Title	**Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy**
Date approved	February 2026
Next review date	February 2027

Distribution

Distribution	All staff & volunteers. All service users should be informed.

1. Scope, aims and responsibilities

Rainbow Haven is committed to protecting all service users from abuse.

Rainbow Haven believes that every service user has the right to live free from abuse. Rainbow Haven will not tolerate any member of staff breaching their responsibility by any act or omission that causes or permits the abuse of a service user. Where we are unsuccessful in preventing such abuse, we will ensure that robust procedures are in place for reporting and dealing with incidents.

The aim of this Policy is to set out Rainbow Haven's position with regard to the measures to be taken to prevent incidents of abuse and the action to take when vulnerable adults are - or appear to be - at risk of abuse.

It is the responsibility of the Trustee Board and the Operations Manager to ensure that all staff and service users are aware of the existence of this policy and that all relevant staff and volunteers have received appropriate training to identify adults at risk of abuse. It is the responsibility of all team members to ensure that this policy is applied.

2. Definitions

Definition of abuse

Rainbow Haven has adopted the Action on Elder Abuse definition, which states that abuse is:

> *'A single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress.'*

Definition of vulnerable adult

A person is a vulnerable adult if, having attained the age of 18, they are:

- In residential accommodation.
- In sheltered housing.
- Receiving domiciliary care.
- Receiving any form of health care.
- Are detained in lawful custody.
- By virtue of an order of a court, are under supervision per criminal justice act 2003 sections regarding community sentences.
- Receiving a welfare service of a prescribed description.

- Receiving any service or participates in any activity provided specifically for persons who have particular needs because of their age, has any form of disability or has a prescribed physical or mental problem. (dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia are excluded disabilities)
- Have payments made to them or to an accepted representative in pursuance of arrangements under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.
- Requiring assistance in the conduct of own affairs.

3. Types of Abuse

The Department of Health Publication 'No Secrets' (2000) identifies the following types of abuse (the list is illustrative, not exhaustive):

- **Physical Abuse** - including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions
- **Sexual Abuse** - including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting
- **Psychological abuse** - including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks
- **Financial or material abuse** - including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
- **Neglect and acts of omission** - including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating
- **Discriminatory abuse** - including racist, sexist, that is based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- **Institutional abuse** - including staff using their position to obtain unnecessary personal information about service users; giving unqualified legal advice; discriminatory behaviour; restricting access to services or seeking reward in exchange for favourable treatment.

Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

Domestic Abuse

People may think of domestic abuse only as a physical assault by a man on a woman, but it can take many different forms. The definition used in Manchester is: 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence and abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between people who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender' This definition includes forced marriage and abuse within same sex relationships.

Domestic abuse is very common and affects one in four women in their lifetime, although domestic abuse can affect anyone, including men. Domestic abuse is a pattern of controlling and aggressive behaviour that is used to maintain power and exert control on victims, including many forms such as physical assault, bullying, sexual abuse, rape and threats. In addition it may include coercive control typified by destructive criticism, pressure tactics, disrespect, breaking trust, isolation and harassment.

Domestic abuse may apply to relationships other than those of partners and include sibling and intergenerational relationships (parents–offspring).

Forced Marriage

Forced marriages include one or both spouses **not consenting** to the marriage and some element of duress is involved. Duress includes feeling both physical and emotional pressure. Some victims of forced marriage are tricked into going to another country by their families. Victims fall prey to forced marriage through deception, abduction, coercion, fear, and inducements. A forced marriage is considered to be domestic abuse and an abuse of human rights.

There have been reports of vulnerable adults with mental and physical disabilities being forced to marry. Some individuals do not have the capacity to consent to the marriage. Some individuals may be unable to consent to consummate the marriage – sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

4. Risk of Radicalisation

Vulnerable adults may be at risk of radicalisation by a range of groups - the Government's counter terrorism strategy (CONTEST) identifies the following as posing a significant risk:

- Far Right extremists.
- Al-Qa'ida influenced groups.
- Environmental extremists.
- Animal Rights extremists.

Children, young or vulnerable adults and people with mental health issues may be easily drawn into terrorism. There is no obvious profile of a person likely to become involved in terrorist-related activity, or single indicator of when a person might move to support extremism. Vulnerable individuals who may be susceptible to radicalisation can be service users and/or staff.

All staff must escalate a concern and have confidence that each issue will be taken seriously, handled appropriately and that, where necessary, specialist advice will be available.

Reporting a vulnerable individual.

Where staff have concerns about someone who may be at risk of being radicalised they must report the matter to the Operations Manager immediately. To report an individual to police, ring 101 and ask to speak to someone about referral to the "*Channel"* programme. If the matter is urgent, call 999.

5. Disclosure, discovery and confidentiality

Staff may become aware of potential abuse through their own or others' suspicions or by the victim disclosing the abuse to them. All staff have a duty to report any suspicions or disclosures to a senior member of staff as soon as they become aware of or suspect abuse. Information given to a member of staff belongs to the organisation, not the staff member.

Staff may reassure the service user that every care will be taken to deal with the issue sensitively and carefully, but should make it clear that they cannot guarantee confidentiality because the matter may need to be escalated or reported outside the organisation, particularly where other people may be at risk.

Information sharing and confidentiality

Confidentiality is a serious consideration, but information can be safely shared within the confines of Safeguarding arrangements. Responsible information sharing plays a key role in enabling services

to protect victims of abuse and in extreme cases saves lives. **Failure to share information can put individuals at serious risk.**

Legally, staff can share confidential information with the service user's consent. If the information is in the public interest it is also legal to share the information **without** the service user's consent.

In all cases, the worker involved should discuss the proposal to share information with, and seek approval from, their line manager. The reasons for sharing information, what information is shared and who this has been shared with should be documented.

Some basic principles:

- **Never** offer assurances about absolute confidentiality.
- **Never** put management or organisational interests before safety.
- **Always** try to gain consent to share information if you can.
- **Always** consider the person's mental capacity to consent to information being shared and seek assistance if you are uncertain.
- **Always** make sure that others are not put at risk by information being kept confidential:
  - Does the public interest served by disclosure of personal information outweigh the public interest served by protecting confidentiality?
  - Could your action prevent a serious crime?
- **Always** share information on a 'need-to-know' basis, use a secure method and never share more information than necessary.
- **Always** record reasons for sharing information, what was shared and who with.
- **Always** carefully consider the risks of sharing information in relation to domestic violence or hate crime.

6. Measures to be taken

In order to meet the aims that this policy sets out Rainbow Haven will:

- Ensure that rigorous safeguards are in place in recruitment processes *(see RH-05 DBS Checks and RH-13 Recruitment & Selection)*
- Ensure that staff are supported and trained in recognising and dealing with incidents of abuse and that they know how to respond appropriately to allegations, suspicions or incidents.
- Ensure that staff are aware of their individual responsibilities in relation to speaking out where they are aware of or suspect abuse *(see RH-19 Whistleblowing)*
- Ensure that appropriate risk assessment processes are in place to prevent staff from gaining any personal benefit when working with service users
- Respond to any allegations against staff appropriately and fairly and implement any necessary disciplinary procedures
- Ensure that information on reporting abuse is widely available and well publicised.
- Ensure that there is a safeguarding lead on the staff team and the Board. Currently the staff safeguarding lead is Sisay Kahin. The Board safeguarding lead is Hazel Batchelor.

7. Notes

- This policy should be read in conjunction with RH-01 Child Safeguarding.
- Manchester City Council Safeguarding information page.

Manchester City Council Safeguarding reporting page.