

The Old Library
Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy Statement

The Chair is: Helen Verity

Date of policy development: 2nd January 2026

This policy was signed off by the Trustees on: 7th January 2026

The policy will be reviewed on: 7th January 2027

The Secretary is: Sadie Ryan

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Jo Leighton

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is Anne-Marie Killeen

To contact Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Jo Leighton. The Deputy Safeguarding Lead is Anne-Marie Killeen.

Preferred mode of contact is by WhatsApp phone call, from membership list of Volunteers WhatsApp Group.

Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy Statement

This policy will enable The Old Library to demonstrate its commitment to keeping safe the adults at risk it works with. We acknowledge our duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

We are committed to creating a culture of zero-tolerance of harm to adults which means we will have understanding of adults who may be at risk and the circumstances which may increase risk, and be willing to report safeguarding concerns.

This policy and procedure:

- supports volunteers, service users, and Trustees to work to prevent abuse and know what to do in the event of concerns.
- applies to all, including, Trustees, volunteers, and anyone working on site.
- has been drawn up to enable The Old Library to promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm, abuse and coercion occurring. We will ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing harm is supported.

The characteristics of adult abuse can take a number of forms and cause adults at risk to suffer pain, fear and distress reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s). Adults at risk may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach with their worries. There may be some situations where the person is unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this information to others.

In accordance with the *Care Act 2014 Safeguarding*, an Adult at Risk is defined as someone...

- *Who has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)*
- *Is experiencing, or is 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.*

It is important that The Old Library has this policy and a set of procedures to follow to prevent abuse. In order to implement the policy The Old Library will work:

- to stop abuse or neglect wherever possible;
- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or harm to adults with care and support needs. We recognise that some people experience barriers, for example, to communication in raising concerns or seeking help and we recognise that these factors can vary at different points in people's lives.
- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live;
- recruit volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- provide effective management for volunteers through support and training
- to ensure all actions taken will be consistent with the principles of adult safeguarding ensuring any action taken is prompt, proportionate and includes and respects the voice of the adult concerned
- ensure that all Trustees, volunteers, service users, and carers/families are familiar with this policy and procedures
- will act within our confidentiality policy and will **usually** gain permission from service users before sharing information about them with another agency
- will inform service users that where a person is in danger or a crime has been committed, a decision may be taken to pass information to another agency without the service user's consent
- will make a referral to Gateway to Care as appropriate
- will ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead understands their responsibility to refer concerns of abuse to the relevant statutory agencies

Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy & Procedures

The Old Library provides library services and a community café for Skircoat and surrounding areas in Halifax.

This Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy is compliant with United Nations directives (on the rights of disabled people and commitments to the rights of older people) and UK legislation. It is covered by:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- The Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005

These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any adult who accesses our service. The procedures recognise that adult abuse can be a difficult subject for workers to deal with.

The Old Library is committed to the belief that the protection of adults at risk from harm and abuse is everybody's responsibility and the aim of these procedures is to ensure that all involved with the organisation act appropriately in responding to any concerns.

1. Preventing abuse

The Old Library is committed to putting in place safeguards to reduce the likelihood of abuse taking place within the services it offers and that all those involved within The Old Library will be treated with respect.

The Old Library is committed to safer recruitment policies and practices for all volunteers. This includes ensuring references are taken up, adequate training and where appropriate, supervision.

2. Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse

The Old Library is committed to ensuring that all trustees and volunteers undertake training to gain a basic awareness of signs and symptoms of abuse. The Old Library will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other trustees and volunteers have access to training around Safeguarding Adults.

'Abuse'

Abuse is when someone does or says things to another person to hurt, upset or make them frightened. Adult abuse is wrong and can happen to anyone who is over 18 years of age. Abuse can happen anywhere and can be committed by anyone.

Forms of abuse can include:

- Physical abuse such as: hitting, pushing, pinching, shaking, misuse of medication, scalding, inappropriate restraint, hair-pulling.
- Sexual abuse such as: rape or sexual assault; sexual acts to which the adult at risk has not or could not have consented, or to which they were pressurised into consenting or encouraging people to watch inappropriate materials.
- Psychological or emotional abuse such as: threats of harm or abandonment; deprivation of social or any other form of contact; humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, or harassment; verbal abuse.
- Financial or material abuse such as: theft; fraud or exploitation; pressure in connection with wills, property, or inheritance; misuse of property, possessions or benefits.
- Neglect or acts of omission such as: ignoring medical or physical care needs; preventing access to health, social care, or educational services; withholding the necessities of life, such as food, drink, or heating.
- Discriminatory abuse such as that based upon a person's race, sexuality, or disability; any other forms of harassment or slurs.
- Domestic violence - all forms of abuse can be experienced in a family setting by a partner, family member, or with someone with whom there is a relationship.
- Institutional abuse and poor practice - disrespect and unethical practice, ill treatment and professional misconduct.

People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be doctors, nurses, social workers, advocates, staff members, volunteers or others in a position of trust. They may also be relatives, friends, neighbours or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse.

3. Mental Capacity

UK law assumes all people over the age of 16 have the ability to make their own decisions, unless it has been proved that they can't. It also gives us the right to make

our own decisions even if others consider them to be unwise. Mental capacity refers to the ability to make a decision at the time that decision is needed.

The Law says that to make a decision we need to:

- ✓ Understand information
- ✓ Remember it for long enough
- ✓ Think about the information
- ✓ Communicate our decision

A person's ability to do this may be affected by things such as learning disability, dementia, mental health needs, acquired brain injury and physical ill health.

Being unable to make a decision is called "lacking mental capacity".

A person's mental capacity can change. If it is safe/possible to wait until they are able to be involved in decision making or to make the decision themselves.

For example:

- A person with epilepsy may not be able to make a decision following a seizure.
- Someone who is anxious may not be able to make a decision at that point.
- A person may not be able to respond as quickly if they have just taken some medication that causes fatigue.

Not allowing a person to make decisions they are is capable of making is abuse.

Mental Capacity must also be considered when abuse or neglect might be taking place. It is important to make sure an adult at risk has choices in the actions taken to safeguard them, including whether or not they want other people informed about what has happened. However, in some situations, the adult may not have the mental capacity to understand the choice or to tell you their views.

The principles are the same.

- We only make decisions for other people if they cannot do that for themselves at the time the decision is needed.
- If the decision can wait, we will wait – e.g. to get help to help the person make their decision or until they can make it themselves.
- If we have to make a decision for someone else then we will make the decision in their best interests (for their benefit) and take into account what we know about their preferences and wishes.
- If the action we are taking to keep people safe restricts them, then we will think of the way to do that which restricts to their freedom and rights as little as possible.

4. Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Old Library has appointed an individual who is responsible for managing any Safeguarding concerns: our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Their telephone numbers will be provided to all volunteers. In their absence volunteers should contact Gateway to Care directly on 01422 393000.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Jo Leighton.
The Deputy Safeguarding Lead is Anne-Marie Killeen.**

Preferred mode of contact is by WhatsApp phone call. To make a call, click on Jo's name in the membership list on the Volunteers WhatsApp Group.

The roles and responsibilities of the named person(s) are:

- to ensure that all volunteers and trustees are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they have concerns that an adult at risk may be experiencing, or has experienced abuse or neglect.
- to ensure that concerns are acted on, clearly recorded and referred appropriately.
- to follow up any referrals and ensure the issues have been addressed.
- to reinforce the utmost need for confidentiality and to ensure that volunteers are adhering to good practice with regard to confidentiality and security.
- to ensure that volunteers working directly with service users who have experienced abuse, or who are experiencing abuse, are well supported.

5. Responding to people who have experienced or are experiencing abuse

The Old Library recognises that it has a duty to act on reports, or suspicions of abuse or neglect. It also acknowledges that taking action in cases of adult abuse is never easy.

How to respond if you receive an allegation:

- Reassure the person concerned
- Listen to what they are saying
- Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief
- Tell them that the information will be treated seriously
- Don't start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions
- Don't promise to keep it a secret

If you witness abuse or abuse has just taken place the priorities will be:

- To call an ambulance if required
- To call the police if a crime has been committed

- To preserve evidence (where appropriate)
- To keep yourself, volunteers and service user's safe
- To inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- To record what happened in our secure safeguarding file

All situations of abuse or alleged abuse will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If a trustee or volunteer feels unable to raise this concern with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or they are implicated in the abuse) then concerns can be raised directly with Gateway To Care Direct on 01422393000. The alleged victim will be told that this will happen. This stage is called the **Reporting A Concern**.

If it is appropriate and there is consent from the individual, or there is a good reason to override consent-refusal, such as risk to others, a referral will be made to Gateway to Care.

If the individual experiencing abuse does not have capacity to consent a referral will be made without that person's consent, in their best interests.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead may take advice at the above stage from Gateway to Care or other advice giving organisations such as Police.

6. Reporting a Safeguarding Adults Concern

All safeguarding adult concerns should be made by telephone Gateway To Care, Monday to Friday 9.00am till 5.00 pm

Gateway To Care

Phone: 01422 393000

Available: Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

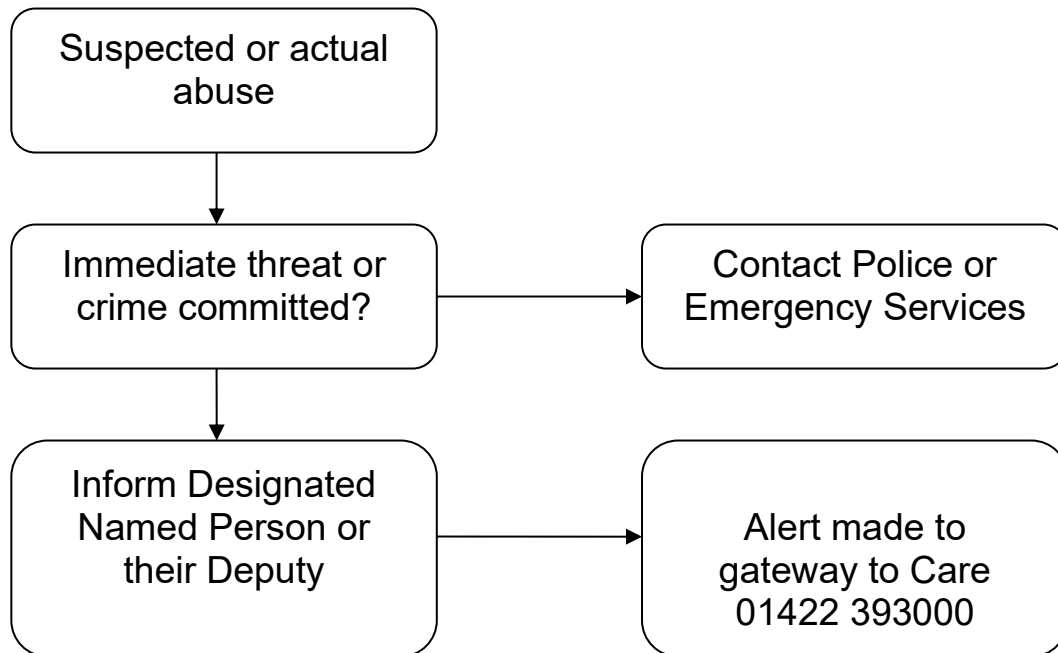
West Yorkshire Police

Safeguarding Unit 01422 337041

Hate & Mate crime and Domestic abuse are crimes, please seek advice from the Police Safeguarding team in the first instance then refer to Gateway to Care.

In an emergency situation outside of these times, please contact the Emergency Duty team on 01422 288000. You should ask to make a Safeguarding Adults Alert.

Gateway to Care will then decide if the safeguarding process should be instigated or if other support/services are appropriate.



7. Managing allegations

The Old Library commits to having procedures in place to ensure that any allegation made against a volunteer is dealt with appropriately. It reflects our commitment to ensuring that volunteers and Trustees feel safe to express their concerns about the practice of others within the organisation.

The Old Library will ensure that any allegations made against volunteers or Trustees will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures:

- The worker should listen carefully to what the adult at risk says, but not ask detailed questions.
- The worker must ensure that that the individual is safe and away from the person against who the allegation is made.
- The DSL should be informed immediately. In the case of an allegation involving the DSL, alternative arrangements should be sought to ensure that the matter is dealt with by a trustee.
- The DSL should contact Gateway to Care for advice on how to proceed with the immediate situation. Outside of working hours the Emergency Duty Team can give advice and/or in the event of an emergency situation arising, the Police.
- The individual who first received/witnessed the concern should make a full

written record of what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible after observing the incident/receiving the report. It is important that the report is an accurate description. The DSL within the Group (if appropriate) can support the worker during this process but must not complete the report for the worker. This report must be made available on request from either the Police and/or Gateway to Care.

The Old Library will ensure that an internal investigation takes place and consideration is given to the operation of disciplinary procedures. This may involve an immediate suspension and/or ultimate dismissal dependent on the nature of the incident. Any actions should be discussed with Gateway to Care to avoid compromising the Police or a Safeguarding investigation.

8. Recording, managing and sharing confidential information

The Old Library is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information around Safeguarding Adults issues should be shared only with those who need to know.

All allegations/concerns will be recorded in a secure safeguarding file and access will be restricted to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Chair of the Trustees. The information will be factual and not based on opinions, will record what the person has told us and/or what volunteers have seen and witnessed.

The information that is recorded will be kept secure and will comply with the Data Protection Act. However, the purpose of Data Protection legislation is not to prevent information sharing but to ensure personal information is only shared appropriately, i.e., with those with a 'need to know'. This does NOT automatically include the person's spouse, partner, adult, child, unpaid or paid carer.

9. Disseminating/Reviewing policy and procedures

This Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure will be clearly communicated to trustees and volunteers. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be responsible for ensuring that this is done.

The Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures will be reviewed annually and any changes will be clearly communicated to trustees and volunteers.