



West Sussex Federation of Women's Institute

Safeguarding Policy

Adherence of this policy is the responsibility of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

West Sussex Federation of Women's Institutes (WSFWI) is a membership organisation, which offers services to a wide range of individuals, in line with the WI Constitution. It is recognised that some of those who access the WI's services will be children, young people who under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults.

As such, the welfare of the child, young people or vulnerable adults will be paramount, therefore, West Sussex Federation has to make sure that the people they are working with are exposed to minimal risk in all matters and also to make sure staff and volunteers are also at minimal risk of being accused.

West Sussex Safeguarding Policy applies to all staff, the Board of Trustees, volunteers or anyone working or volunteering for or on behalf of the organisation.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive services that are provided by or on behalf of the organisation.
- To provide staff, Trustees, volunteers and any person working on behalf of WSFWI with the overarching principles that underpin the organisations' approach to Safeguarding.

The Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of the UK law. Please see Appendix 3.

How we might notice abuse

Concerns about or evidence of abuse can come to us:

- Directly by disclosure by the child, young person or adult.
- By observing the behaviour of the person by the volunteer, member of the public or carer.
- A complaint or expression of concern by a volunteer, carer, member of the public or relative.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone, either within or acting on behalf of the organisation. All staff members and volunteers of WSFWI needs to be alert to the potential of abuse, this also includes abuse by members of the organisation. It is expected that all members are responsible and should respond to any suspected or actual abuse in accordance with this Policy and procedures.

DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION

If we know or suspect that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being abused, we WILL do something and act accordingly making sure that our observation or suspicion is duly recorded.

1. Recruitment, Selection & Training of Staff & Volunteers

- 1.1 West Sussex Federation of Women's Institute (WSFWI) will ensure that the recruitment and selection procedures take account of the need to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults. A minimum of two references will be taken up for all successful candidates prior to a formal offer of employment and where appropriate, referees will be asked to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
- 1.2 Where relevant to the post, the WI members/staff will have the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service check taken out. The check will be requested prior to the applicant having direct contact with children, young people, vulnerable adults and/or their carers.
- 1.3 Induction for new staff and volunteers will include information on all relevant policies and procedures, including eg safeguarding of child, young people and vulnerable adults. All staff and volunteers will be required to read the WSFWI's Safeguarding Policy and on-going training will be provided if necessary.
- 1.4 All staff and volunteers will have a designated supervisor who will provide appropriate ongoing support and supervision.

2. Reporting Procedure

- 2.1 Abuse or vulnerable adults and young people can take many forms including physical, emotional, sexual, financial and institutional. It is not the responsibility of anyone working or volunteering within WSFWI to decide whether or not abuse has taken place, consequently all cases of suspected or alleged abuse must be raised in line with the procedures identified in this Policy.
- 2.2 It is the responsibility of the person that first becomes aware of the situation where there may be a child, young person or vulnerable adult subject to, or at risk of, abuse to:
 - Inform a staff member/volunteer's Line Manager immediately – or the senior member of staff/Chair – Board of Trustees, if the Line Manager is unavailable or is implicated in the allegation.
 - Record the factual details of the allegation.
 - Clarify the distinction between fact, opinion or hearsay There must be NO attempt by the person to who the allegation has been reported or has concerns/suspensions regarding potential abuse to investigate the matter themselves.

2.3 The line manager, in consultation with Chair of Board of Trustees will:

- Decide without delay on the most appropriate course of action.
- Deal with any immediate needs of the individual concerned, ensuring any other service users are not put a risk.
- Clarify the facts stated by the member of staff/volunteer, but should not, in any circumstances, discuss the allegation of abuse with the alleged perpetrator or, if possible the victim.
- Address issues of consent and confidentiality.

Make a formal referral on the same day as the concern/allegation has been raised to either Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care or the Police wherever:

- A crime has been, could have been, or yet could be committed.
- There is suspicion that an abuse has taken place.
- The allegation involves a member of staff volunteer, paid carer or anyone who works on behalf of WSWFI.
- Other children, young people or vulnerable adults are at risk:

2.4 Where a decision is made not to refer, the concern/allegation must be recorded together with the reasons for the decision.

2.5 Any allegation made against a staff member/volunteer should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Trustees who will take action as per this Safeguarding Policy. In the event of an allegation being made against the Chair of the Board of Trustees, this should be reported to the Vice Chair or their nominated representative.

2.6 Where a disclosure of abuse is made, care should be taken to explain to them the procedure that will be followed and they should be informed that it might not be possible for WSWFI to maintain confidentiality

2.7 Where a member of WSWFI makes an allegation regarding another organisation.

3. Accusations made against WSWFI Staff/Member/Volunteer

If a staff member of WSWFI is accused of abuse they will be immediately suspended on full pay. If a WSWFI member/volunteer is accused of abuse they will be immediately suspended from any Committee positions held. This does not mean that there is a presumption of guilt: it is to protect the member of staff/WI member/volunteer from further accusations. The Chair of the Board of Trustees will then follow the Safeguarding Policy for the organisation.

4. Good Practice

All staff and volunteers should be familiar with and adhere to WSWFI of Women's Institute Guidelines for the Good Practice for working with Members and Service (see Appendix 2).

Appendix 1: Guidelines

The following are guidelines on immediate action to be taken following a reporting of abuse by a child young person, vulnerable adult or any member of staff/volunteer:

- React calmly so as not to frighten or deter him/her.
- Reassure him/her that it is not their fault.
- Do not promise to keep the information to yourself -inform the individual of WSFWI's confidentiality policy and explain what this means.
- Explain that you need to make sure they will be safe and that you may have to pass on the information to somebody trusted to deal with it appropriately.
- Listen carefully to what they say and take them seriously.
- Allow them to tell you what happened in their own words.
- Clarify what you have heard to establish the basic facts.
- Avoid leading questions.
- Do not ask specific questions regarding explicit details.

If possible, make brief note during the initial disclosure, explaining why you are doing this. If this is not possible, a record of the conversation must be made as soon as possible afterwards. All notes must be dated and signed by the staff member or volunteer taking them, recording the information as set out within this Safeguarding Policy. The information to be included is set out under section 2.2 of the Policy.

Appendix 2: Good Practice Guidelines for Working with Service Users

If it is necessary for a member of staff/volunteer to meet a member or service user outside. Whenever possible, this meeting should be in a public place. Visiting members or service users at their home is not encouraged, however it is recognised that in certain circumstances it may be unavoidable. In the event of a staff member/volunteer visiting a member or service user at home, they should ensure that another member of WSFWI knows where they are going and what time they are expecting to complete their visit, or take 'a friend'.

Members and service users should never be given access to the home address or telephone number of any volunteer or staff member of WSFWI without explicit consent.

Appendix 3:

- The Mental Health Act (1983)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- The Children Act (1989)
- Protection of Freedoms Act (2002)
- The Children and Families Act (2014)
- The Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- The Care Act (2014)
- The Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998)
- Making Safeguarding Personal Guide (2014)
- Working Together (2015)
- The United Convention of the Rights of the Child (1991)

Appendix 3: Glossary

Young Person/Vulnerable Adult in the context of this policy, is a young person defined as anyone aged less than 18 years. A vulnerable adult is a person over the age of 18 years who is or may be in need of/eligible for Community Care Services by reason of mental or other disability age or illness.

AND is unable to take care of themselves

OR is unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

This includes people:

- With a mental health or a learning disability
- Physical impairment or sensory impairment
- Substance or alcohol dependency or
- Who receives personal care, nursing or support to live independently in their own home or a care home
- Who are older and frail
- Who are family carers providing assistance to another vulnerable adult

People who may be vulnerable to abuse-

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person(s) or group of people. Abuse may be single or repeated acts. It can be:

Physical abuse: for example, hitting, slapping, burning, pushing restraining or giving the wrong medication

Psychological abuse: including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, shouting, and swearing

Financial: including the illegal or unauthorised use of a person's property, money, pension book or other valuables, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance

Sexual: such as forcing a person to take part in any sexual activity without his or her informed consent – this can occur in any relationship

Discriminatory: including racist or sexist remarks or comments based on a person's disability, age or illness, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment. This also includes stopping someone from being involved in religious or cultural activity, services or support networks

Institutional: the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people at risk of abuse. This includes a failure to ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to protect adults and maintain good standards of care in accordance with individual needs including training of staff, supervision and management, record keeping and liaising with other providers or care

Domestic Abuse: incident or pattern or incidents of controlling coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse by someone that can be a partner or family member, regardless of gender or sexuality

Neglect and acts of omission: including ignoring medical or physical care needs. There can be deliberate or unintentional, amounting to abuse by a carer or self-neglect by the vulnerable person: for example, where a person is deprived of food, heat, clothing, comfort or essential medication or failing to provide access to appropriate health or social care services