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**One Minute Guide**

**Safeguarding Children and Adults for Coronavirus Volunteers**

Thank you for volunteering to help keep our community in Portsmouth safe at this difficult time. This short guide gives volunteers some information about how to protect children and vulnerable adults who are at risk of abuse or neglect.

**What is Safeguarding?**

Safeguarding means protecting the most vulnerable from abuse and neglect. We all have a duty to help protect children or adults who may be experiencing (or are at risk of) abuse or neglect. During lockdown, we know that there is likely to be an increase in domestic abuse, self-neglect, and use of alcohol and drugs which is likely to be linked to the impact on people's emotional wellbeing. This may put children and adults at greater risk than usual.

**What is my role as a volunteer?**

Volunteers have an especially important role during the lockdown, as vulnerable children and adults may be particularly isolated and it may hard for them to tell someone about the abuse or neglect. They may not be getting the same face-to-face services they usually get, such as going to school or getting visited by their social worker. Volunteers are the 'eyes and ears' on the ground.

It is your role to be curious and if you see something that doesn't feel right, tell someone. Signs might include someone you visit having unexplained injuries, a child left alone in the house, or someone you speak to on the phone who seems evasive, scared or fearful. Remember, safeguarding is everybody's business.

**What is abuse?**

Abuse is when someone does something to another person which damages their quality of life or puts them at risk of harm. Abuse can happen once or repeatedly. It may be deliberate or unintentional.

Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual or financial. Neglect is also a form of abuse.

**Who may be at risk of abuse or neglect?**

Some people may be more at risk than others. This can include people who depend on others for their care, are older or frail, have mental health problems, who have a learning disability or physical disability, who have dementia or memory loss, who misuse alcohol or drugs, or who are carers for someone else. During lockdown, people could be putting themselves at risk for reasons other than shopping, exercise, or medical reasons allowed by the coronavirus guidance. This may be due to a lack of understanding of the government advice, or even criminal exploitation.

When you visit or phone, think about the whole family. You may be there to visit one person, but an issue like domestic abuse can affect several different members of the family, including unborn children.

**Who can abuse or neglect?**

Anyone can cause harm - a family member, a carer, or a stranger. It is usually someone the child or adult knows. Some adults also self-neglect, for example not eating properly, not taking their medication, or neglecting their personal hygiene or living conditions. Self-neglect can be a safeguarding issue too.

Most volunteers are there to help people, but it is possible that a small number of people may use the position to abuse someone. You need to tell someone if have any concerns about another volunteer, for example if they are behaving inappropriately, or accepting money or gifts from a resident.

**Where does it happen?**

Abuse can happen anywhere: at home, in a care home, school or nursery, hospital, day centre or in a public place.

**What should I do if I am worried about a child or a vulnerable adult?**

Speak to your manager or volunteer contact about your concerns in line with the organisation's safeguarding policy. Your organisation will have clear processes in place to enable effective appropriate contact into the Children's or Adult MASH and you may be expected to do that yourself.

For concerns about an adult:Adult Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on 02392 680810 or email [PortsmouthAdultMASH@secure.portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:PortsmouthAdultMASH@secure.portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

For concerns about a child:Children's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on 02392 688793 or email [MASH@secure.portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@secure.portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

In emergency, dial 999.

**How can I keep myself safe?**

If someone is offensive or abusive to you, or you feel unsafe at any time carrying out your volunteering role, tell your volunteer contact. Always follow the guidance and training you have been given, including safety guidance about social distancing.

**Where can I find more information?**

For more information about safeguarding children, and how to report a concern, see the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership website [www.portsmouthscp.org.uk](http://www.portsmouthscp.org.uk)

For more information about safeguarding adults, and how to report a concern, see the Portsmouth Safeguarding Adults Board website [www.portsmouthsab.uk](http://www.portsmouthsab.uk)

A short animated video about safeguarding adults <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ToOu2wlkHsw>

A short video about safeguarding for volunteers, produced by Waltham Forest <https://youtu.be/HHQG8CJROhU>