**Safeguarding Essentials**

**"Safeguarding means protecting a child or vulnerable adult's health, well being and human rights to enable them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect"**

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and in the current climate it is essential that everyone, including staff and volunteers who witness something concerning never ignore it. By sharing information and reporting to an organisations designated safeguarding person or member of staff, all can play a part in the prevention of potential abuse and neglect.

Even if you don’t interact with people directly, you still need to think about safeguarding and how you would respond in the event of an incident or allegation. In relation to Safeguarding, GDPR doesnot prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children or vulnerable adults safe.

Legal and secure information sharing between agencies is an essential safeguarding tool for ensuring those at risk get the support and intervention they need and Information can be shared lawfully within the framework of the Data Protection Act.

The management or interests of an organisation should not override the need to share information that safeguards adults or children at risk of abuse and when required transparency is essential. For example, always telling those involved what you are doing with their personal data, being open about the risks and safeguards involved and letting them know what to do if they are unhappy; empowers the child, parent or adult in question with an understanding of data protection risks, consequences, legal safeguards and their rights.

It is also important to understand that both children and adults at risk of harm need different safeguarding approaches, as the way abuse is reported for children and adults at risk is not the same and legislation for managing the two is very different. When safeguarding adults organisations must consider the person's individual needs in every situation and it is good practice to try to gain the person’s consent to share information at the earliest opportunity.

Recent cases reported during the Covid-19 pandemic suggest abusers taking advantage of lax safeguarding policies for the recruitment of volunteers, targeting the elderly and those confide to their homes. By gaining access to personal and sensitive data, including medical history, medications and financial circumstances, so-called "well intentioned" members of the community, volunteers, carers and family members have been using the pandemic to exploit or coerce vulnerable adults for the purpose of financial abuse.

As in any case of safer recruitment, volunteers need to be vetted in the same way they would be ordinarily; following organisational procedures and carrying out DBS checks, as well as taking references and interviewing all those offering their support. Inductions explaining safeguarding, confidentially and data protection should not be neglected because of time constraints.

**Additional Resources**

For more information please click on the links below or contact Camden's Adult / Children's Safeguarding Boards for signposting information and support.

* Camden's Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board: <https://www.camden.gov.uk/safeguarding-adults#section-4>
* Age UK Camden: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/camden/our-services/coronavirus-covid19/>
* Action On Elder Abuse: <https://wearehourglass.org/>
* Gov's - Disclosure and Barring services: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>
* True Vision Hate Crime: <https://www.report-it.org.uk/home>
* Silver line - The Helpline for older People: <https://www.thesilverline.org.uk/>

**Further information on Safeguarding children**

* Camden's Safeguarding Children's Board: <https://cscp.org.uk/>
* NSPCC: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>
* Childline: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>
* Family Lives: <https://www.familylives.org.uk/>