

Dulwich Helpline

Organisational Policies and Procedures

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Introduction to Policies and Procedures

These policies and procedures are intended to maintain a consistent approach to the work of Dulwich Helpline. They explain our approach to new staff and act as a point of reference and guidance with difficult problems.

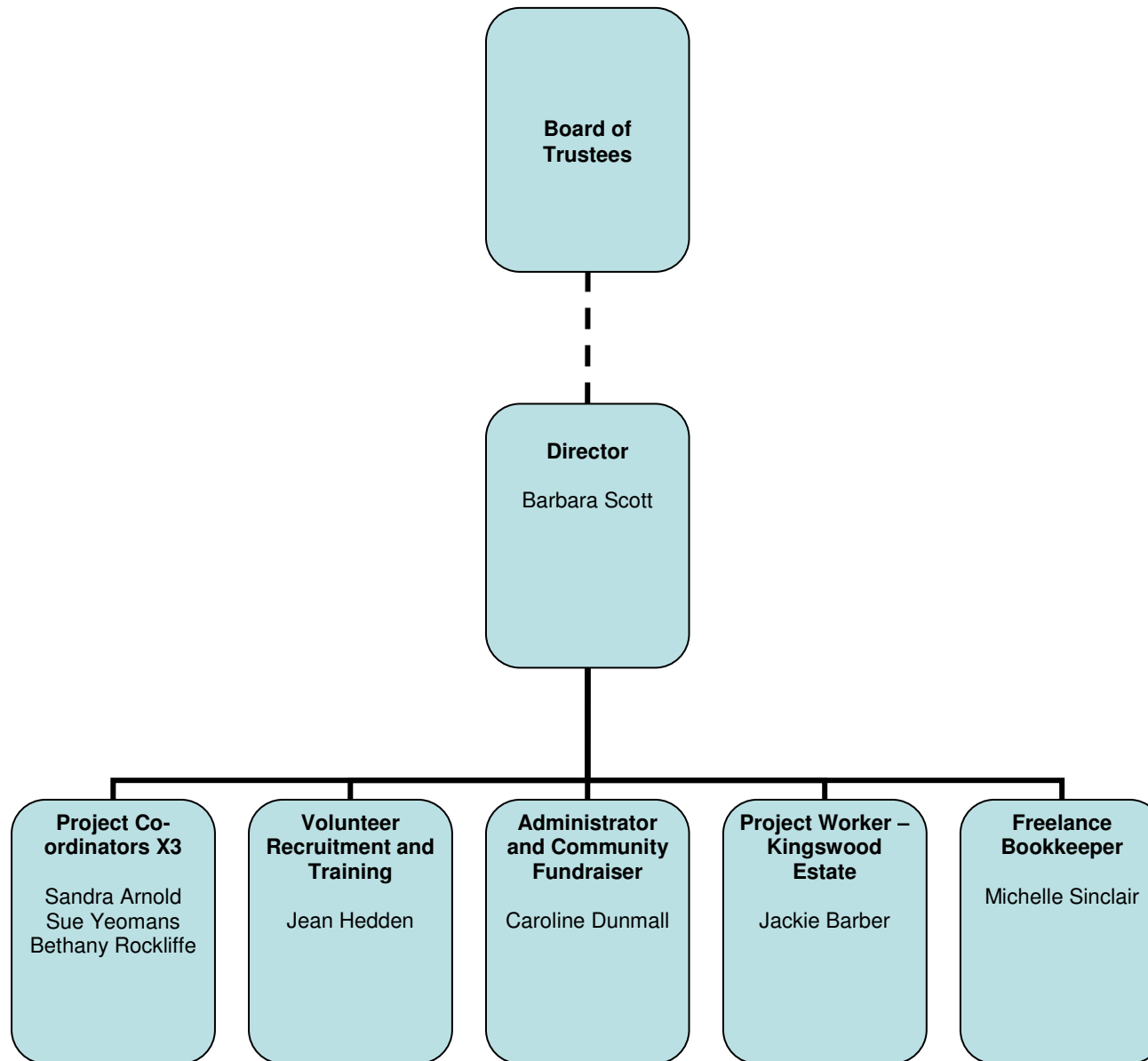
Our approach in updating them has been to check with relevant websites what the legal position might be and to incorporate this into the document with links where appropriate.

The safeguarding of vulnerable adults is vital in all we do as an organisation working with this user group. We take adult protection very seriously and strictly adhere to our Safeguarding Policy, which can be found later in this document.

It is not possible to write policies and procedures to cover every single circumstance that might arise. Staff and volunteers may have to react to a set of circumstances not covered by these policies and procedures and at a time when it is not possible to ask for advice and guidance. On these occasions staff or volunteers are going to have to rely on experience and common sense to support their decision making. Provided they have acted in good faith and can give good reasons for the decisions they have made they can rely on the organisation to support them.

Barbara Scott
Director
March 2010

Dulwich Helpline Structure and Staff



Bereavement Procedure – When a Service User Dies

The service we provide is based on personal relationships with our service users and each one will be different. When a service user dies, the relevant Co-ordinator should use their discretion as to how best to implement this policy. If the Co-ordinator is unable to do so through absence from the office, another member of staff should become a named contact for the interim.

The guidelines are: -

- Send a card to the family member or other noted emergency contact to offer condolence.
- Ascertain details of funeral arrangements wherever possible.
- If applicable, advise volunteer of service user's death, by telephone, and thank them for their friendship and support of the service user.
- If applicable, advise the group members and other relevant people (other volunteers, service users, group members, tutors etc) of the service user's death.
- Give the volunteer and any other relevant people the funeral details.
- Advise volunteer of bereavement support available, if required.
- Close and archive paper file, close the database record. (by un-ticking 'active' and adding in a file closed date)
- Wherever possible, the Co-ordinator should attend the funeral to support the volunteer, as well as being there to represent Dulwich Helpline.
- Service users' deaths to be recorded in the next edition of the Herald newsletter.
- After the funeral, the Co-ordinator, in conjunction with the Volunteer Co-ordinator, should have a discussion with the volunteer about their needs. This should include advice on bereavement support and help if appropriate.

Code of Conduct

This code of conduct has been established to provide protection for Dulwich Helpline and all those involved in its work. Although Dulwich Helpline is not a public body it receives public money and it demands the same high standards of conduct from its Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers as those required for members of public bodies.

Trustees, staff and volunteers of Dulwich Helpline are expected to

- Declare any conflict of interest
- Comply with Dulwich Helpline's policies and procedures
- Respect the lines of accountability within the organisation
- Maintain professional boundaries between themselves and Dulwich Helpline service users and volunteers.
- Respect the decision making process of the organisation
- Respect the multi-cultural environment of Dulwich Helpline and show sensitivity to others
- Respect the skill and knowledge of those involved in Dulwich Helpline and value the contributions made by all concerned.

Serious breaches of this code are disciplinary issues that could lead to dismissal of staff or volunteers or removal of a trustee from Dulwich Helpline's Board.

No trustee, volunteer or staff member should put themselves in a position where their duty and personal interest conflict, or might conflict. A conflict of interest arises where an individual holds a financial or other interest or engages in any activity – paid or unpaid – which could have some adverse effect on Dulwich Helpline's activities.

No trustee, volunteer or staff member shall have any financial interest in any contract, transaction or undertaking of Dulwich Helpline, either personally or as a member of another organisation, or in any way whatsoever, unless it is expressly permitted by a decision of Dulwich Helpline Board of Trustees.

Any trustee or staff member having an interest in any arrangement between Dulwich Helpline and another person or organisation must disclose that interest to the Director. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

All existing staff and applicants for vacancies are required to declare a known relationship with any current staff member, trustee, or user. Failure to do so may prejudice continued employment with Dulwich Helpline.

Complaints

We welcome feedback about our services and in this guidance for staff we have set the principles that apply to complaint handling and the steps to be taken depending on who is the subject of the complaint.

Dulwich Helpline aims to provide top quality services which will not give any cause for complaint but we recognise that from time to time difficulties may occur. The information pack given to new service users and volunteers includes Dulwich Helpline's Complaints Policy which encourages service users or volunteers to use these procedures, if they have any concerns. Dulwich Helpline takes all complaints seriously and will follow these procedures set out below, established to provide a consistent method of responding to complaints.

There are some principles it may be useful to consider when trying to handle complaints effectively:

- All complaints will be taken seriously.
- We will attempt to acknowledge and resolve the complaint as quickly as possible without complicating the process. However we are a small organisation; most of our staff are part time. Complaints requiring consideration by Trustees may take longer to resolve than complaints that can be resolved by a Co-ordinator or a Director.
- Complaints can be general (about a service) or about an individual. Where the complaint is about an individual the procedure we follow will be slightly different depending on whether the complaint is about a volunteer, a member of staff, the Director or a Trustee.
- In order to preserve the confidentiality of the complainant and the person complained about, the discussion about the complaint will be confined to those directly relevant to the complaint and any investigation should be proportionate to the seriousness of the complaint.
- If there is any lack of clarity about who should be dealing with the complaint should be dealing with the complaint it should be directed to the Company Secretary and any correspondence should be addressed as private and confidential.

The following pages explain both how to make a complaint to us, and how the process works if you are the subject of a complaint.

You may also wish to use the London Borough of Southwark complaints procedure for users of the services of voluntary organisations. For a copy of this, you may contact Southwark Council on 020 7525 5000.

Complaints

A guide for people wanting to make a complaint

Dulwich Helpline aims to provide good quality services. We welcome feedback and comments about our services and inevitably there will be occasions when difficulties occur.

An information pack is given to new service users and befriending volunteers. This pack can be made available to all volunteers on request, either electronically or in paper form. This contains information about how to make a complaint. In the information pack we have set out a stage by stage guide as to how we will manage the complaint once it has been submitted. This may vary depending on who the complaint is about. (See also appendix)

We will aim to resolve any complaint at an early stage and as informally as possible, but recognise this may not always be achievable.

We would also wish to reassure Service Users that complaining will not prejudice the service offered by Dulwich Helpline.

Complaints About a Volunteer

Stage 1

If your complaint is about a volunteer and you cannot discuss the problem with them directly, you should write or contact one of the co-ordinators outlining your concerns. The co-ordinator will attempt to resolve the issue to your satisfaction. If this is not possible the complaint passes to stage 2.

Stage 2

The Director will contact you in writing or in person acknowledging your complaint within 10 working days and will tell you how we intend to proceed. This could range from attempting to resolve the issue, further investigation of your complaint, contacting other agencies or simply ending the relationship with the volunteer.

Stage 3

If at any stage the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction and you wish to appeal to the Trustees, you can do so by telephoning the Dulwich Helpline office asking for the Company Secretary's telephone number or writing to The Company Secretary at Dulwich Helpline, Dulwich Community Hospital, East Dulwich Grove, London SE22 8PT. Please mark the envelope PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL (Complaints).

The Company Secretary will investigate your complaint, will review of the actions taken and will discuss with the Chairman what further steps might be taken to resolve the complaint. Every effort will be made to do this in the shortest time possible. The nature and complexity of the complaint and the availability of the Company Secretary may have an impact on the time taken.

Complaints About a Member of Staff Other Than the Director

Stage 1

If your complaint is about a member of staff, other than the Director, and you cannot discuss the problem with them directly, you should write to or contact the Director outlining your concerns. Any correspondence should be marked PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL. The Director will contact you and

attempt to resolve the issue to your satisfaction. If the complaint is serious or complex it may be necessary to carry out an investigation and this may delay resolution. If the complaint is of serious nature involving any breach of trust or confidentiality, Trustees would have to be informed and involved. The complaint would automatically pass to stage 2.

The Confidentiality Policy contained within our policies and procedures outlines circumstances where the Duty of Care overrides the duty of confidentiality. Ultimately this in itself may be a cause for complaint and may involve a judgement being made as to the course of action to be followed.

Stage 2

The Director will discuss the complaint with the Company Secretary. The Director will write or contact you to give you information about the progress of your complaint. After due consideration we tell you what we intend to do. This could range from attempting to resolve the issue, further investigation of your complaint, an apology, referral to external agency and or no action if the complaint is considered unjustified.

Stage 3

If at stage 2 the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction and you wish to appeal to the Trustees for further consideration, you can do so by telephoning the office and asking for the telephone number of the Company Secretary or writing to The Company Secretary at Dulwich Helpline, Dulwich Community Hospital, East Dulwich Grove, London SE22 8PT. Please mark the envelope PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL (complaint).

The Company Secretary will investigate your complaint and will review the actions already taken and will discuss with the Chairman and Trustees what further actions might be taken to resolve the complaint.

Every effort will be made to resolve the complaint in the shortest time possible. The nature and complexity of the complaint and the availability of the Company Secretary may have an impact on the time taken.

Complaint about the Director or a Trustee

The Company Secretary should be contacted either by telephoning Dulwich Helpline's office and asking for the Company Secretary's number or by letter (which should be marked PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL, Complaint) and he will respond as soon as possible. The process of investigation and consideration by the Trustees will follow as previously outlined in stage 3.

It is also possible to use the London Borough of Southwark's complaints procedure for users of the services of voluntary organisations. For a copy of this you should contact the council on 0207525 5000.

Complaint about a Service User

Action will, in principle, follow the sequence described above. The complainant could be another service user, a member of staff or a volunteer. Such complaints are likely to be rare but should be reported initially to the co-ordinator responsible for that activity or at a higher level to the Director or Company Secretary as necessary.

Complaints

A guide for people who are the subject of a complaint

- Regardless of where the complaint originated, it will be investigated as set out in the previous flowchart. This will be informal, and in discussion with both sides of the complaint. This discussion is to clarify the situation, the validity of the complaint, and to invite each side to give their point of view.
- If the matter is not resolved any of the parties involved may refer it to the Director who will meet with each party, but not necessarily at the same time, explaining that they may bring a friend to the meeting for support.
- Each side will state their case, and then be questioned by the Director. Each may consult with the person they have brought with them. Mitigating circumstances must be listened to and taken into account if they are relevant.
- If the facts of the case question the continuation of service, each side will be informed of this in writing with the reasons within one week of the interview. They will be informed that any further behaviour giving rise to a repetition of such complaint will lead to them finishing with the organisation.
- If further complaints are made the Director will investigate the situation further and include further meetings or other actions as appropriate.

In the event of a volunteer's service being terminated by Dulwich Helpline the volunteer must be informed in writing, with specific reasons given. The reasons must have been made clear throughout the whole process, and written records of all discussions and correspondence kept.

Where a warning has been given or services terminated the volunteer has the right of appeal to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and two other members of the Board who will constitute an Appeals Panel. This must be made in writing within one week of the warning or termination notice. The Chairman and other Board members will interview the appealing volunteer and the Project Coordinator. Again the volunteer may be accompanied by a friend or another volunteer for support. The Project Coordinator may be accompanied by another member of staff. The Panel will also independently gather the necessary information and evidence. They will come to a decision within four weeks of the appeal being made, and will notify the volunteer and the Project Coordinator in writing. For this purpose the address given by the volunteer to the organisation will be used. The Appeal Panel decision will be final.

Summary termination of service can only be authorised by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees following the advice of the Director. The following are offences for summary dismissal: -

- Theft of property belonging to Dulwich Helpline, or any of its service users, volunteers or staff.
- Acts of violence towards a member of staff, another volunteer, or a service user.
- Malicious damage to property belonging to Dulwich Helpline, its staff, its volunteers, or its service users.
- Deliberate falsification of expenses claims.
- Disclosure of confidential information relating to Dulwich Helpline, its staff, volunteers or service users.
- Convictions for a criminal offence that undermines a volunteer's suitability for service with Dulwich Helpline.

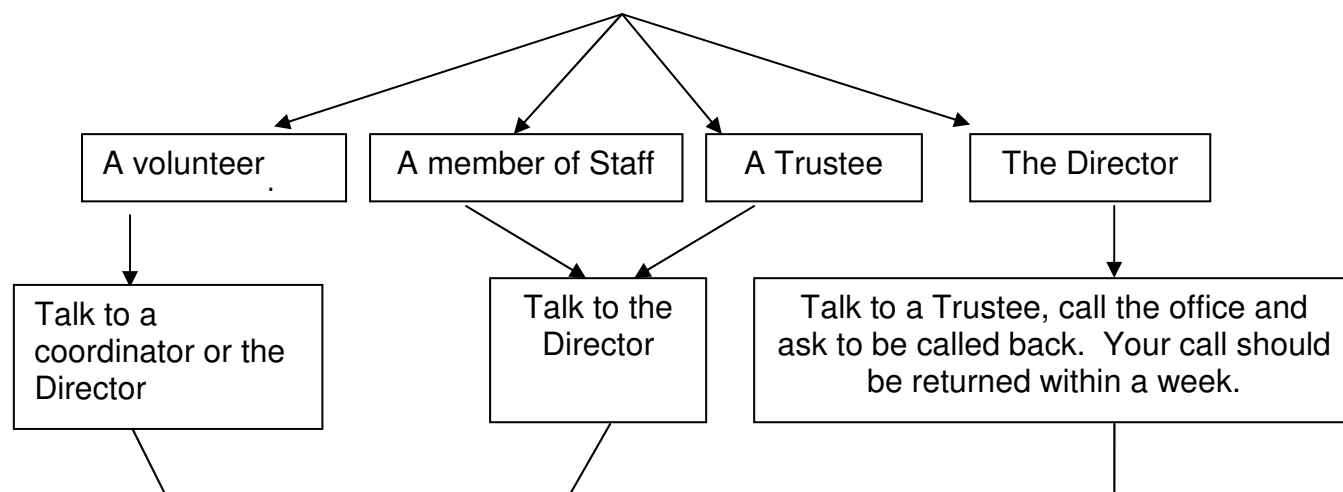
- The provision of false information, or failure to disclose information relevant to his/her engagement as a volunteer involved with users of the service.
- Sexual and/or racial harassment

Appeal against summary dismissal may be made as above. The Appeals Panel should not consist of any person previously involved in other appeals made by the volunteer. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final.

Appendix - Complaints

Stage 1: If you have a complaint about the service you are receiving you should first discuss it informally with a member of staff.

Who is the complaint about?



Stage 2: The person you contact will take your complaint seriously, discuss it with you and try to resolve it. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the discussion, you should then put your complaint in writing.

Write* to the Director

Write* to the Company Secretary - this should be sent to the office and marked 'Private & Confidential'

Stage 3: The person you contact will listen to you, and agree to meet with you at a mutually convenient time and place to discuss the complaint with you and try to resolve it. They will then investigate it further and take any action they consider necessary to resolve the complaint. They will inform you of the outcome of this. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you should then prepare a written statement* and send it to the Company Secretary - this should be sent to the office and marked 'Confidential'.

Stage 4: The Company Secretary will discuss it with all relevant parties and arrange to meet you to discuss the matter and then prepare a written report to be discussed at a Board meeting, or by an appeal panel nominated by the Board. This meeting will decide on the action to be taken to resolve the complaint and will inform you of their decision. Their decision on the matter will be final.

* If you need assistance in preparing a letter or written statement as part of this process, this can be arranged for you. Contact the office for more information.

Confidentiality

The work of Dulwich Helpline involves trustees, staff and volunteers having access to private and personal information about service users, their families and friends. Dulwich Helpline is committed to maintaining high standards of confidentiality to protect all parties.

Trustees, staff and volunteers are not permitted to disclose to any person outside the organisation any confidential information received in the course of their work with Dulwich Helpline. They must not disclose any confidential information to any other person involved in Dulwich Helpline except in the best interests of the service user and his/her family and friends. They are asked to clear with their line manager, or Project Coordinator, who the appropriate persons are to receive such information.

Details which enable a service user to be identified will not be made public or passed to a third party (family member, friend, social worker, health worker, etc) without the service user's informed consent, in writing if necessary. Informed consent requires the service user to receive an explanation of why information is to be passed on, what information will be included, with whom the information will be shared and the possible implications of sharing this information. However it is a condition of the funding we receive from Southwark that share the names and addresses of service users with them. We ask our service users permission to do this (as of April 2010) and if they refuse we will not pass those details on. Any user who has reservations about this should speak to their Project Coordinator or Director.

Information will usually only be shared if it is seen as necessary to safeguard the service user or will be of direct benefit to him/her. Such consent is valid only for the purpose for which it is given. If information is to be re-used in a different context, permission will be sought again. If a service does not have capacity to give permission it will be sought from the carer, relative or advocate and only with consent from the Director or an officer of the Board of Trustees. Efforts must be made to maximise the capacity of the individual and to support their involvement in decision making.

The rare exceptions to this rule are:

Where there is evidence that not sharing information could

- Endanger the service user's own life
- Seriously endanger other people including a Dulwich Helpline volunteer or worker

Or where

- disclosure is required by law
- the information is relevant to counselling or support being given to an individual to enable him or her to function more positively within the organisation, and only then if confidentiality is maintained by the person providing counselling or support
- the Director or Trustees consider it necessary to disclose information to a person or organisation with responsibility for the regulation or monitoring of the work of Dulwich Helpline, including enforcement of the law

Trustees, staff and volunteers are required to return to their line manager or relevant Project Coordinator all documents and any other materials belonging to the Helpline before the last day of their employment or involvement with Dulwich Helpline.

On the rare occasions when a volunteer needs advice on whether or not to disclose something, out of normal office hours, then they should contact the Southwark Social Care and Health on the main Southwark Council number 020 7525 5000, they will then be directed to a particular emergency out of hours number. The volunteer should inform Dulwich Helpline of his/her concerns and any action taken at the earliest opportunity.

Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Checks

'This service enables organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to make safer recruitment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially that involve children or vulnerable adults. The CRB was established under Part V of the Police Act 1997 and was launched in March 2002.

All staff, volunteers and Trustees are required by law to have a CRB check and until this has been received the person will not be able to work with any members of Dulwich Helpline. Best practice then indicates that CRB checks should be renewed every 3 years.

User/volunteers who work with service users may also require a CRB check, depending on the nature of their volunteering duties.

Having a criminal record does not necessarily exclude someone from working or volunteering with Dulwich Helpline. However previous convictions must be declared, in confidence, at the point of application for the CRB check; this information is treated confidentially. Decisions on suitability take place after the CRB check results are obtained and are treated on a case-by-case basis, in conjunction with advice from the CRB.

It is essential that all staff, volunteers and the Board of Trustees have some basic awareness training in safeguarding adults, all paid staff will undergo specific safeguarding adult training.

All volunteers and the Board of Trustees will receive information about elder abuse and be actively encouraged to attend an awareness training session and/ or complete the e learning certificate sponsored by Southwark. All staff and members of the Board of Trustees need to be fully aware of their responsibilities and familiar with Social Services policy and procedures on safeguarding adults.

For more information on elder abuse see the Safeguarding Policy in this document, which is also available online at www.dulwich-helpline.org.uk People who do not have access to a computer can use the computers in the Dulwich Helpline office by arrangement.

Data Protection and Access to Information

Dulwich Helpline complies with the Data Protection Act (1998) principles of good information handling and requires all information whether kept in electronic or paper form to be:

- Fairly and lawfully processed.
- Processed for a specific purpose.
- Adequate, relevant, and not excessive.
- Accurate, and where necessary, kept up to date.
- Kept no longer than necessary.
- Processed in line with the rights of the individual.
- Kept secure
- Not transferred to other countries without adequate protection

Dulwich Helpline processes data about its service users, volunteers and employees only in so far as it is necessary in managing its services. It does not disclose data to anyone else other than its authorised employees, agents, contractors or advisers save as required by law unless an individual expressly authorises disclosure of information about him/herself.

Dulwich Helpline takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the data it processes is accurate and keeps it in a secure system, whether manual or computerised, to the best of its ability at all times.

Dulwich Helpline complies fully with the Criminal Records Bureau Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information.

Dulwich Helpline service users, volunteers and employees whose personal data is kept on Dulwich Helpline's computerised database or in paper form have a right to see information that is held about them, and to require Dulwich Helpline to correct it if it is wrong. Dulwich Helpline may require this request to be in writing.

Dulwich Helpline will provide the information within the time limit of 40 days specified in the Act.

Dulwich Helpline is asked by the London Borough of Southwark for details of our service users names and addresses, as a condition of their funding. This is for the purpose of verifying our activity and for assessing the use of discretionary and Fair Access to Care services. We have not released this information in the past but from May 2010 we will seek the permission of each service user to do this. Any service user not consenting to this has the opportunity to withhold their consent and to have this information recorded on their notes and on the database.

Donations and Gifts

Donations

Dulwich Helpline has a fundraising strategy which recognises the importance of individual donations. Many service users, their families or friends wish to make a donation towards the costs of the services they receive, most of which are free. Dulwich Helpline is extremely grateful for these donations which can either be made by sending a cheque or postal order (payable to Dulwich Helpline), or on-line through our website - www.dulwich-helpline.org.uk. Cash should not be sent through the post. Dulwich Helpline is registered with the Inland Revenue's Gift Aid scheme and asks donors who are tax payers to indicate their willingness to participate in this scheme as it increases the value of the donation at no extra cost to the donor. A Gift Aid form is available on request.

Whether or not to make a donation is a matter of personal choice and we emphasise that there is no obligation to do so. All donors are normally sent a written communication of thanks within seven working days of receipt of their donation, with possible exceptions at busy times of the year such as over the Christmas period.

Dulwich Helpline asks its service users not to offer money to the volunteers who provide our face to face services as this may cause embarrassment. They do not expect payment for what they do and Dulwich Helpline covers their expenses. Volunteers who are given a donation should hand it into the office where it will be paid into our general funds, although, if the donor wishes, it may be earmarked for a specific service.

Gifts

Dulwich Helpline recognises that there are times, such as at Christmas or at birthdays, when volunteers and users may want to exchange gifts. Users may wish to exchange gifts. This is, of course, a matter of individual choice and there should never be any expectation of a gift.

In order to protect both volunteers and users from exploitation the gifts should be of a value of £10 or less. If either party is unsure about this they should contact the Co-ordinator.

Staff may accept personal gifts from users or volunteers of a value of £10 or less and must declare the gift to the Director who will enter details in the office record.

Wills and bequests

Dulwich Helpline is always grateful for bequests to the organisation but it is our policy that no bequests are made to individual staff members or volunteers. Staff and volunteers are required to inform the Director if a service user mentions the possibility of a personal bequest to them. The Director will contact the service user to explain Dulwich Helpline policy.

Staff are not permitted to become involved in service users' wills in any way including acting as a witness or executor.

Environmental Protection

Dulwich Helpline encourages all staff to consider the impact of their actions and seeks to minimise the impact of its activities on the environment.

Transport

Whilst encouraging cycling, walking and the use of public transport for staff, trustees and volunteers we need to recognise that it is not always possible because of time, the number of people travelling and the destination to adhere to this ideal.

The age and infirmity of many of our service users increases our reliance on the use of private cars and hired minibuses. Dulwich Helpline accepts that this is inevitable and the provision of this service facilitates social contact.

Reducing, Reusing and Recycling

We aim to minimise the use of resources for the purposes of environmental protection and good financial practice. We follow the practice of reduce, reuse and recycle wherever possible in our day-to-day working. We aim to be a socially and environmentally responsible organisation.

We try and minimise our paper usage. For instance emails are used instead of post where possible, emails are not printed out unnecessarily and computer records are kept rather than excess paper files where possible.

Dulwich Helpline aims to recycle the by-products of our operation wherever possible. Bins are provided for recyclables and we also collect cartridges and old mobile phones for this purpose. Any redundant office equipment is offered to other organisations or to Freecycle.

The office administrator is responsible for the implementation of this policy and will consider all recycling opportunities.

Equal Opportunities

Dulwich Helpline is committed to the promotion and delivery of equal opportunities to its service users, volunteers and staff; discrimination is unacceptable.

Dulwich Helpline's policies aim to ensure that everyone feels welcome within Dulwich Helpline's services. Dulwich Helpline recognises its obligations under current legislation addressing discrimination on grounds of race, religion, sex, and disability

All trustees, staff and volunteers are required to comply with Dulwich Helpline code of conduct which, amongst other things, requires them to comply with Dulwich Helpline's equal opportunities policy.

The implementation of the equal opportunities policy is the responsibility of all those involved in Dulwich Helpline including paid staff, volunteers and the Board of Trustees.

Employment practices

- Employees are recruited and selected, promoted and trained on the basis of objective criteria. Recruitment procedures and terms of employment give all equality of opportunity whatever their gender, ethnic origin, marital status, disability, sexuality, age, responsibility for dependants, or religious belief.
- Dulwich Helpline recognises that sexual, racial and other forms of harassment may cause problems at work and is committed to ensuring that unacceptable behaviour does not take place.
- All personnel responsible for the recruitment, selection and promotion of staff are given information and/or training to enable them to minimise the risk of discrimination.
- Genuine occupational requirements which limit a post to a particular group are identified, and made clear throughout the recruitment process.
- Personnel responsible for operating grievance and disciplinary procedures are given information and training to enable them to minimise the risk of discrimination.
- We endeavour to use the most effective way of bringing job vacancies to the attention of potentially disadvantaged groups. All vacancy advertisements include a short statement on equal opportunities.

Involvement of volunteers

- Recruitment procedures and terms of deployment for volunteers give all equality of opportunity whatever their gender, ethnic origin, marital status, disability, sexuality, age, responsibility for dependants, or religious belief.
- All volunteers are made aware of the support available to them from the staff and trustees when carrying out their responsibilities.
- Dulwich Helpline recognises that sexual, racial and other forms of harassment may cause problems for volunteers and is committed to ensuring that unacceptable behaviour does not take place.
- All staff responsible for the selection and deployment of volunteers are given information and/or training to enable them to minimise the risk of discrimination through their work.
- All Dulwich Helpline volunteers are given a copy of the complaints procedure and encouraged to use this procedure if they feel they have been treated unfairly.

Service provision

- Dulwich Helpline has published criteria for referrals and service provision based on current circumstances. In processing referrals and providing or withdrawing Dulwich Helpline services all are treated equally, irrespective of their gender, ethnic origin, marital status, disability, sexuality, age, or religious belief, within the limits of the agreed criteria.

- Once accepted as a user of Dulwich Helpline services the same responsibility of Dulwich Helpline continues in the delivery of the service in line with its equal opportunities policy.
- All employees and volunteers working with Dulwich Helpline service users are given information and/or training to enable them to minimise the risk of discrimination through their work.
- All Dulwich Helpline service users are given information about the complaints procedure and encouraged to use this procedure if they feel they have been treated unfairly.

Monitoring practice

- The Board of Trustees is responsible for monitoring the application and effectiveness of this equal opportunities policy.
- The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that personnel policy and procedures are kept under review to ensure that they promote equal opportunities.
- The Board of Trustees will pursue all indications of a lapse in practice through the agreed procedures of Dulwich Helpline and if necessary take appropriate action to redress discrimination.
- To ensure that this policy is operating effectively (and for no other reason) Dulwich Helpline asks applicants for posts, volunteers and service users to complete monitoring forms giving ethnic origins, gender, age and disability.

Financial Controls

Purchasing/placing orders/ authorising expenditure

- Authorisation for ordering items in any four monthly period is as follows:
- Maximum expenditure that can be authorised by the Director for a single item is £250 and the cumulative total for the period is £500.
- The Director plus one trustee can authorise items to a maximum of £700.
- The Finance Committee can authorise items of £701 and above. In the Director's absence the administrator is authorised to order urgent items for general use (e.g. Stationery) to a maximum of £50. No other member of staff has the authority to authorise or agree expenditure on items that are not part of regular planned expenditure, unless this has been discussed and agreed with the Director. If a situation arises where there is a need for urgent and unplanned expenditure and the Director is not available please contact the Treasurer, Chair or Vice Chair or other authorised signatory.

Invoices and expense claims for payment

- All invoices must be initialled and dated by the Director before the Bookkeeper can make payment. The purpose of each invoice must be clearly marked.
- Invoices must be presented for payment within one month of receipt and normally within the quarter within which the charge was incurred. Invoices presented out of time may not be paid.
- All staff expenses claims must be initialled and dated by the Director before the Bookkeeper can make payment. All volunteer expense claims must be countersigned and dated by the relevant Project Co-ordinator before passing to the Bookkeeper for payment. Staff and volunteer expense claims must be submitted at least quarterly and normally within the quarter for which the expenditure was incurred.
- Expense claims out of time may be rejected. Expenses incurred within the last two weeks of each quarter may be carried forward to the next quarter.
- It is the responsibility of the Project Co-ordinators to ensure that all paid staff, casual staff and volunteers are aware of these Procedures. In order to simplify the processing of claims, the Bookkeeper will provide Co-ordinators with an appropriate claim form for regular items of expenditure.

Cheques

- Dulwich Helpline cheque books are held by the Director or Bookkeeper.
- Cheques are normally generated weekly. All cheques require two authorised signatures, for amounts above £500, two authorised trustee's signatures are required.
- The Director is authorised to sign cheques up to £500.
- When planning to request an order which will require a cheque to go with it, staff should allow ten working days from the initial request to the Director to receipt of a signed cheque, although every effort will be made to process the cheque in a shorter time.

Cash received

- All cash received must be put in an envelope with the date; amount and source marked upon it and placed in the Bookkeepers cash tin as soon as possible and added to the incoming post book.

Postage

- The post book and stamps are accessible to all members of staff.
- All post sent must be recorded in the post book to provide a record and justify the stamps used.
- Post should be sent second class wherever possible, including all mailings.

- Email is the preferred method of communication, but hard copies should be available to provide a record for files where necessary.

Health and Safety

Dulwich Helpline takes seriously its obligations and responsibilities under health and safety legislation. We recognise our duty of care to service users, volunteers and staff and aim to provide healthy and safe working and service delivery conditions for all and to provide such training and information as is necessary.

The overall responsibility for health and safety lies with a named member of the Board of Trustees (currently Michael Merrifield). Day to day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the Director.

All employees, volunteers and service users have a responsibility within their role for the maintenance of a healthy and safe environment, complying with agreed procedures and reporting all health and safety concerns to an appropriate person.

Risk assessments of all aspects of Dulwich Helpline's work will be undertaken by appropriate persons. They will be reviewed annually or whenever the work activity changes.

We recognise that much of Dulwich Helpline's work takes place in homes of service users and in property managed by other organisations. In such circumstances we will take all measures open to us to implement our health and safety policy

We offer training in awareness and practice in health and safety on induction of staff and volunteers. Procedures are reviewed regularly and training is identified, arranged and monitored by the Director.

We will bring findings of risk assessments and all incidents relating to health and safety to the attention of the Board of Trustees who will also review policy and practice annually.

All work shall be carried out in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations and within Dulwich Helpline procedures.

This policy applies to all aspects of Dulwich Helpline's work and covers Dulwich Helpline offices, venues for group activities, service users' homes, and when travelling in vehicles, by public transport or on foot.

When new equipment, projects or practices are introduced we will review the health and safety implications and amend policies to take the changes into account.

Dissemination of information

Dulwich Helpline ensures that all staff and volunteers are aware of and understand its Health and Safety Policy and Procedures. A copy of the Policy and Procedures is available in the offices. All new staff and volunteers are given a copy of The Health and Safety Policy and Procedures at their induction and receive appropriate instruction on its implementation.

The Health and Safety Law poster is displayed in the general office at Dulwich Community Hospital, East Dulwich Grove. Health and safety advice is available from the Director or the administrator.

Training

Any health and safety training needed will be provided free of charge to staff, volunteers and trustees. All health and safety training is recorded on both the individual staff member's or volunteer's personnel file and on a general register file maintained by the Director.

Employer's liability insurance – for the year 2010-2011

Name of insurance company: AON Ltd
Address: Commercial Division, Capital House
1 Houndwell Place, Southampton SO14 1HU

Date of expiry: 01/05/2011

Risk assessments

Risk assessments are carried out on all aspects of Dulwich Helpline's activities as follows:

- The Project Coordinator undertakes a risk assessment of a service user's home as part of the initial assessment visit before agreeing to provide a service or arranging for a volunteer to visit. The risk assessment will include other people who live in or visit the house frequently and pets. Where the service user has requested help with gardening the risk assessment includes the garden
- The appropriate Project Coordinator undertakes a risk assessment of all venues, including service users' homes, which are to be used for a befriending or group meeting.
- A staff member checks that a risk assessment has been done for any venues to be used for a social activity organised by Dulwich Helpline.
- The administrator undertakes an annual risk assessment of Dulwich Helpline offices. The findings of this assessment are made available to all staff.

Where hazards are identified efforts are made to eliminate or minimise them. Dulwich Helpline does not provide a service unless hazards are reduced to an acceptable level.

All risk assessments are updated every year or when there are changes in the nature of the work or in the personnel undertaking the work. The written conclusions of all risk assessments are kept in the relevant files where all staff have access to them.

Medical

Any medical examination or health check of a staff member required which is related to their job description is provided without charge to the individual e.g. Eye examination for users of display screen equipment (vdu).

All staff must ensure the Director is aware of any health condition which may in any way affect the efficient performance of their duties.

Immediate suspension and disciplinary action is taken if a staff member or volunteer is found to be incapable of performing his/her duties due to the influence of alcohol or other non-prescribed drugs.

First aid

One staff member (currently Caroline Dunmall) is trained in emergency first aid at work and has responsibility for providing first aid in the office. A first aid box is kept in the kitchen.

If any staff member, volunteer or service user becomes ill whilst engaged in Dulwich Helpline activities and requires medical attention, arrangements will be made to call a doctor or emergency services or to take the individual to accident and emergency at the nearest hospital.

All accidents which take place during Dulwich Helpline activities must be reported in the accident report book kept in the office.

Infection control

In all circumstances there is a potential risk of infection and this may be increased when work is carried out in people's homes. Most healthy people are not at a great risk of infection, although older people are known to be at greater risk than others and this should be taken into account. Where the risk is known e.g. someone has 'flu', obvious precautions can be taken. However, unless there are symptoms, many people will not be aware they are harbouring an infection.

Dulwich Helpline employees, volunteers and service users may be potential spreaders and receivers of infection. Sensible precautions should be taken when faced with known situations which have an increased risk of bacterial/viral infection.

The following general practices are recommended. Employees should discuss any issues arising with their line manager and volunteers with their Project Coordinator. Any action taken must comply with Dulwich Helpline's Confidentiality Policy.

- Do not take part in Dulwich Helpline activities if you are unwell. Always let the office know
- Inform your line manager or Project Coordinator if you have, or have been in contact with, an infectious illness.
- Cover any cuts or abrasions
- Always let your line manager or Project Coordinator know if a user either has an infection or is vulnerable to infection through social contact. You must let the user know that you will be passing on this information prior to doing so.
- Should the user refuse permission to pass on this information the service must be withdrawn without disclosure. Employees must tell their line manager, and volunteers their Project Coordinator, of the withdrawal of the service whilst respecting the user's confidentiality.
- If the user gives permission for disclosure then a plan of action must be discussed with the person in the office to whom you are responsible

If, during your work with Dulwich Helpline, you come into contact with infection or suspect that you have, we recommend that you seek information and advice from your general practitioner.

Fire

Fire safety information is prominently displayed in Dulwich Helpline offices. This includes details of evacuation procedures and fire fighting equipment and its location. (A copy is attached to these procedures). Fire fighting equipment is checked at the appropriate intervals, and the fire alarm is tested weekly by the landlords (Southwark pct). They also organise an unannounced fire drill at least once a year.

In the event of any fire, all staff, volunteers and trustees are asked to vacate the premises and call 999, we would not expect anyone to tackle a fire unless trained to do so.

From 1st July 2007, all public places and workplaces became smoke-free in England, with the exception of a limited number of exemptions under the Smoke-free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006. Staff and visitors are not permitted to smoke in the offices and staff may not smoke in service users' homes. All Dulwich Helpline group activities are non smoking.

Electrical equipment

Dulwich Helpline complies with the electricity at work regulations 1989. All electrical equipment is inspected and tested (pat testing) by a qualified electrician once a year, organised by Southwark

PCT. All faulty electrical equipment is clearly identified and removed from the work area pending repair or disposal.

Office equipment and machinery

All machinery and equipment is maintained and repaired by authorised contractors.

Protective clothing

Dulwich Helpline complies with the personal protective equipment regulations 1992 and provides all necessary clothing and equipment to staff without charge.

This must be correctly used and maintained and returned to Dulwich Helpline at the end of employment.

Identity badges

All Dulwich Helpline staff and volunteers are issued with identity badges which they are required to produce when visiting service users. The identity badge includes the name Dulwich Helpline and its telephone number, the name and photograph of the staff member or volunteer, and the date of issue.

A procedure is in place to control the issue and recall of id badges. Clear and acceptable ways of identifying staff and volunteers are agreed with service users with special communication needs.

Personal safety

Dulwich Helpline staff and volunteers frequently work alone, usually in the home of a service user, although staff sometimes work alone in Dulwich Helpline offices. Staff and volunteers also travel around the area alone in the course of their duties. All staff and volunteers are given guidance on maintaining personal safety whilst working alone as part of their induction and a personal safety checklist.

Pets

Staff are not permitted to bring pets with them to work. Volunteers are not permitted to take pets to service users' homes or to group activities without the express permission of the service users concerned. Service users' pets will be included in risk assessments and volunteers will be informed of the existence of the pet and any associated risks before visiting a service user.

Referrals and Service Provision

Dulwich Helpline accepts referrals of people who are:

- Aged 60 years or over
- Living in the parts of south Southwark covered by Dulwich Helpline - i.e. SE22, SE24, and parts of SE5, SE19, SE21, SE23, and SE26. A map giving the boundaries is available from Dulwich Helpline office.
- Motivated towards remaining independent
- Looking to increase their circle of social contacts.

Referrals are accepted from professionals, family, friends, neighbours and older people themselves. Anyone wishing to make a referral may write, fax, email or telephone the details. Beforehand, referrers should:

- Obtain the older person's agreement before being referred to Dulwich Helpline
- Refer only people who meet the criteria set out above
- Include all relevant information, including any risks associated with the person referred

Assessment of persons referred

A Dulwich Helpline Project Coordinator will aim to contact the person referred within five working days of receiving the referral to agree a date to carry out an assessment. The purpose of the assessment is to ascertain that the person referred is able to benefit from Dulwich Helpline services e.g. If requiring transport able to travel in a standard saloon car, and identify the most appropriate Dulwich Helpline service. This is normally done by a home visit or exceptionally by telephone.

Dulwich Helpline aims to carry out the assessment within ten working days of the initial contact with the person referred.

Provision of services

Dulwich Helpline will inform the referred person within ten working days of the assessment whether or not we are able to provide the service required. We are only able to provide a service when an appropriate volunteer, or a place in an appropriate group, is available. If the service is not available immediately the appropriate Project Co-ordinator will explain the position and add the person to a waiting list or refer them to another appropriate organisation, if known.

Dulwich Helpline will, at the same time, inform the person making the referral of the outcome of the assessment.

Withdrawal of services

Dulwich Helpline reserves the right to withdraw services from a service user at its discretion. If services are withdrawn Dulwich Helpline will inform the service user and the referrer of its reasons in writing. The following list, though not exhaustive, gives examples of reasons for withdrawal of services

- Threatened or actual physical violence
- Sexual harassment or assault
- Persistent verbal abuse
- Racist, sexist or homophobic abuse
- Persistent unreasonable behaviour
- Serious health and safety risk

A service user may at any time decide that he or she no longer wishes to receive services from Dulwich Helpline and may be re-referred if his/her circumstances change.

Targets for service delivery

Once a new referral is received, it will be discussed and assigned to a Coordinator at a weekly referral meeting, the targets for service delivery are: -

Within one week of receipt:	Within two weeks of receipt:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Initial contact made with the person	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Assessment arranged with the person
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Referrer told of outcome of the assessment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Person added to our database if a service is to be provided

At the meeting following the assessment, the Coordinator will discuss the outcome of new referral and where appropriate, a suitable volunteer or group place will be sought. Where the referral is better suited to a different service, the Coordinator will signpost the referral to the appropriate agencies.

Once a suitable volunteer has been identified and has agreed to take on the role, the Coordinator will then arrange a mutually convenient time to introduce the volunteer and new service user in person. If attending a group, the Coordinator will arrange the first attendance of this as appropriate.

Safeguarding Adults

‘Everybody has the right to live their life free from violence and abuse, whilst maintaining their independence and wellbeing. “Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons”.’

No Secrets, Dept. Health 2000.

An organisation that deals exclusively with older people must be aware of the possibility that some older people may experience abuse. It is important that staff and volunteers are aware of this and are familiar with the approach the local authority takes in providing information about safeguarding adults and the advice about actions to be taken when there is a suspicion that abuse is taking place.

For information, see: -

www.southwark.gov.uk/safeguarding

Statement of intent

The staff and volunteers of Dulwich Helpline are committed to working in a way that protects vulnerable adults from harm. We accept our responsibilities to safeguard the well-being of all those with whom we work.

We will raise awareness of abuse through training and signposting to the Southwark safeguarding website and will follow recommended practice in dealing with situations where abuse is suspected or is identified.

Southwark Safeguarding Adults Policy

This policy applies to all adults but in this instance we are specifically thinking of the service users of the Dulwich Helpline, who will be over the age of 60. It is worth bearing in mind that volunteers and staff may become aware of safeguarding issues regarding people of other ages within the family; where these arise the same guidance will apply. Appendix 1 details both types and examples of abuse and some signs of abuse.

If abuse is suspected

If there is an emergency situation or someone is in immediate danger then the emergency services must be contacted. Please do not put yourself at risk.

Contact Dulwich Helpline as soon as is possible.

If anyone suspects abuse has occurred, during office hours they must contact a staff member or the Director Dulwich Helpline, on 0208 299 2623. If the Director or a member of staff cannot be contacted then please contact Southwark Council on 020 7525 5000.

Please record the reasons for your concerns and what you did. Record any verbal communication word for word as far as possible and any other factual information.

What happens next (see appendix 2)

The organisation will follow the policy and procedures of Southwark Social Services. They will take the lead on any investigation.

Confidentiality and information sharing

An older person may disclose information about their circumstances that causes concern to a volunteer or staff member. It is always advisable to discuss these concerns with the person concerned and request permission to share this information within the organisation.

A service user may preface a disclosure by requesting confidentiality. It is unwise to promise to maintain confidentiality, if something is disclosed about a situation where they are being abused or if they are abusing another person. The duty of care overrides a situation where an abused individual withholds their consent.

The situation must be discussed with the person concerned; if consent is withheld then a judgement has to be made at an organisational level, not by an individual, as to whether disclosure is in their interests.

The principle of proportionality is important, as it is a requirement of the Human Rights Act 1998 as well as the European Convention on Human Rights as well as the Data Protection Act 1998, and should be considered within the context of disclosure. For further detailed information consult the Southwark safeguarding adults partnership: information sharing protocol.

However it is a condition of the funding we receive from Southwark that share the names and addresses of service users with them. We ask our service users permission to do this (as of April 2010) and if they refuse we will not pass those details on.

Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks

All staff, new volunteers, and trustees will have a CRB check and until this has been received the person will not be able to work with any members of Dulwich Helpline. The CRB checks will be renewed every 3 years.

User/volunteers will have CRB checks if they are in one-to-one situations with other users including befriending and transport help. If they are primarily user/ helper in groups settings, CRB checks will not be necessary. – **For discussion**

Training in safeguarding adults

It is essential that all staff, volunteers and trustees have some basic awareness training and this is available in an e-learning format. Computers need to have flash software (available as a free download).

Once your computer is flash enabled please use the following web addresses to access the e-learning courses.

Essential training

Safeguarding adults (SA) e-learning website: www.kwango.com/lbswksalogin

Mental capacity act 2005 (MCA) e-learning website: www.kwango.com/lbswkmcalogin

Access codes are:

- Username: swarkccfmact
- password: ccfswarkmca1

All paid staff will undergo specific safeguarding adult training. All staff and members of the Board of Trustees need to be fully aware of their responsibilities and familiar with policy and procedures on safeguarding adults.

Mental capacity

There is an overall presumption of capacity unless it can be shown otherwise and it is assumed that the person can give or withhold consent. However 'best interests' need to be considered in relation decision making in sharing information. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (and the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice - Ministry of Justice 2007) set out a best interests check list. This focuses largely on care and medical treatment but encourages the involvement of the subject to the fullest extent.

Appendix 1 - Safeguarding Adults

Definitions

Vulnerable adult

A person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself against significant harm or exploitation (consultation paper 'Who Decides?' Issued by Lord Chancellor's department 1997).

This includes those who are elderly or have loss of vision or visual impairment, loss of hearing or hearing impairment, loss of speech or speech impairment, mobility difficulties, learning difficulties, mental illness, physical illness and those recovering from mental illness, physical illness or substance abuse.

Abuse:

Abuse as a violation of an individual's human rights by any other person or persons (see article 3 of the European convention on human rights).

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, sexual, verbal or psychological; it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

- **Physical abuse**

Any deliberate act to cause physical harm including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or the use of inappropriate sanctions.

- **Sexual abuse**

Includes rape and sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or to which he or she could not consent or was pressured into consenting. Also the exposure to and observation of sexual acts without informed consent.

- **Psychological abuse**

Includes 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**

Includes 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**

Includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failing to provide access to appropriate health or social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, nutrition and heating.

- **Discriminatory abuse**

Includes racist, religious and sexual abuse; abuse based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

- **Institutional abuse**

Mistreatment or abuse by a regime or the individual within an institution.

- **Bullying**

Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour. An abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

- **Harassment**

Unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of a person. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, nationality or any personal characteristic or an individual. The conduct may be persistent or a one off event.

Capacity

An adult is presumed to have the capacity to make decisions for themselves and to be able to give or refuse consent unless it can be shown otherwise.

The law commission defines incapacity as:

‘A person is without capacity if, at the time, they are unable by reason of mental disability to make a decision on the matter in question; or unable to communicate a decision on the matter in question because he or she is unconscious or for any other reason.’

Any other reason can include:

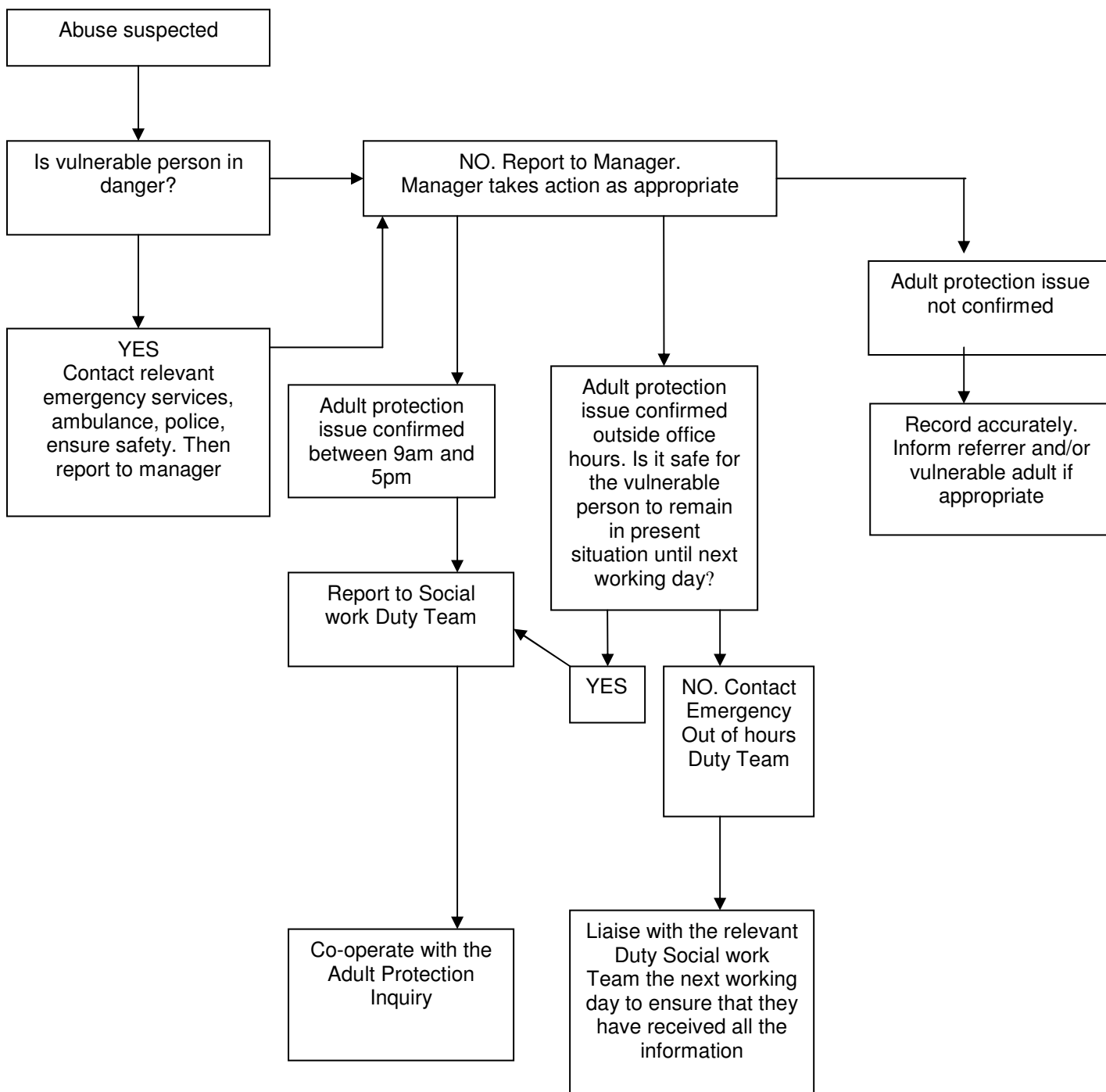
Not being able to understand the implication of what is being said due to: the type of language used or any other of the reasons which causes them to be defined as a vulnerable adult.

The inability to make a clear statement or negative indication for any other the reasons which causes them to be defined as a vulnerable adult.

Appendix 2 - Safeguarding Adults

What happens next?

Southwark Social Services department flow chart
Adult protection enquires and referrals



Smoking and Alcohol

Smoking is not permitted in Dulwich Helpline offices or at any Dulwich Helpline activities or social groups with service users.

From 1st July 2007, all public places and workplaces became smoke-free in England, with the exception of a limited number of exemptions under the Smoke-free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006. Staff and visitors are not permitted to smoke in the offices. All Dulwich Helpline group activities are non smoking.

Dulwich Helpline staff and volunteers are prohibited from smoking whilst in the home of a service user, and at any time, whilst working with a service user. This includes outside or in public places.

Volunteers will be advised if a service user with whom they are matched is a smoker and are at liberty to choose not to work with that person. If the volunteer decides she or he does not wish to work with a smoker, this will in no way affect his or her further involvement with Dulwich Helpline.

Dulwich Helpline staff may not drink alcohol whilst working. Immediate suspension and disciplinary action will be taken if a member of staff or a volunteer is found to be incapable of performing his or her duties due to the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or similar substances.

It is recognised, however, that alcohol plays a part in social interaction and that service users may on occasion wish to offer a volunteer a drink. Volunteers are therefore requested to take a responsible approach and use their discretion in drinking alcohol whilst taking part in Dulwich Helpline activities with service users.

Staff Recruitment and Selection

Dulwich Helpline aims to follow good practice in its staff recruitment. The recruitment and selection process is important to any equal opportunities policy. Dulwich Helpline will endeavour through training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.

This policy relates to all aspects of staff recruitment from vacancy to the completion of the probationary period. The policy is implemented in full for any appointment of over three months' duration.

Confidentiality and equal opportunities

The recruitment process complies with Dulwich Helpline's Confidentiality and Equal Opportunities Policies.

Advertising

Dulwich Helpline will adopt a consistent non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies. Dulwich Helpline will not confine its recruitment to areas or media sources which provide only, or mainly applicants from a particular group

Selection

Short listing and interviewing is carried out by a selection panel of not less than three members normally including the Director and at least one trustee. At the beginning of each recruitment process the Director briefs the selection panel on required practice during the process.

Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.

Training

All those staff and trustees, involved in any part of the recruitment process should be trained appropriately for their role and the need for further training is reviewed annually. The Director is fully trained on all aspects of the recruitment process including the implementation of equal opportunities.

Job description and person specification

Job descriptions and person specifications will be reflect accurately the skills and qualifications required for the work to be undertaken.

Criminal Records Bureau disclosures

All posts are subject to Criminal Records Bureau disclosure and the 1974 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. A criminal record does not necessarily prevent an applicant from being appointed to a post with Dulwich Helpline. The decision depends on the nature of the post and the circumstances and nature of the applicant's offences.

Application forms

All recruitment is done using standard application forms.

References

Written references are obtained before a final offer of employment is made.

Induction and probationary period

All staff are subject to a three month probationary period and have an individual induction programme.

Staff Support and Training

Dulwich Helpline recognises that our most valuable asset in achieving our aims and objectives is our staff and we are committed to their development and support. The Director reports to the trustees on staff support and training matters.

Support

Dulwich Helpline has a small staff team who offer each other informal peer support. Staff are supported formally through individual supervision sessions and annual appraisal with their line manager. Weekly team meetings are also held to co-ordinate work. Supervisions enable managers to monitor standards and identify training needs.

Training

Staff are encouraged to attend appropriate training to support their roles and their ongoing development. The Director agrees training needs and plans with staff individually at supervision sessions and collectively at team meetings. All proposed training courses must be approved by the Director.

Volunteer Recruitment and Support

Volunteers are at the core of Dulwich Helpline's work providing face to face services for local isolated older people. Without sufficient committed volunteers Dulwich Helpline would not exist. Dulwich Helpline is committed to a continuous programme of volunteer recruitment and the provision of on-going support. Dulwich Helpline makes every effort to meet the needs of its volunteers alongside those of its service users.

Publicity and information

Dulwich Helpline uses a wide variety of media to display and distribute information about volunteering opportunities with the aim of reaching all sections of the community. This includes posters and handbills in local shops, libraries, leisure centres and places of worship; advertisements and articles in local publications; talks to local groups and information on local and national websites, together with a presence at local fairs, community events, supermarkets and local shopping centres.

Recruitment and selection of volunteers

All potential volunteers are expected to attend a welcome session, complete a short application form, providing basic personal details, and complete an equal opportunities monitoring form. Two character references are taken up and all volunteers must complete a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau check, administered and paid for by Dulwich Helpline.

Code of Conduct

All volunteers are required to comply with Dulwich Helpline's Code of Conduct and to follow policies and procedures, which include confidentiality, equal opportunities and health and safety. Breach of the Code of Conduct may lead to dismissal.

Safety and security

All volunteers are required to comply with Dulwich Helpline's health and safety policies and procedures. Dulwich Helpline staff will undertake risk assessments of all activities before volunteers are asked to carry them out. Dulwich Helpline's insurance covers volunteers against injury, loss or third party claims whilst involved in Dulwich Helpline activities. Volunteers are given identity cards and asked to carry them whenever engaged on Dulwich Helpline activities.

Expenses

All volunteers may claim travel and other expenses incurred in the course of their volunteering. Meal expenses, up to a max. of £3.50, to anyone volunteering three (or more) hours consecutively in any one day.

Induction and training

All volunteers are given an explanation of their role by a Co-ordinator and are offered relevant training free of charge.

Support

Volunteers are encouraged to contact the volunteer or Project Coordinators with any concerns and will be in regular contact with the office generally. Volunteers receive a regular newsletter and are invited to informal meetings – 'Volunteer Get Togethers' - to share experiences in a social setting and with talks on subjects relevant to their volunteering.

Students and Young People

Subject to proper supervision Dulwich Helpline encourages the involvement of young people as volunteers in support of its work, in ways appropriate to their age and experience.

For insurance purposes and in keeping with legislation regarding child protection, we are not able to accept individual offers of help from, and to supervise, young people under the age of sixteen. However, we do welcome offers of volunteers under sixteen from schools as part of a structured programme. Students should be fourteen years minimum and supervised by staff of the school.

All Dulwich Helpline staff who work with young volunteers are checked by the Criminal Records Bureau.

Consultation and feedback

Volunteers are encouraged to feedback comments, criticisms and suggestions about Dulwich Helpline's work. Annual feedback forms are sent out but volunteers are also encouraged to report back informally to Dulwich Helpline staff and trustees. The volunteer Coordinator regularly seeks volunteers' suggestions for training and informal gatherings for volunteers to discuss ways of developing their work are organised.

Whistleblowing

Dulwich Helpline works with vulnerable people and is in receipt of public money. It is essential that we work in a way that encourages accountability, honesty and transparency. Staff members and volunteers are made aware of their responsibility to report malpractice, neglect or abuse and that there are procedures to enable them to do this without fear of being treated less favourably as a result.

The following list, though not exhaustive, includes the kinds of activities Dulwich Helpline expects staff and volunteers to report

- Criminal offences
- Failure to comply with legal obligations
- Miscarriage of justice
- Actions which endanger the health and safety of service users or staff
- Actions which cause damage to the environment
- Significant breaches of our policies and procedures
- Actions which are intended to conceal or profit from any of the above

Dulwich Helpline prefers staff and volunteers to report incidents even when they are unsure whether or not they have witnessed misconduct. The charity Public Concern at Work (www.pcaaw.co.uk) offers advice on what should be reported.

If a report is made in good faith and is found to be untrue the person making the report will not be subject to reprisals and their concern for Dulwich Helpline and our service users will be very much appreciated.

If a report is found to be untrue and it is discovered through the investigation that it was reported falsely with malicious intent, the person making the report will be subject to the disciplinary procedure.