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# PROTECTION OF ADULTS AT RISK POLICY

**Policy Statement**

Comfort Home Care recognizes that the services it provides are used by adults who are at risk or may be at risk at certain times.

The Organisation has a duty to ensure the welfare of its clients who may be at risk. This duty involves reporting the risk to an appropriate agency and by promoting a safe environment within the organisation.

The Organisation believes that its clients must be safeguarded from all forms of abuse. It recognises that it must at all times protect its clients from the risk of abuse and identify and deal with specific instances of abuse if they occur.

The Organisation will take every possible action to prevent abuse and to deal with it as promptly and effectively as possible if it occurs.

The Safeguarding Adults at Risk officer is Victoria Burston

**Aim of the Policy**

The central aim of the Organisation’s safeguarding policy is to set out to staff the:

* the Organisation’s approach to the safeguarding of its clients
* ways in which the Organisation does this
* the steps taken to avoid abuse taking place
* the actions that will be taken by the Organisation to deal with abuse if it occurs

**Definition of Abuse**

Abuse of clients may take any of the following forms:

* physical abuse
* financial or material abuse
* psychological abuse
* sexual abuse
* neglect
* discriminatory abuse
* inhuman or degrading treatment
* inappropriate or excessive restraint.

**Responsibility**

The Organisationhas a duty to report serious concerns relating to abuse to appropriate agencies including the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS).

The Organisation has a duty to ensure that staff working with adults at risk adopt safe practices.

The Organisation will undertake DBS checks on all new and existing staff as appropriate and will undertake regular supervision of staff to minimise any risks to clients posed by staff.

**The Organisation will –**

* Set out and inform staff of the procedures for responding to suspicions or evidence of abuse
* Operate policies which ensure that all new staff are rigorously checked, by the taking up of references and appropriate DBS checks
* Incorporate material relevant to issues of abuse into staff training at all levels
* Maintain vigilance concerning the possibility of abuse of clients from whatever source
* Encourage a climate of openness which enables staff to pass on concerns about behaviour that might be abusive
* Maintain robust procedures for regulating staff handling of clients’ property, money or financial affairs
* Produce and regularly revise policies and procedures to minimise the risk of abuse
* Provide training for staff in all aspects of abuse and protection
* Investigate any allegations of abuse quickly and thoroughly
* Implement improvements to procedures if an investigation reveals deficiencies in the way in which the Organisation operates
* Collaborate with other relevant agencies in combating abuse and improving the protection of clients

If a member of staff who works with adults at risk in a regulated activity has been cautioned or convicted for a “relevant offence” the Organisation must make a referral to the DBS and the member of staff will be removed from working in the regulated activity.

**The Organisation expects its staff to:**

* Refrain from any abusive action in relation to clients
* Report to the Organisation anything they witness which is or might be abusive
* Co-operate in any investigation into alleged abuse
* Participate in training activities relating to abuse and protection.

Staff should be aware of who they may turn to for advice if they become aware or suspect that abuse is occurring.

Failure by staff to report incidents or suspicions of abuse may lead to disciplinary action.

**Recruitment**

The Organisation will carry out all relevant checks on recruits to ensure that they are of a high standard.

The Organisation will ensure that new employees working with adults at risk are checked as appropriate through the DBS; obtaining a standard or enhanced certificate as appropriate.

For particular posts indentified by the Organisation, applicants will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS disclosure. In all cases enhanced disclosure will apply applicants for posts where job involves “regulated activity”.

Regulated Activity involving adults at risk includes –

* Those providing healthcare
* Those providing personal care eg. feeding, washing, dressing etc.
* Those providing social care
* Those providing assistance with cash, bills and / or shopping
* Those assisting in the conduct of a person’s own affairs
* Those (other than taxi drivers and family & friends) who transport an adult because of their age, illness or disability to or from their place of residence to a place where they are receiving health care, personal care or social care (or between such places).

**Procedures for Reporting Abuse**

If you suspect abuse may be occurring, you should discuss your concerns with

* Care Direct Adult Social Services 0845 155 1007
* EDT Emergency Duty Team 0845 607 0888
* Local Safeguarding 01392 380279 or 10392 381206 (Option 5)
* CQC 03000 616161
* Police 999

Concerns can also be brought to the attention of Victoria Burston

Concerns should be documented. If you still have concerns, then these should be reported to the most appropriate agency.

If your concerns are about a colleague, these should be reported to Victoria Burston or to the above.

If the alleged abuse is by a professional from another Organisation or agency, the report should be made to Victoria Burston, or by contacting the numbers above who will raise the issue with the organisation who employs the person.

If the alleged abuser is a member of staff and there is sufficient evidence that abuse has or might have occurred, the Organisation will suspend that person from duty pending the outcome of a disciplinary investigation.

You should record any concerns that you have raised, who you reported them to and if you spoke to the person about the concerns. If you do not hear back from this person, contact them again.

There will be an enquiry into the alleged abuse.

The enquiry will include interviewing the member of staff involved in the incident, hearing and assessing evidence from any others who might have knowledge of the incident and considering any other possible source of evidence.

The investigating officer will also usually interview the person who it is alleged has been abused to hear their account of what has occurred.

**Following the Enquiry**

If it seems from the enquiry that abuse may have taken place, and the alleged abuser is a member of staff, the Organisation will take action under the Organisation’s disciplinary policy.

If the alleged abuser is not a member of staff the Organisation will involve other appropriate responsible bodies.

If abuse is proved against a staff member, the Organisation will take appropriate steps to inform the DBS that the staff member is possibly someone who is unsuitable to work again with adults at risk.

**Preventing Missing Persons Incidents**

* Support staff from Comfort Home Care should always remain vigilant and be aware of exactly where service users are at any given time.
* Service users who are prone to wandering, or who may be at risk of getting lost by reason of their mental state, should have this identified during risk assessment and a suitable entry made in their plan of care. Such service users should be kept under observation as appropriate to the level of risk identified.

**Situations where a missing person's report should be made include the following:**

* where a service user has not returned from or has got lost during an arranged activity or walk.
* where a service user cannot be found in their house or grounds and no prior arrangements have been made to explain their absence.
* If it becomes clear that a service user may be missing, it is vital that all the members of staff in Comfort Home Care work as a team and follow a clearly defined procedure.

**Missing Persons Procedure**

As soon as it is suspect that a service user may be missing, support staff at the service user's home or place of care should:

* Initiate an immediate search of the building and its immediate surrounds.
* Contact relatives, friends, neighbours or other obvious places where the service user may have gone or has been known to go in the past.
* Check the GPS tracker and identify the location of the service user (where applicable).
* Ensure that service users who are prone to absconsion have an up to date picture on file at Comfort Home Care’s head office.

If the service user cannot be found during the initial search, then the member of support staff should immediately raise the alarm by informing their line manager at the office by phone or call the on-call supervisor (out of office hours).

They should pass on all relevant information, such as the full details of the service user (it is very important to correctly identify the service user) and full details of the incident, including when and where the service user was last seen, who by and what the service user was wearing.

The member of support staff should then remain at the service user's home or place of care in case the service user returns (within the allocated care time for that service user).

Upon receiving a missing person's report, the line manager should do the following.

* Make immediate efforts to contact the service user's relatives or carers, if not already done, to inform them of the situation, to gather information and to get advice.
* Contact the police and give full details about the service user, including when and where they were last seen, who by, what they were wearing and any special risk factors involved.
* Co-operate fully with any police search.
* Where the police are involved then Comfort Home Cares Registered Care Manager should be informed as soon as possible, as should members of the missing service user's family if they have not already been contacted. Families should be requested to telephone the office, on-call supervisor or police if the service user contacts them, and relatives should be kept informed at each stage of the search.

The line manager should, at the earliest opportunity, fill out an incident form and ensure that a full note of events has been made in the service user's notes by the member of support staff at the service user’s home. Times of actions and decisions should be noted as accurately as possible. On conclusion of the incident, support staff involved should be asked to check the incident form for accuracy and to sign it.

Once the service user has been found, it is essential that all the parties who were advised of the emergency are contacted again and informed that the search has been concluded, including the member of support staff at the service user's home and the police.

At all stages the line manager should be sensitive to the needs of members of support staff involved, who may well be upset by the emergency incident, and should provide or arrange any support required, including bringing in extra staff to help or sending someone to "sit" with the support staff involved, and checking staff are ok before they go home.

If at any stage the on-call supervisor is unsure of what to do then the Registered Care Manager should be contacted immediately for advice.

**Procedure to Follow After a Missing Persons Incident**

Upon conclusion of a missing persons incident Comfort Home Care should mount a full enquiry and investigate the incident thoroughly. The Registered Care Manager or a member of the senior Management team will follow the Care Quality Commission’s (CQC) guidance and forward a detailed notification.

Investigations should be led by the Registered Care Manager who will also be responsible for implementing any improvements that are indicated.

**Reviewed by:** Mr Ryan Palmer **(Registered Manger)**