

Safeguarding Adults – 5 minute report to Area Meeting, Saturday 20th March 2021

On 11th February I attended a webinar on Safeguarding Adults delivered by the specialist safeguarding agency, Thirtyone:Eight.

Until 2018, this body was known as the 'Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service'. The new name, which is a reference to a verse in the book of Proverbs, reflects its wider remit of safeguarding all who may be vulnerable – both children and adults.

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.”

[Thirtyone:eight](#)

Sue Pounder
ECAM Safeguarding Co-ordinator
20/3/2021

In the UK, all children are protected by law.

This has been the case for over a century [1889] and most of us will have come across children's safeguarding and safeguarding training during our working lives, and beyond.

We probably don't think about it that much, but we have some basic awareness – we know about the NSPCC and we know that social workers and the police may intervene to protect children.

We know that organisations like East Cheshire Area Meeting have Safeguarding Policies. And hopefully know where to find it – try a search on the ECAM website.

Most people are much less clear about what safeguarding adults might entail – probably because development of services and legislation is much more recent.

When you turn 18, you become an adult and the protection you had as a child changes.

As an adult you are assumed to have the right, and ability to make your own decisions.

We have to take much more responsibility for our own safety – but we also have a duty of care to each other.

What I want to do very briefly today is to outline some of the risks adults can face, and say a little bit about who might be especially vulnerable.

What I can't do is go into any detail about the procedures and services available. I'd just say that if you have a **serious** concern, or if someone shares something with you, and you think they are in **real danger**, you should contact adult social care or the police. That's exceptional, but important.

[Friends asked about confidentiality, and of course this is important especially around highly sensitive situations and where we are in a position of trust. You would try to find out what the person wants you to do. However there may be situations where you need to pass on information even without the person's consent e.g. if someone else is in danger or a serious crime is being committed. For this reason it is best not to promise confidentiality. Wherever possible, explain **why** you may need to share information and **who** you might need to speak to.]

Just an acknowledgement here – we never really know what other people are facing in their own lives, and it may be that some of us, are dealing right now with some very difficult and distressing situations. I hope we can stay sensitive to that, and just remind people that support is available.

All in all, living is a dangerous business, and it doesn't get any safer when you become an adult.

The key legislation about safeguarding adults – the Care Act 2014 – uses ten different categories for adult abuse, where as for children we use four

Categories of Adult Abuse

The first four are actually the same as for children:

1. Physical abuse
2. Emotional or psychological abuse
3. Sexual abuse
4. Neglect

In addition, there are two particular kinds of exploitation:

5. Financial abuse
6. Modern slavery

Then there is:

7. Domestic Violence
8. Organisational abuse (which used to be called institutional abuse)
9. Discriminatory abuse (discrimination due to a protected characteristic such as race, gender, sexual orientation or disability)

And finally:
10. Self-neglect

Who is affected by abuse?

Anyone at all may experience abuse. There is no unique profile and we can all be at risk in different ways at different times of our lives.

The Care Act specifically protects people who are:

experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect

AND

have care and support needs which makes them unable to protect themselves

[However, there are exceptions for Domestic Violence and Modern Slavery, where there may be no care and support needs. Domestic violence also has a lower age limit of 16 years, rather than 18 years.]

So it's very much a combination of the individual person AND the situation they are in.

This is why we talk now about 'adults at risk of harm' rather than the older terminology 'vulnerable adults'.

A care and support need could include a learning disability, mental health needs, a physical or sensory disability, homelessness or problems with drugs or alcohol.

If the need affects the person's capacity to make decisions or to communicate, the risk would be increased. So someone living with dementia or who is isolated or dependent on others for care would be seen as more vulnerable.

If you ARE worried about yourself or someone else, there are people who can support you. You can get general advice and support without breaking confidences, but please don't keep it to yourself.

The really serious adult safeguarding is real but will be relatively rare in a Quaker context. Most of our contact with adults at risk of harm is incidental.

The caring and support we need, and can offer each other, usually takes a much more everyday form – just being there, a listening ear, a friendly phone call, taking time to show your interest and empathy.

So finally ...

In our Quaker community there will always be some people who have care and support needs – we may be aware of them or not.

We are committed to creating safe and supportive spaces for everyone, and as part of that I urge Friends to continue this conversation, and to think about where our gaps might be, what we might need to learn and the part we each can play.

Some suggested resources are below, and I would be more than happy to talk to anyone who has further questions or comments.

Sue Pounder
ECAM Safeguarding Co-ordinator
20/03/2021

Resources

Advisory service for church groups
<https://thirtyoneeight.org>

Training slides from Suffolk County Council – the first few slides give a general overview of adult safeguarding
<https://slideplayer.com/slide/16629174/>

Safeguarding for older people
<https://wearehourglass.org/>

https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/factsheets/fs78_safeguarding_older_people_from_abuse_fcs.pdf

Safeguarding for adults with learning disabilities
<https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/safeguarding>

Safeguarding and dementia
<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/legal-financial/safeguarding>