Children are also considered to be at higher risk if FGM has already been carried out on their mother.

What are the signs and indicators of FGM

- A relative or 'cutter' visiting from abroad
- A special occasion or ceremony to 'become a woman' or prepare for marriage
- A female relative being cut – a sister, cousin, older female relative such as a mother or aunt
- Unexpected, repeated or prolonged absence from school

What are the signs that FGM may have happened

- Difficulty walking, standing or sitting
- Spend longer in the bathroom
- Appear withdrawn, anxious or depressed
- Display unusual behaviour after an absence from school or college
- Be reluctant to have routine medical examinations

FGM is child abuse and is **illegal** in the United Kingdom and should be reported as a **safeguarding** if you identify an adult at risk has had or is at risk of having this procedure carried out. If you feel the adult is in immediate danger, to contact the police on 999.

In relation to adults at risk, it is important to be aware of this practice and ensure the adult is safeguarding their child appropriately.

10. Honor Based Violence (HBV)

HBV is violence committed when the family or community feel the victim has not followed what they believe is acceptable behaviour and has brought shame or dishonour to the family. Women and girls are predominantly the victims; however, it can also affect men. In extreme cases, victims can be killed.

Common triggers for HBV are refusing an arranged marriage, defying their parents, talking to a male who is not related to the family, becoming 'western' (wearing make-up or clothes deemed inappropriate, having a relationship outside the approved group, loss of virginity, pregnancy outside of marriage, spending time without the supervision of a family member, reporting domestic violence, attempting to divorce and pushing for custody of children after divorce and being homosexual.

If you are concerned an adult at risk is a victim of Honor Based Violence this must be reported as a safeguarding concern. If you feel the adult is in immediate danger, the police should be contacted on 999.

11. Forced marriage

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities or reduced capacity, cannot) consent to the marriage as they are pressurised, or abuse is used, to force them to do so. Forced marriage is illegal in the United Kingdom and is reportable to the Local Authority or the Police.

12. Prevent

Prevent is part of the overall counter-terrorism strategy which is called CONTEST. It aims to stop people, both children and adults, becoming terrorists and supporting terrorism. It is thought those who may be deemed vulnerable are at a greater risk of becoming radicalised. Signs that an adult is being radicalised includes isolating themselves from family and friends, talking as if from a scripted speech, a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others, increased levels of anger and increased secretiveness especially around internet use.

If you suspect an adult or adult at risk is supporting terrorism this is a safeguarding concern which is reportable to the local Authority of where the adult resides and it is to be put through as a Prevent referral. As per the flow chart concerns must be documented. You would not inform the adult as part of a Prevent referral due to the nature of the concern.

If you feel the adult is in immediate danger, the police should be contacted on 999 or the anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321.

13. Hoarding

Hoarding is now recognised as a mental health condition and can be classed under self-neglect as stated in The Care Act (2014). Dependant on the level of hoarding this may be reportable as a safeguarding concern due to the associated consequences of living in this environment, whilst also being mindful of respecting a person's right to privacy and making unwise decision.

Please review local authority guidance on their website for RAG rating of hoarding and safeguarding referral form.

14. The Mental Capacity Act 2005

The Mental Capacity Act is a statutory piece of legislation which is designed to empower and support adults with a diagnosed impairment of the mind or brain. This is applicable to those ages 16 years and above. With regards to aspects of advanced planning this is applicable aged 18 years old and above. The assessment of capacity is time and decision specific.

All practitioners must follow the 5 guiding principles of the Mental Capacity Act.

These are:

- Every adult must be presumed to have capacity unless it is proven otherwise
- All reasonable steps must be taken to assist the person to make a decision
- Individuals have the right to make unwise decisions, even those others may consider eccentric
- All actions on behalf of those who lack capacity must be in their 'best interests'
- Any treatment should be done in the least restrictive manner of the persons basic

In order to assess a person's capacity they person must have a diagnosed impairment of the mind or brain. For example, dementia, a learning disability, schizophrenia, depression or a brain injury. If a person is under the influence of drugs or alcohol this may signify a temporary impairment of the mind. If a person does not fit this criterion; **they have capacity** and an assessment of capacity is not appropriate.

Assessing capacity

Assessing an adult's capacity is a two stage test.

1. **Diagnostic stage** - Does the person have an impairment or disturbance of the mind or brain? If yes move to stage 2, if no they have mental capacity.
Things to consider – can the decision that needs to be made wait if they are under the influence of drugs and alcohol? Will they then likely regain capacity and be able to make the decision themselves?
2. **Functional stage**
 - Does the adult understand the information relevant to the decision being made?
 - Is the adult able to retain the information/explanation long enough to make the decision?
 - Is the adult able to weigh up the information in the decision-making process?
 - Is the patient able to communicate the decision by any means?

If the answer is no to one or more of the above points the adult is deemed to lack capacity into the decision that needs to be made.

If you assess an adult's mental capacity to make a decision to document the decision which needs to be made and the outcome of the above points.

Acting in best interests

If it is deemed a person lacks capacity into a decision for which you have assessed, a decision may need to be made in that adult's best interests. As a Venus employee this may involve such actions as ringing the police or social care if the adult is at risk, or being part of a team to provide information in order that a decision may be reached on behalf of the adult 'in their best interests'.

15. Hate crime.

Our Venus Values state that everyone is welcomed, valued and included in our Centre and our Services; an awareness of hate crime and guidelines for reporting incidents should help us make sure this happens.

What is Hate Crime?

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Crown Prosecution Service have a nationally agreed definition of Hate Crime. Hate crimes are taken to mean any crime where the perpetrator's hostility or prejudice against an identifiable group of people is a factor in determining who is victimised. This is a broad and inclusive definition. A victim does not have to be a member of the group. In fact, anyone could be a victim of a hate crime.

Definition of Hate Crime

Any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based upon the victim's:

- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity
- Crimes against sex workers

Hate crime can take many forms including:

- Physical attacks such as physical assault, damage to property, offensive graffiti and arson
- Threat of attack including offensive letters, abusive or obscene telephone calls, malicious emails or posts on social networking sites such as Facebook, groups hanging around to intimidate, and unfounded, malicious complaints
- Verbal abuse, insults or harassment - taunting, offensive leaflets and posters, abusive gestures, dumping of rubbish outside homes or through letterboxes, and bullying at school or in the workplace

How does Venus deal with Hate Crime?

Our aim is always to give individuals as many options as possible. There are many different ways to deal with hate crime and different ways to report it so we would deal with each case individually.

When a Venus worker or volunteer and an individual in receipt of support make a support plan, they are asked to both consider any issues around Hate Crime and plan actions to take to address it.

If an individual attends an appointment at an advice Drop In at our centre and discloses that they have been a victim of Hate Crime, workers and volunteers are trained to advise the individual to report the

incident/s to Sefton Council or the Sigma Team of Merseyside Police via 101 or via Police Facebook and Twitter accounts.

We would also provide information about the various Hate Crime Reporting Centres around Sefton and provide contact details and sign posting information to specialist agencies and organisations – this information can be accessed www.sefton.gov.uk/advice-benefits/crime-and-emergencies/hate-crime

Merseyside Police have appropriate victim care providers they can refer to

If you don't want to report it to the Police you can make a report to Stop Hate UK using the following:

- Telephone 0800 138 1625
- Text: 07717 989 02
- Text Relay: 18001 0113 293 5100
- BSL via stophateuk.org
- Email: talk@stophateuk.org
- Chat: stophateuk.org/talk
- Online: stophateuk.org/tell
- Post: Stop Hate UK, PO Box 484, Leeds, LS7 9BZ

Stop Hate UK are a registered charity and provide the helpline across Merseyside supported by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The service is confidential.

Sefton Council offers an anonymous hate crime reporting form online, go to:
<http://forms.sefton.gov.uk/hatecrimereport/>

Hate crimes can also be reported through a 24 hour helpline:



We make sure that we display information about hate crime and how to report it within our Centre.

16. Useful telephone numbers:

Sefton MBC Customer Access Team	0151 934 3555
Knowsley MBC Social Careline	0151 443 2600
Liverpool City Council Careline	0151 233 3700
Wirral Borough Council Social Services	0151 606 2008
Halton Borough Council Social Services	0151 907 8305
IDVA Team Sefton	0151 934 5142

17. What safeguards are in place at Venus to protect adults at risk?

As noted earlier, Venus requires potential workers and volunteers to undergo Enhanced DBS checks before starting to work with us, we also take up at least 2 professional references. As part of a new trustee's, worker's, student's and volunteer's induction process, they must familiarise themselves with our policies and procedures. They must also sign a statement that they agree to work within the rules we have set out, including our Code of Conduct and declare they have read and understood this policy.

18. How does Venus manage allegations against workers or volunteers?

Venus is committed to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We recognise that despite our every effort, there may be occasions where concerns or allegations of misconduct are made against a Venus worker or volunteer. Concerns or allegations may be that the worker or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or young person.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to a child or young person.
- Behaved towards a child or young person in a way that indicates that they are unsuitable to work with children or adults at risk.

Venus has a clear procedure for managing allegations made against its staff and volunteers which is set out in the Disciplinary & Grievance Policy.

19. How do we make sure that this policy is put into practice at Venus

Aside from our regular policy review drop ins, we make sure that workers and volunteers are reminded about their duties and responsibilities for safeguarding through one-to-one supervision sessions, and regular policy/training away days throughout the year.

At our weekly team meetings there are opportunities to review, challenge and revise the procedures that we have here at Venus, safeguarding issues are included in this.

Venus facilitates student placements from higher and further education establishments such as Liverpool John Moores University and Hugh Baird College. We make sure that all students placed with us are DBS checked and undergo safeguarding awareness as part of their induction with us. Students participate in ongoing policy review throughout their placements with Venus.

20. Documentation

- All relevant information should be documented on Civi records.
- Information should be objective and factually accurate.

- Do not include personal opinions or assumptions. Observations should be explained. For example, it is not appropriate to say “X was very upset”, best practice would be “X appeared to be upset as she was crying and visibly shaking”.
- Dates and times should always be correctly documented.

21. Flow Chart



