

# Richmond & Kingston



## ME Group

Serving the Richmond & Kingston Boroughs and all surrounding areas

## **Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy**

The Richmond & Kingston ME Group is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use our service are not exploited or abused and that working practices minimise the risks of such abuse. If abuse is reported, or volunteers and/or contract staff feel concerns about a situation of potential abuse, the following policy and procedure should be implemented.

Volunteers and/or contract staff will be aware of and guard against possible discrimination because of assumptions about class, gender, sexuality, race, disability, religion and age.

### **Definition**

The term vulnerable adults refers to people of 18 and over 'who are or may be in need of support by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness or lack of opportunity; and who are or may be unable to care for him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'.

Adult protection is concerned with the violation of an individual's human or civil rights by another person or persons.

Abuse can include: verbal, physical, financial/material, sexual, psychological, discriminatory, emotional abuse and neglect. Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private and can be perpetrated by anybody.

### **Awareness**

As a volunteer or paid contract staff you are not responsible for diagnosing abuse. However, all volunteers and contract staff involved in

the provision of Richmond & Kingston ME Group's support services have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a vulnerable adult.

Not all concerns relate to abuse and there may well be another explanation. It is important while being vigilant to keep an open mind. If at all possible you should discuss your concerns discreetly and in confidence with the Chairperson and seek help, if you are concerned about a member or volunteer/contracted staff.

### **Further Action**

Having raised the issue with the Chairperson you should make a confidential personal note of the circumstances and if appropriate check whether there were any witnesses present.

- a. As part of the counselling process, the person will be supported by a counsellor, to feel empowered to participate in appropriate protective action being taken in conjunction with the Richmond & Kingston ME Group and relevant agencies.
- b. The vulnerable adult should be informed that you will be discussing the matter with the Chairperson at the Richmond & Kingston ME Group. If the person who says that they are being abused asks you to do nothing at all, you should inform them that whilst respecting this you must share the information with the Chairperson.
- c. You assure them that you are listening and that you will tell the Chairperson and/or Social services that they want nothing more to happen.
- d. Do not carry out an investigation yourself. This must be left to the relevant agencies. You should also inform them that the information might be passed to appropriate agencies.
- e. If physical and/or sexual abuse/assault is reported the vulnerable adult and/or their representative should be asked to report it to the police and offered support to do so.
- f. The Chairperson of the Richmond & Kingston ME Group will treat the matter as top priority and inform the Committee. The Chairperson will seek advice urgently. This may involve discussing the situation with Social Services or with the Police. Social Services will instigate an assessment of the person's needs under the Community Care legislation.
- g. The Chairperson will keep the Committee informed in writing, of all action taken to date.
- h. The Chairperson will keep the vulnerable adult informed at all times as to action being taken.

## **Support for Volunteers**

The volunteer reporting incidents of suspected or potential abuse may find that the vulnerable adult is very upset or angry. The Chairperson and Committee will offer support as appropriate. Other support, for example, may include counselling provided by an outside body if required or by request.

### **Suspected abuse by a volunteer and/or contract staff of the RKME Group**

Where a volunteer or contract staff is suspected of abuse the following action should be taken;

- a. The Chairperson should interview the member of staff or client with a witness or representative of their choice present.
- b. The Chairperson should make arrangements for interviewing the suspected victim; this should be done with a volunteer, Committee member and a representative of the victim present.
- c. The purpose of the meeting is not to investigate but to establish whether there are grounds for the allegation.
- d. The procedure outlined under *Further Action* should then be followed.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is crucial to all our work and relationships, the Richmond & Kingston ME Group will ensure confidentiality, except that the welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount and takes precedence over it. Do not keep concerns relating to the potential abuse of a vulnerable adult to yourself.

Confidentiality may *not* be maintained if the withholding of information or evidence will prejudice the welfare of the adult.

### **Contact information**

Allegations of alleged abuse, which occurred when the person is over the age of 18 years old falls under the Protection of Vulnerable Adults.

Email: [randkmegroup@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:randkmegroup@yahoo.co.uk)

Website: <http://www.richmondandkingstonmegroup.org.uk/>

Other contacts Richmond:

Email: [adultsocialservices@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:adultsocialservices@richmond.gov.uk)

Telephone: 020 8891 7971 or outside office hours 020 8744 2442

Other Contacts Kingston: 020 8547 4735

Email: [adult.safeguarding@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:adult.safeguarding@kingston.gov.uk)