

Safeguarding Policy
Version 2.0
Revision November 2024



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Adults

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SAFEGUARDING LEAD: BANDNA REKHI, CLINICAL DIRECTOR
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As Clinical Director, Bandna has oversight of all our clinical activities and takes responsibility for providing advice and support on all aspects of safeguarding, monitoring practice and ensuring that it remains a priority.

If Bandna is not available, Karen Quatermass, Director (07966 192228) will act as deputy.

1. Introduction and aims

Questa Psychological Services Ltd is a practice providing assessments, psychological therapy and support to children, adults and families. We are, as a practice, committed to the welfare and safeguarding of everyone across all of the activities we undertake.

2. Purpose/Intent

It is important for all our staff to recognise that our principal aim is to provide clients (patients) and their families with a safe and secure environment so that they are cared for by staff that are both trained and committed to protect them from all forms of potential abuse.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and associates without exception

We aim to create a culture of communication, trust and openness so that adults who come under our care have the opportunity to speak up and be supported at the earliest opportunity; to support the emotional and psychological wellbeing of any adult or young person who may be being abused or exploited. A climate of 'openness, honesty and awareness' will be encouraged among staff through regular supervision meetings and an open door policy for people to raise concerns with the Directors.

3. Context

There is a great deal of legislation aimed at keeping adults safe that we refer to, we have a responsibility to keep up to date with this. Some of the legislation we refer to includes:

- The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) (2005)
- The safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

- The Mental Health Act (1983, 2007)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Care Act 2014
- Local Government Documents, Making Safeguarding Personal (2014)
- NHS (National Health Service) England Safeguarding Policy 2015
- GMC (General Medical Council) on confidentiality 2009
- NHS England PREVENT Training and Competencies Framework 2015

Making safeguarding personal (MSP) aims to ensure that the adult at risk is fully engaged and consulted throughout and that their wishes and views are central to the final outcomes as far as is possible.

The MSP principles we promote in this policy are :

- Empowerment (presumption of person led decisions and informed consent)
- Prevention
- Proportionality (least intrusive and proportional risk appropriate response)
- Protection (support and representation/advocacy for those in greatest need)

4. Dissemination/Access

The policy is shared with all our staff and on our website for public viewing.

Questa's safeguarding lead provides regular weekly supervision and 'drop-ins' for our clinicians so that they can discuss any concerns they may have about a person's behaviour or responses.

5. Recognising signs and symptoms of abuse; responsibilities of staff

As persons in a position of trust (PiPOT) staff have a duty to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of vulnerable adults and are responsible for reporting any concerns promptly.

Questa's Lead is responsible for ensuring that members of staff receive training on safeguarding and ensuring that staff recognise when a person may be at risk so that they know what to do if they suspect there is an issue.

Staff are responsible for ensuring that they keep up with knowledge and best practice. This is also a requirement of clinicians governing/registering bodies.

Psychologists and other clinical staff are acutely aware from their training and ongoing CPD of the range of factors which may increase an adult's vulnerability to abuse such as age, physical and learning disabilities and perceived 'differences' in race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Staff are responsible for keeping accurate and detailed records of any concerns or reported abuse and of all action taken.

6. What to do if you suspect abuse

Identify and respond promptly to any allegation - report and discuss with lead, don't assume someone else must be aware.

Listen carefully to the person making the report, gather information respectfully and empathically and record name, address, date, time and a record of the what was reported. Reassure and advise that this information will need to be shared and action will be taken.

Discuss with lead to assess risk. A comprehensive risk assessment should be carried out to determine immediate and ongoing risk to the victim, as well as any other vulnerable adults and effects on the wider contextual system.

Immediate action should be taken if there is reasonable suspicion that the vulnerable adult has been or will be abused. Bear in mind that abuse may take many forms and ensure that you are aware of these. The interests of the person are paramount so sharing information may be necessary to safeguard them. This may mean breaking confidentiality and contacting the police or local agencies but information should be shared on a need to know basis and in compliance with data protection and GDPR rules.

Record the incident verbatim as accurately as possible (with date and time) and describe all actions taken.

Ensure that the vulnerable adult receives appropriate support and multi-disciplinary care as needed throughout the process.

Identify possible support systems (eg family, friends, GP, A&E, victim support helplines) Encourage and validate seeking help. Our policy aligns with the Mental Capacity Act - staff are trained to recognise any capacity issues due to mental impairment but the assumption is that the person has capacity unless proven otherwise.

We respect the autonomy and choices of the individual for any safeguarding plan.

A post-incident review will be carried out as standard practice with any learning or shortfalls identified and disseminated.

7. If a staff member is suspected of abuse

A staff member who is reported for suspected abuse will be dealt with according to the company's disciplinary procedure which, subject to risk assessment, will mean the individual being immediately suspended, without prejudice to that individual, pending investigation. Legal guidance may be sought prior to this decision being taken.

Staff and Directors will work closely with other relevant organisations where and whenever required, including the Police and Local Safeguarding Boards, and will always cooperate in any abuse investigations.

They will follow any protection plan agreed through multi-agency procedures in order to reduce the risk of further abuse after an actual or suspected case of abuse.

Questa adheres to safe recruitment guidelines to minimise the risk of someone working with vulnerable adults who might pose a risk to them.

All Questa staff have enhanced DBS checks.

8. Confidentiality

Questa undertakes to maintain confidentiality and protect data as far as it is able, to share information on a need to know basis and in accordance with legal guidelines. We undertake to do our utmost to care for all parties, recognising that, ultimately, the perspective, needs and long term future of the person must take precedence.

Version control:

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Authors: Bandna Rekhi, Dr Karen Quatermass.

Next review January 2025