SAFEGUARDING: ADULTS AT RISK

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Review

Reviewed by: Emma King CEO	Owner: CEO	Version: 3
Date Approved: 14/9/2026	Next review due: August 2027 This policy is reviewed as necessary, always following a serious incident, and at least once a year.	
Summary of Key Changes: Summary of Additions: Types of abuse: domestic, self-neglect, radicalisation | Serious Incident Reporting | Riding Activities		

Board Approved 19.9.2025

Policy Statement

At Deen City Farm and Riding School (DCF), we believe that the safety and welfare of adults at risk is of the utmost importance. It is the duty of all our staff, Board of Trustees and volunteers to protect each adult at risk from abuse and to be alert to the possibility of abuse.

Introduction

In this policy, we help staff to understand and recognise abuse and neglect and explain why such policies are necessary and have been instigated. The policy should also enable them to understand their part in implementing the policy.

Where a third party is running an activity or service from DCF premises, they are required to have their own Safeguarding policies in place or must adopt this policy.

This policy is based on the Care Act 2014 and uses guidance from the Merton's Safeguarding Adults Department, London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and government issued guidelines: Care and support statutory guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Adult Safeguarding duties apply to any adult who:

- Has needs for care and support.
- Is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect.
- As a result of care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or experience of, abuse or neglect.

Definitions

Adults at risk are people aged eighteen or over, who:

- have needs for care and support.
- are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- 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.

Examples of adults with care and support needs include:

- An older person
- A person with a physical disability, a learning difficulty, or a sensory impairment
- Someone with mental health needs, including dementia or a personality disorder.
- A person with a long-term health condition.
- Someone who misuses substances or alcohol to the extent that it affects their ability to manage day-to-day living.

This list is not exhaustive. Safeguarding duties apply regardless of whether or not someone has the ability to make specific decisions for themselves at specific times. There may be times when a person has care and support needs and is unable to protect themselves for a short, temporary period – for example, when they are in hospital under anaesthetic. People with care and support needs are not inherently vulnerable, but they may come to be at risk of abuse or neglect at any point due to, for example:

- Physical or mental ill-health
- Becoming disabled
- Getting older or developing cognitive impairment

- Not having support networks
- Inappropriate accommodation
- Financial circumstances
- Substance abuse
- Being socially isolated

People who abuse:

- are often well known to their victims but can also be strangers, such as in cases of online fraud or scams.
- might be a relative, partner, son or daughter, friend, or neighbour, a paid or voluntary caregiver, a health or social care worker, or other service users.
- could be another vulnerable adult or service user.
- may not realise they are abusing and can sometimes act out of character and abuse because of the stress of caring.

Abuse can take place in a wide range of settings such as:

- The vulnerable adults' own home.
- A carer's home, a day centre, or care home.
- A hospital or workplace.
- Educational institutions.

Recognising Abuse

The most common types of abuse are:

Physical abuse: this is usually the use of force to cause pain or injury and signs might include burns, bruising, scratches, or accidents that cannot be explained. Also included is misuse of medication or forcing someone to stay in a care home against their wishes.

Neglect or acts of omission: this is when a vulnerable adult does not have their basic needs met, such as adequate food or warmth or help with personal hygiene. Signs might include deteriorating health, appearance, or mood.

Financial abuse: this is when a vulnerable adult is exploited for financial gain. Often valuables will go missing in the home or there may be a change in financial circumstances that cannot be explained.

Sexual abuse: this includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts which the vulnerable adult has not or could not consent to or was pressurised or manipulated into. Signs can include changes in behaviour or physical discomfort.

Psychological or emotional abuse: this might be emotional abuse such as threats of harm or abandonment, enforced isolation, blaming, or controlling behaviour, or verbal and racial insults. Signs may be fear, confusion, or disturbed sleep.

Domestic abuse: any incident or pattern of incidents involving controlling, coercive, threatening, abusive or violent behaviour between individuals aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. This includes honour-based violence and all examples within categories of sexual, physical, psychological and financial abuse.

Self-neglect: this covers a wide range of behaviours, including neglecting personal hygiene, health or care needs or living conditions. It can also include behaviours such as hoarding, which may place the individual or others at risk of harm. Self-neglect does not automatically require a safeguarding enquiry

under the Care Act 2014; decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the level or risk, the adult's capability and impact on their wellbeing. Wherever possible the adults' views, feelings and right to make a choice must be respected and used to inform any decisions taken.

Radicalisation: is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and or extremist views linked to terrorism. In the context of this policy, it includes people who may be vulnerable to being radicalised through exposure to extremist views. Possible indicators of radicalisation may include:

- Becoming withdrawn or isolated from family and friends.
- Sudden changes in behaviour, beliefs, or attitudes.
- Expressing extremist views or intolerance towards others.
- Spending increasing amounts of time accessing extremist material online.
- Associating with individuals or groups that promote extremist views.
- Being secretive about their activities or online behaviour.

These indicators do not necessarily mean a person is being radicalised. They should be considered alongside other information and circumstances, and any concerns should be reported in line with safeguarding procedures.

Discriminatory abuse: this includes any sort of abuse based on a vulnerable adult's race, gender or impairment such as their mental or physical health.

Organisational or Institutional abuse: this is poor professional practice, including neglect, and can take the form of isolated incidents right through to ill treatment or gross misconduct.

Modern Slavery: this includes human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, such as escort work, prostitution and pornography and debt bondage – being forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they never will be able to.

Action to be Taken

- It is responsibility of all staff to report suspected or expected abuse.
- If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, first ensure they are safe and if immediate help is needed, call the emergency services on 999.
- Then follow the detailed reporting procedure set out below.
- A worker from Merton Social Services may then arrange an investigation that involves other agencies who work with vulnerable adults.
- Action will then be taken to ensure the vulnerable adult is protected in the future.
- Staff who are suspected of abuse will be dealt with through Deen City Farm's disciplinary procedures.
- The police should always be informed in cases of suspected criminal offence.

Reporting Procedures for Suspected/Reported Abuse

- Only ask the person sufficient questions to establish what has happened i.e. accident or possible abuse/neglect.
- If immediate danger exists, ensure the person and any other vulnerable adults are protected.
- If the person is seriously injured, seek immediate medical treatment – ringing 999 for ambulance and police if the injuries are serious.
- Ensure that detailed notes and actions are created, agreed and recorded on an incident report form. Documentation is vital and should evidence be required for criminal proceedings at a later date, a medical examination by a GP/hospital doctor or nurse would be advantageous.
- If applicable, be careful not to destroy or contaminate evidence.
- Immediately report the incident to your Head of Department and/or the CEO and adhere to existing policies e.g. Health and Safety. The Safeguarding Lead and/or the senior staff member

onsite is responsible for carrying out a referral to Merton Adult Social Care. They will also decide if the victim's relatives or carers need to be contacted, and if the police should be informed.

- When referring an adult you can contact the First Response Team, 020 8545 4388 from 09:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday or Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours – after 17:00 and bank holidays) Phone: 020 8770 5000 or 0345 6189762 who will offer advice on whether the circumstances meet the threshold for a referral. Referrals can be made here: Reporting abuse or neglect – safeguarding adults | Merton Council
- If the suspected abuser is a member of staff, the matter will be managed under Deen City Farm's disciplinary procedure. The police may be involved, and the staff member may be suspended while an investigation is carried out.

Confidentiality

It is expected that all staff and volunteers will deal sensitively and sympathetically with any suspected abuse or neglect case. It is essential that information remains confidential and that only those with a 'need to know' should be privy to it.

The adult at risk needs to be made aware that staff cannot ignore issues around abuse and that steps will be taken to deal with them as sensitively as possible. Staff have an obligation to get consent from the adult in question before anything is reported where it is appropriate. There are some instances where consent can be overridden, and this should be explained to the adult in question.

Reasons for overriding consent include:

- When others may be at risk.
- If there are legal requirements, for example to support an investigation.
- Protecting someone's vital interests (life-saving or urgent and significant risk situations)
- Fulfilling a legal obligation (e.g. Section 42 Care Act enquires for adults)

There are limited circumstances where it may be acceptable not to share relevant information. Your Head of Department and/or the CEO will decide whether this applies.

Safe Recruitment Procedures

We are careful in the recruitment and selection of employees as we see this as an effective way to provide a safe environment for everybody. It is important that our recruitment policy is adhered to in order to reduce the risk of potential abuse and a deterrent for the risk of potential abusers who may see the Farm as a way of gaining access to adults at risk.

- We endeavour, where possible, to advertise and interview in a timely fashion to allow references and DBS checks to be received prior to new employees starting their role.
- At interview all potential employees and volunteers will be questioned on their understanding of their responsibility for the safety and welfare of adults at risk.
- We require every potential employee whose role falls into the definition of 'regulated activity' (as defined by the under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 20006) to undergo an enhanced DBS check prior to working at the Farm.
- We require every potential adult volunteer to undergo a DBS check prior to working at the Farm if they are to be working unsupervised with adults at risk.
- It should be noted that in some circumstances the work of our staff will not fall within the definition of 'regulated activity' and therefore an Enhanced DBS cannot be sought. In this case a basic or standard DBS will be sought where appropriate. See DBS Procedure for Volunteers (Appendix Three, Safeguarding Policy: Child Protection)

- We acknowledge that DBS checks alone may not be a sufficient deterrent for potential abusers and therefore we insist on taking up personally **two** references of previous employment. We will not accept references attached to application forms or those addressed 'to whom it may concern'.
- As part of our induction for all workers and volunteers they will be given an overview of the work of the Farm and given time to understand their role in implementing our Safeguarding Policies.
- All staff and adult volunteers will undergo a probationary period of six months or until a DBS check is completed, whichever is the longer.
- They will not work with any adult at risk without a completed DBS check unless they are supervised by a permanent staff member who has a completed DBS check and is not on probation.
- In the instance of short-term workers such as student placements, they will always be supervised when working.
- Staff and adult volunteers will be made aware that it is their duty to voice any concerns of abusive or unethical conduct by those involved in the welfare of adults, *including other colleagues*. In this respect, 'whistleblowing' will be actively encouraged. Refer to DCF's Whistleblowing Policy.

Serious Incident Reporting and Referrals

DCF has a duty to consider whether safeguarding concerns require a referral to the DBS. A referral will be made where an individual has harmed, posed a risk of harm to, or is considered unsuitable to work with children, young people or adults at risk and the legal criteria for referral have been met.

The organisation will also consider whether a safeguarding concern meets the threshold for reporting to the Charity Commission as a Serious Incident. This may include incidents involving abuse, neglect, exploitation, criminal activity, significant safeguarding failures, or any matter that has resulted in, or could result in, significant harm to beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, or the charity. Reports will be made promptly and in accordance with statutory requirements, Charity Commission guidance, and the organisation's safeguarding procedures.

Physical Assistance and Safe Handling in Riding Activities

The welfare of children, young people and adults at risk is paramount in all riding school activities. Physical assistance and sport-specific handling may be required to support rider safety, balance, positioning, communication, learning and understanding, including when mounting, dismounting, leading horses, adjusting equipment, or providing riding instruction.

Any physical contact must be necessary, appropriate to the activity, proportionate to the rider's needs, and carried out in a manner that respects the individual's dignity, comfort and wellbeing. Wherever possible, the reason for any physical assistance should be explained in advance and the rider's agreement sought. Staff should remain mindful of individual needs, including disability, communication requirements and sensory sensitivities. Physical assistance should take place in an open and observable environment wherever practicable and must never exceed what is required for the rider's safety or instruction.

Any concerns regarding boundaries, inappropriate contact, or a rider's welfare must be reported in accordance with these safeguarding procedures.

Further guidance on acceptable physical assistance, safe handling practices and reporting concerns can be found in the Riding School's internal procedures: Rider Support, Physical Assistance & Safeguarding Guidance.

Training

We acknowledge that members of staff need training to enable them to put this policy into practice. Key staff members and volunteers must attend relevant Safeguarding training. Refresher courses must also be attended as follows:

- The Safeguarding leads and head of departments must attend a relevant Safeguarding Lead training course, and this is to be updated every two years.
- Staff and volunteers who are involved in looking after adults at risk, will undertake safeguarding training, which should be updated every two years.
- All staff and volunteers who work with adults at risk are made aware of how they can support individuals in understanding, recognising, and responding to potential risks.
- New staff and volunteers are made aware of the contents of this policy as part of their induction process, as well as when the policy is updated.

Relevant Contact Numbers

Name	Role	Organisation	Telephone No.	Email
Jo Henbrey	DCF Safeguarding Lead	DCF	020 8543 5858	stables.safeguarding@deencityfarm.co.uk
Emma King	CEO	DCF	020 8545 2177/ 07508 113 399	manager@deencityfarm.co.uk/ safeguarding@deencityfarm.co.uk .
Maddy Ruzenne	Trustee Safeguarding Lead	DCF		Trustee.safeguarding@deencityfarm.co.uk
Matt Linden	Chair of the Board of Trustees	DCF		chair@deencityfarm.co.uk
Merton First Response Team		Merton Council	020 8545 4388 (9am-5pm, excluding bank holidays)	safeguarding.adults@merton.gov.uk
Emergency Out-of-hours Duty Team		Merton Council	020 8770 5000 or 0345 6189 762 (after 5pm and bank holidays)	safeguarding.adults@merton.gov.uk
Community Drugs & Alcohol Recovery Services		CDARS Merton	020 8540 4023	Info@cdars.org.uk

Useful Links

Safeguarding Adults Referral Form – Merton Council