

## **Families First Adult Protection Policy and Procedure**

### **1. Introduction**

**1.1** Families First works with vulnerable children, adults and their families, known as service users, as part of its core work through their services of:

- One-to-one Befriending (children)
- Young People's Support (children and young people)
- Family Support (adults)

**1.2** Families First is committed to protecting all Parents and Carers (PaCs) from any form of abusive behaviour; all adults have a right to feel safe.

**1.3** The purpose of this policy is to protect parents and carers who receive services from Families First from abuse or risk of harm either through the behaviour of others or their own behaviour.

**1.4** This policy will provide parents, carers, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of vulnerable adults.

**1.5** This policy applies to service users and anyone working on behalf of Families First, including the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students. This includes people who work directly or indirectly with parents and carers.

### **2. Scope**

**2.1** Families First Adult Protection Policy will be used as guidance for all adult protection, safeguarding and wellbeing concerns.

**2.2** All people acting on behalf of, working for, or having a role within Families First, whether paid or unpaid, are required to abide by the procedures contained in this policy without exception.

**2.3** All staff who will be working directly with parents and carers will be required to read this policy.

**2.4** All adult service users will be told about this policy and given a summary (appendix A) when they register with our services.

**2.5** All volunteers will be trained on Families First approach to adult protection, informed of this policy, given a summary (appendix B) and informed of where it is held.

**2.6** All staff and volunteers, whether working directly or indirectly, with parents and carers will be provided with child and adult protection training as part of Families First induction training programme.

**2.7** As part of our community parents and carers have much to give as well as receive. We will listen to them, and as we seek to nurture them in learning, recreation and community life, we will respect their wishes, feelings and human rights implicitly where it is safe to do so.

**2.8** Staff and volunteers will not condone, and will always actively challenge, the use of physical punishment, bullying, verbal abuse or threats to adults.

**2.9** Families First's policy on adult protection will be applied when any form of abusive behaviour is observed, reported or disclosed.

- 2.10** The safety and wellbeing of adults takes precedence over any other consideration.
- 2.11** It is essential that the adult's needs are considered and placed first, over and above the needs of anyone else involved including children and young people who may be abusive towards their parents.
- 2.12** Families First recognise that the wellbeing and protection of all parents and carers is everyone's responsibility and everyone's job, and they have a duty, individually and collectively, to protect all vulnerable people their community.

### **3. Definition of an adult**

- 3.1** The Adult Support and Protection Act 2007 gives greater protection to adults at risk of harm or neglect.
- 3.2** The Act defines adults at risk as those aged 16 years and over who:
- Are unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests.
  - Are at risk of harm.
  - Are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity. These adults are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.
- 3.3** In Scotland a child is defined as someone under the age of 18. When considering a young person aged between 16 and 18 protective interventions will depend on the circumstances and legislation relevant to that young person.
- 3.4** Local authorities are required to establish clear links between their child and adult protection committees, and to put clear guidelines in place for the transition from child to adult services.

### **4. Legislation**

- 4.1** There are a number of Legislations and Good Practice Guidance that influence Adult Protection in Scotland. Listed below are some of the key documents that influence Families First's work with adults.
- 4.2** Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act, 2000 - An adult with incapacity is defined as someone who lacks the capacity to make or convey their own decisions. Families First must inform Fife Council Social Services of any circumstances made known to them in which the personal welfare of an adult, who lacks capacity, seems to be at risk, whether the adult concerned agrees to the investigation or not.
- 4.3** Mental Health (Care & Treatment) Scotland Act, 2003 - This Act imposes duties on, and assigns functions to, local authorities and health boards in respect of social and mental health wellbeing; the making of enquiries in respect of persons who appear to have a mental disorder, and (where necessary) the application of compulsory measures in relation to the assessment and treatment of persons having a mental disorder.
- 4.4** The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 - The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) membership scheme is managed and delivered by Disclosure Scotland. It helps make sure people whose behaviour makes them

- 4.5** unsuitable to work with children and/or protected adults are unable to do regulated work with these vulnerable groups.
- 4.6** The UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) please refer to Families First Data Protection policy.
- 4.7** The Human Rights Act 1998 The Human Rights Act is a UK law passed in 1998. It means that you can defend your rights in the UK courts and that public organisations must treat everyone equally, with fairness, dignity and respect. The Human Rights Act protects all people, young and old:
- 4.8** Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 - This Act imposes duties on, and assigns functions to, local authorities in respect of the making of enquiries, the conduct of investigations, the application for protective powers in respect of adults defined by the legislation to be at risk of actual or suspected harm. This Act also brought about the formation of Adult Protection Committees in every local authority in Scotland.
- 4.9** Fife Adult Protection - It is the responsibility of adult protection agencies such as Fife Adult Services and Police to make enquiries (proactive and reactive) and to carry out appropriate investigations in order to establish:
- Whether or not an adult is at risk from harm or suspected harm; and, if so,
  - Which, if any, of the protective measures available in terms of the legislation are most appropriate to an adult at risk's individual circumstances.
- 4.9.1** Under the Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 an "adult" is a person aged 16 or over. However, if the adult concerned is 16 or 17 years of age, it is possible that they are already subject to a Supervision Order or other Order under the Children (Scotland) Act, 1995, or other social work or childcare legislation.
- 4.9.2** It is everyone's responsibility to report concerns regarding any adult who is, or who appears to be, at risk of harm to Fife Adult Services on either:
- The Adult Protection Phone Line 01383 602200, or in an emergency dial 999.
  - Or complete the form on Fife Council Adult Protection website and send to the email address highlighted on the form.
- 4.10** Should anyone have a concern regarding an adult the Fife Adult Protection website is a useful source of information.
- 5. Safe recruitment and retention of people working with children and vulnerable adults.**
- 5.1** As an organisation Families First acknowledge that we could be a target for people who want access vulnerable adults for their own inappropriate motivations and self-gratification such as criminals and sociopaths.

- 5.2** The Scottish Government have provided agencies with strict guidance on the safe recruitment of people working with vulnerable adults.
- 5.3** A PVG Scheme member's paper certificate shows the information available on the day it was created. In Scotland scheme members are continuously checked, unless they decide to leave the scheme, therefore Families First do not need to re-register volunteers and staff.
- 5.4** Families First staff will follow the process outlined in the Safe Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers policy when recruiting new people. This will help to ensure that all possible protective checks are followed and that Families First is doing all it can to protect vulnerable people.

## **6. Families First staff**

- 6.1** Families First staff have a wealth of expertise and experience in all safeguarding matters.
- 6.2** Families First Manager is the named Adult (and Child) Protection Officer. The Manager's role, responsibility and contact details will be explained in all Adult Protection training and literature.
- 6.3** All new staff, trustees and volunteers must attend Families First induction training on adult protection and wellbeing.
- 6.4** Further training will be offered to individuals appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.
- 6.5** All staff are required to discuss any concerns or worries at Family Review or Support and Supervision meetings.
- 6.6** If it is an immediate risk discussion will take place with colleagues or Families First Manager as to the next steps.
- 6.7** Families First offer regular support and supervision to all staff and volunteers by a designated line manager. A record of these meetings will be kept in the staff and volunteer's personnel file.
- 6.8** Families First will create a culture of mutual support where staff and volunteers feel safe to explore concerns around inappropriate behaviour and attitudes. This may take the form of:
- One-to-one support and supervision.
  - Group supervision.
  - Brief and de-brief.
  - Internal and external training opportunities.
  - Team meetings.
  - Observation of the staff and volunteers at work.

## **7. Families First Adult Protection Training**

- 7.1** As an organisation Families First has a duty of care to ensure that we have a competent workforce.

- 7.2** Some staff and volunteers may not have a specific role working with vulnerable adults therefore it is imperative that everyone understands adult protection, abuse and wellbeing; so they know what to do when they feel something is not right.
- 7.3** Families First training will offer the participants opportunities for questions and group discussions and will cover the following areas:
- Adult protection overview.
  - Legal framework.
  - Families First policy and procedures.
  - Types of abuse.
  - When to break confidentiality.
  - Boundaries.
  - The importance of communication.
  - What to do if an adult discloses abuse.
  - Families First role if an adult discloses abuse.
  - Families First commitment to staff and volunteers.
  - Case studies and scenarios.
- 7.4** All participants will be given full training papers, a summary of this policy (appendix B) and asked to sign a statement confirming they have received Adult Protection training. This statement will be kept in the participant's personnel file.
- 7.5** This training will be regularly reviewed to reflect any changes or updates in legislation as appropriate.
- 7.6** All staff and volunteers will be offered regular Continuous Professional Development through internal and external training as appropriate to their role.
- 8. Types of abuse**
- 8.1** It can be difficult to know when an adult is experiencing abuse therefore, it is important for all staff and volunteers to share or talk through their concerns with their line manager or a paid member of staff.
- 8.2** Staff may have some background knowledge of the adult that will help to build a picture of their life. What is important to know is that Families First will treat any concern, worry or niggle with extreme consideration and respect.
- 8.3** This knowledge will help us to build a picture of that adult's life. Families First staff will know what to do with the information provided and take the appropriate action.
- 8.4** The following are some of the areas of concern identified as adult abuse or risk:
- Disability.
  - Domestic abuse.
  - Financial abuse.
  - Forced marriage.
  - Hate crime
  - Historical Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE).
  - Cyber fraud and crime.
  - Mental health and wellbeing.

- Substance misuse.

**8.5** At times it can be a worry knowing whether to be concerned or not.

**8.6** Staff and volunteers are not expected to be experts in identifying adult abuse, but they should document and report any concerns they have and discuss it with their line manager.

## **9. Managing risk**

**9.1** Families First have a number of policies and procedures for assessing risk at venues and locations, through their Lone Working, Health and Safety and Referral, Registration and Review policy.

**9.2** All risk assessments are reviewed to ensure they are still fit for purpose.

**9.3** If the risk assessment requires any follow up action the member of staff responsible will set a reminder in their diary and outlook calendar to ensure follow up action is pursued.

## **10. Delivering services safely online**

**10.1** Families First is committed to providing continuous service delivery no matter what may get in the way of this such as staff absence or lockdown of community activities due to a pandemic.

**10.2** We can do this in a number of ways to ensure there is minimal disruption to service delivery such as telephone, video and messaging support (whatever the service user prefers).

**10.3** Staff should adhere to the following principles:

- Staff must create Families First social media accounts, not linked to their personal accounts.
- Staff must ask volunteers to create Families First social media accounts, not linked to their personal accounts.
- Staff must only use designated IT work equipment and mobile phones to contact service users.
- Staff must ensure all new activities are risk assessed.
- Verify who else is in the room, encourage others to be present to avoid Lone Working challenges e.g. is mum in the room with a child or a colleague in the room with you?
- Think of the news, your family and your manager - don't say or do anything you wouldn't be comfortable with reported in the news, or your family or manager hearing, or that could compromise your career.
- Check all privacy settings on your Families First social media accounts to ensure you are only sharing information with those you want to.
- Ensure volunteers are fully briefed on the process they should follow when offering alternative support.
- Maintain the same professional boundaries as if working face-to-face with a service user.

**10.4** If an adult, with whom you work professionally, approaches you on your personal social media account, decline any friendship or connection requests and, if appropriate, refer them to your official Families First accounts.

**10.4.1** An example of appropriate wording could be: *“Thanks for getting in touch, but as this is my personal social media account it’s not appropriate for us to connect. If you’d like to get involved with me at Families First and hear all our news, you can follow my families First Twitter/Insta/Facebook accounts.”*

**10.5** Follow all Families First policy and procedure such as completing session reports, Lone Working, Confidentiality, Data Protection, and ICT as if you were working face-to-face with the parent or carer.

**10.6** Continue to record all contacts on the data base noting what media was used.

**10.7** If you are unsure about anything speak with a colleague or your line manager before proceeding.

## **11. Responding to concerns about wellbeing and abuse**

**11.1** A safeguarding issue may come to the notice of staff and volunteers in several ways.

**11.2** Where an allegation is made against staff or volunteers the recipient of the allegation must refer to the procedure outlined in **Section 17** of this document.

**11.3** Staff and volunteers will need to be clear in their own minds what is concerning them.

**11.4** If staff or volunteers are concerned, they should note the names of anyone else who witnessed or is involved in the concern.

**11.5** If staff or volunteers are suspicious about a particular person, they must discuss their concerns with their line manager or a member of staff. They should not discuss their concerns with the person they are concerned about.

**11.6** Staff and volunteers should not try to investigate an allegation of abuse; this responsibility lies with Police Scotland Fife Division and Fife Council Adult Services.

**11.7** All concerns must be taken to one of the following people for discussion and agreement will be reached about what will happen next and by whom:

- A line manager.
- A paid member of staff.
- Families First trustee Barbara Maggs.
- Families First Manager – [manager@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk](mailto:manager@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk)
- Deputy Manager – [yps@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk](mailto:yps@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk)

**10.7.1** Should you not have contact details for one of the above people. Please contact the main office on 01334 208086 or [enquiries@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk) where someone will take a message and arrange for your preferred person to contact you.

**10.7.2** In the interest of confidentiality you should just state you have a confidential adult protection concern you wish to discuss with and state their name.

- 11.8** It is important to note at this stage that if an adult is not in immediate danger or risk, they have the right to decline any intervention.
- 11.9** If staff feel children are at risk, because of the incident, the wishes of the parent or carer will be overruled in response to the best interests of the child.
- 11.10** A full risk assessment will be undertaken at the time of reporting to assess the danger or risk the adult might be in.
- 11.11** If none of the above people are available, the person raising the concern should refer to their emergency contact cards, handed out during their Child/Adult Protection training and inform the relevant authority, such as police or social work, of their concerns.
- 11.12** As soon as possible after the event a member of staff should be informed and they will take you through the adult protection process and paperwork, such as completing an incident form.
- 11.13** Staff and volunteers should keep a record of what happened and what actions were taken (signed and dated) until they can complete Families First forms.

## **12. Attendance at professional meetings**

- 12.1** During the course of their work with vulnerable adults Families First staff may be required to attend professional meetings.
- 12.2** There are a number of ways that Families First staff could be involved such as offering a service, advocacy or working in partnership with others.
- 12.3** When staff become involved in multi-agency meetings they will work with volunteers and partners to ensure that the adult is safe, their needs are being met and their goals are being achieved.
- 12.4** Staff will be required to complete forms and provide reports to the professional meetings to demonstrate what work has been undertaken at Families First.
- 12.5** Staff will involve volunteers as appropriate to contribute to the meeting/plan process.

## **13. Third party information**

- 13.1** If staff or volunteers are given information from a third party that an adult is being abused, they should:
- Encourage the third party to contact the relevant statutory authorities themselves. If they are not willing to do this explain that as they have passed the information to Families First, we are obliged to pass the information on to the relevant statutory authority.
  - Write down the information and discussion as soon as possible. If practical inform the Families First adult protection officer and discuss a plan forward, if not contact the relevant statutory authorities.
  - It is not the responsibility of Families First to investigate, but it is everyone's responsibility to make sure that vulnerable adults are protected and to pass

- any information on to Fife Council Adult Services, and, or Police Scotland Fife Division.
- In all circumstances relating to adult protection when Families First staff or trustees cannot be contacted, the information must be passed on to the relevant statutory authorities immediately.

#### **14. Responding to an adult who discloses abuse**

- 14.1** It takes a lot of courage and trust for an adult to disclose that they have been abused. Staff and volunteers will never know when or who they may choose to disclose abuse to.
- 14.2** Staff and volunteers should be mindful that it is acceptable for an adult to choose not to make a disclosure.
- 14.3** It is essential for the adult to understand that support is available whether or not a disclosure is made.
- 14.4** Staff and volunteers need to be honest with adults and be mindful not to make false promises.
- 14.5** Adults need to understand that Families First provide a safe environment, with a secure and consistent service and that staff and volunteers operate within clear boundaries.
- Remind the adult of Families First adult protection policy and let them know that you may not be able to keep what they tell you in confidence.
  - Always listen to what the adult has to say and take them seriously. Avoid interrupting them wherever possible.
  - Try not to show you are shocked by an adult's disclosure (no matter what you are feeling inside).
  - Offer reassurance that you will try and help them in the best way you can.
  - Always inform the adult who you are going to share what they have told you with; inform the relevant statutory authorities if you feel that they are at risk.
  - If an adult does not wish anyone else to be informed of their disclosure, a full risk assessment will be made by a member of staff and the named adult protection officer as to how to proceed with the disclosure.
  - Never prompt or lead the adult who is disclosing information. Allow them to express themselves in their own time.
  - Never try to question the adult who has made an allegation about a specific individual. Where this relates to another member of staff or volunteer, refer to the procedure outlined in **Section 17**.
  - Never make false promises to an adult. This can be extremely detrimental to any trust that might have been developed between staff, volunteers and the adult.
  - Clarify with the adult that they understand what you are saying to them.
  - Be objective in your recording of events. Record any information in a factual way, including dates, names and places that have been mentioned.
  - Never make subjective statements about what an adult discloses. This is not helpful and will not be regarded as valid evidence. All notes and information will be held in the adult's file and signed and dated.

- Reassure the adult that they will be given full support to help them to deal with the situation.
- Inform the adult that you will let them know what is going to happen next.
- Never manage the situation on your own. Speak with your line manager or a paid member of staff for support and guidance.
- It is not your duty to investigate abuse, leave that to the statutory agencies.
- Respect the adult's confidence. You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated in this policy and procedure.

If an adult discloses abuse:

- Listen.
- Reassure.
- Be honest.
- Do not interrupt.
- Do not interpret.
- Do not prompt.
- Do not put words into an adult's mouth.
- Do not deal with it alone.
- Act promptly.
- Make notes, date and sign.

**14.6** It is not Families First's role to investigate an adult protection disclosure, but Families First will support all staff and volunteers through any adult protection process.

## **15. Safe Storage and use of personal information, data protection**

**15.1** Families First hold a hard copy file and electronic data on each service user which contains information such as registration forms, personal contact details, session notes, child and adult protection concerns, wellbeing details, meeting notes, and correspondence. All data is stored securely as outlined in our Data Protection policy

## **16. Keeping records**

**16.1** At the point of registration all adult service users will be informed about Families First Adult Protection Policy and given a summary (appendix A).

**16.2** All concerns regarding adults must be recorded on the appropriate paperwork and a copy retained in the adults' file. Forms and procedures Families First use includes:

- Families First Risk Assessment form.
- Incident form.
- Chronology form.
- Whistleblowing procedure.

- 16.3** As well as any formal documentation it is advisable to keep all informal notes, signed and dated.
- 16.4** All correspondence, notes of meetings, incident and accident forms, chronology and risk assessment forms in relation to safeguarding will be filed under the safeguarding tab in the adult's file.
- 17. What to do if an allegation against staff or volunteers is made (see also Families First Whistle Blowing Policy)**
- 17.1** Should an allegation of abuse be made against staff or volunteers Families First needs to act in a professional and unbiased manner.
- 17.2** Families First may need to seek legal advice on how to proceed through their insurers or HR consultant.
- 17.3** Families First recognises that this may prove a challenge to all staff and volunteers involved but the needs of the adult are paramount. The following procedure should be used as a guide following an allegation:
- 17.3.1** Keep focused on the needs of the adult.
  - 17.3.2** Decide who will be in the investigating team. Under normal circumstances this would be Families First Manager and a nominated member from the Board of Trustees.
  - 17.3.3** If the allegation is against Families First Manager consideration should be given to an external independent panel such as the Manager of another voluntary sector agency, Fife Voluntary Action, or Families First Fife Council Link Officer.
  - 17.3.4** Consultation with other agencies may be necessary for support and advice such as Fife Adult Protection Committee.
  - 17.3.5** An allegation of adult abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation. Do not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation.
  - 17.3.6** As much information as possible must be obtained from the informant including - the name of the alleged abuser, the nature of the alleged abuse, when it is thought to have occurred, how often, and how the informant knows of the incident(s). The date, time and nature of the allegation should be recorded.
  - 17.3.7** If other staff members and volunteers have witnessed or have concerns about their peers' suitability to work with an adult this information must be passed to Families First Manager, with the nature of the concerns, when it occurred, how often, and the date, time and nature of the allegation should be recorded.
  - 17.3.8** The law protects staff and volunteers from the actions of those individuals who have been implicated in the abuse, if the report was not malicious or vexatious.
  - 17.3.9** Where the adult makes an allegation of abuse (relating to now or in the past, such as historical abuse) by a staff member or volunteer, the recipient of the allegation should follow the procedure at **Section 13.5** above.
  - 17.3.10** Make an accurate record of the conversation and be honest about what will happen next.

**17.3.11** If the allegation has been received in the form of a complaint from an adult, and it has been established that an adult may have been harmed or placed in danger, due to a failure to put safeguarding measures in place, the complaints procedure is no longer appropriate, and the adult protection policy must be followed.

**17.3.12** During investigations a number of options may be considered in relation to managing the workload of the staff member involved, such as:

- Suspending the staff member or volunteer.
- Implementing the Families First disciplinary policy and procedure.
- Provide alternative working arrangements.
- Appointing an independent person to support and assist the person against whom the allegation has been made.

**17.4** If the adult is considered to be in immediate danger the police should be notified instantly.

**17.5** Following investigations and if the allegations are found to be true Families First will make referral to Fife Adult Protection Services and Police Scotland Fife Division.

**17.6** Where the grounds for referral have been met Families First will take legal advice where appropriate or necessary.

## **18. What will happen next?**

**18.1** It is the duty of Families First to keep vulnerable adults safe and to keep accurate records for any formal investigations that may follow.

**18.2** Families First will follow the protocol outlined on the Fife Adult Protection Website.

**18.3** Families First will seek legal advice where necessary and appropriate.

**18.4** A full investigation may be carried out by Police Scotland Fife Division and Fife Adult Services.

## **19. Families First commitment to all staff and volunteers**

**19.1** Families First will induct all new staff and volunteers on the policies and procedures of the organisation relevant to their role.

**19.2** Families First will provide training relevant to their role on adult protection issues.

**19.3** Families First will provide full support to staff and volunteers who are involved in an adult protection investigation. This support could be in the form of:

- Support and Supervision.
- Brief and debrief sessions.
- Transport to professional meetings.
- A companion at meetings.
- Legal representation.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Families First Adult Protection Policy and Procedure**

#### **Adult protection summary for service users**

Families First is committed to providing the best possible services for Parents and Carers known as adult service users. All people acting on behalf of or working for Families First whether paid or unpaid are required to abide by the procedures contained in the adult protection policy and procedure without exception. This includes people who work directly or indirectly with adults. Adults are recognised as those who are over the age of 16 years.

Adults at risk are defined as adults aged 16 or over who:

- Are unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests,
- Are at risk of harm, and because they
- Are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

There have been a number of Acts, Legislation and Good Practice Guidance that influence Adult Protection in Scotland. These acts from central government through to local authorities ensure that individuals and organisations protect vulnerable adults. From all this information organisations can develop their adult protection policies and procedures. Organisations can receive additional support from statutory and voluntary sector agencies when needed, either for advice and information or for support when going through an adult protection inquiry.

Families First have a legal obligation to follow safe recruitment practices to ensure all people working for them are safe to work with vulnerable adults. To ensure we do this, we require staff and volunteers to complete application forms, attend interviews, follow up with references and make police checks where appropriate. We also ensure staff and volunteers are supported in their role by providing regular training and supervision.

Families First also has an obligation to inform all staff and volunteers about the types and signs of abuse and how we respond to the abuse. We do this through induction, child/adult protection training and on-going support. The Manager of Families First is the named Child/Adult Protection Officer and will support all staff and volunteers through any adult protection concern or investigation. The manager can be contacted directly at the Rose Lane Centre, or on 01334 208086 or emailed [manager@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk](mailto:manager@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk)

Families First have a number of forms and protocols that need to be followed when an adult protection concern is raised. Families First recognise that it can be difficult to remember everything, especially when you are not using these protocols every day. All paid staff working in adult services will have a knowledge and understanding of the procedure to follow. The most important things to remember are:

- We all have a duty to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse.
- Families First staff will support everyone involved; you do not have to deal with it alone.
- Any worries, concerns or niggles will be treated seriously and listened to.

**APPENDIX B****Families First Adult Protection Policy and Procedure****Adult protection summary for volunteers**

Families First is committed to providing the best possible services for Parents and Carers known as adult service users. All people acting on behalf of or working for Families First whether paid or unpaid are required to abide by the procedures contained in the adult protection policy and procedure without exception. This includes people who work directly or indirectly with adults. Adults are recognised as those who are over the age of 16 years.

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- Families First staff will support everyone involved; you do not have to deal with it alone.
- Any worries, concerns or niggles will be treated seriously and listened to.

**Guidance for volunteers:**

- Remind the adult of Families First adult protection policy and let them know that you may not be able to keep what they tell you in confidence.
- Always listen to what the adult has to say and take them seriously. Avoid interrupting them wherever possible.
- Try not to show you are shocked by an adult's disclosure (no matter what you are feeling inside).
- Offer reassurance that you will try and help them in the best way you can.
- Always inform the adult who you are going to share what they have told you with; inform the relevant statutory authorities if you feel that they are at risk
- If an adult does not wish anyone else to be informed of their disclosure, a full risk assessment will be made by a member of staff and the named adult protection officer as to how to proceed with the disclosure.
- Never prompt or lead the adult who is disclosing information. Allow them to express themselves in their own time.
- Never try to question the adult who has made an allegation about a specific individual. Where this relates to another member of staff or volunteer, refer to the procedure outlined in **Section 16** of the main policy.
- Never make false promises to an adult. This can be extremely detrimental to any trust that might have been developed between staff, volunteers and the adult.
- Clarify with the adult that they understand what you are saying to them.
- Be objective in your recording of events. Record any information in a factual way, including dates, names and places that have been mentioned.
- Never make subjective statements about what an adult discloses. This is not helpful and will not be regarded as valid evidence. All notes and information will be held in the adult's file and signed and dated.
- Reassure the adult that they will be given full support to help them to deal with the situation.
- Inform the adult that you will let them know what is going to happen next.
- Never manage the situation on your own. Speak with your line manager or a paid member of staff for support and guidance.
- It is not your duty to investigate abuse, leave that to the statutory agencies.
- Respect the adult's confidence. You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated in this policy and procedure.

**If an adult discloses abuse:**

- Listen.
- Reassure.
- Be honest.
- Do not interrupt.
- Do not interpret.
- Do not prompt.
- Do not put words into an adult's mouth.
- Do not deal with it alone.
- Act promptly.
- Make notes, date and sign.

It is not Families First role to investigate an adult protection disclosure, but Families First **will** support all volunteers through any adult protection process.