

The Institute of Trichologists’  
Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable  
Adults Policy

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## Introduction

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility. This statement sets out what safeguarding means for the IOT, what our role and responsibilities are (and are not), and why safeguarding is important to us. This statement reflects the legislative position on safeguarding adults at risk and vulnerable children and will help our registrants to better understand the how, what, when and with whom to help keep safe the children and adults who use the services we regulate.

## Fundamental standards

In April 2015, fundamental standards of safety and quality were introduced which all providers of regulated health and social care activities must meet. One of the standards relates to safeguarding.

The fundamental standard on safeguarding states that children and adults must be protected from abuse and improper treatment. Providers should establish and operate systems and processes effectively to ensure this protection and to investigate allegations of abuse as soon as they become aware of them. In addition, the standard states that care or treatment must not:

- i. discriminate on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation)
- ii. include acts intended to control or restrain an adult or child that are not necessary to prevent, or not a proportionate response to, a risk of harm to them or another person if the adult or child was not subject to control or restraint
- iii. be degrading to the adult or child
- iv. significantly disregard the needs of the adult or child for care or treatment.

## Definitions

Safeguarding is the right of every child and vulnerable individual to be protected from any form of abuse. Abuse occurs when the child's or vulnerable adult's rights are not respected. Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that deliberately or unknowingly causes them harm, endangers life or violates their rights. It includes not only physical, emotional and psychological ill treatment but also neglect (including self neglect), financial or sexual abuse, and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. It concerns the misuse of power, control and /or authority and can be perpetrated by an individual, a group or an organisation.

## Safeguarding children and young people and promoting their welfare means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing wherever possible impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care,
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is defined as being part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It is the work done to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

## Safeguarding (vulnerable) adults means:

- Protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
- People and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect.
- People and organisations making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

- Recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or wellbeing.

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. An adult is anyone aged 18 or above. A vulnerable adult is someone of 18 years or over and 'who is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself'. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides a statutory framework to empower and protect vulnerable people who are not able to make their own decisions. It makes it clear who can take decisions, in which situations, and how they should go about this.

## Responding to people who may have experienced or are experiencing abuse

The IOT considers it important to act on reports, or suspicions of abuse or neglect. It also acknowledges that taking action in cases of abuse is never easy.

### How to respond if you suspect abuse:

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

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

- To ensure the safety of the individual
- To call an ambulance if required
- To call the police if a crime has been committed
- To keep yourself, your colleagues and other patients safe

When working with children and vulnerable adults, all registrants are acting in a position of trust. It is important to act in an appropriate manner at all times.

- listen and respect them at all times
- ensure any contact is appropriate
- always ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory
- always ensure equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
- ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present/close by during appointments
- respect their right to personal privacy
- encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues.

When working with children and vulnerable adults, it is important not to:

- patronise or treat them as if they are silly
- allow allegations of abuse to go unreported
- develop inappropriate relationships or conduct a sexual relationship or indulge in any form of sexual contact. Any such behaviour represents a serious breach of trust and is not acceptable under any circumstances.
- share personal contact details (mobile number or address)
- “friend” or “follow” from personal social media accounts.
- communicate via personal accounts or private messages
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- make inappropriate promises, particularly in relation to confidentiality
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- either exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues

## Recording and managing confidential information

The IOT is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information around safeguarding children and vulnerable adults should be shared only with those who need to know in order to assist the individuals. The information that is recorded will comply with data protection requirements, for example it will be kept secure and access to this information will be restricted to the appropriate authorities, carers/guardians or health care officials.