

Manresa Link Safeguarding Guidance 2019

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Safeguarding refers to the actions taken to promote the welfare of children and adults in vulnerable circumstances and to protect them from harm.

Definitions

A child is a person under the age of 18 years. We all have a responsibility to protect children and a duty to report the fact that we know or believe that a child is being abused or is at risk of being abused.

An adult in vulnerable circumstances [previously referred to as a vulnerable adult] is a person over the age of 18 years who has care and support needs and who is [or who may be] unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. Unlike children, anyone over the age of 18 who has mental capacity should consent to action being taken.

Abuse can take many forms, including physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, neglect and bullying. It may be current, recent or something which happened in the past that the affected person decides to speak about now. The inappropriate use of power is almost always a key element.

Safeguarding and Manresa Link

One of the main functions of Manresa Link is to make it possible for adults to undertake retreats in daily life. It also provides training courses and events, and quiet days for members.

However, Manresa Link does not provide services to children or, explicitly, to adults in vulnerable circumstances. It is not, therefore, necessary to have formal safeguarding policies or procedures in place but it is important for everyone involved to be aware of safeguarding guidance.

Basic Guidance

When planning Retreats or any other activities, members are advised to seek in advance, information about any special needs that potential retreatants/participants may have.

At the commencement of Retreats, or any other activity, reference should be made that whilst confidentiality is the norm/aim, disclosure of Safeguarding concerns cannot necessarily be ignored.

During retreats or other activities, members need to know that it is not appropriate for them to undertake any other role, such as babysitting, house cleaning or running errands.

If safeguarding concerns come to light which indicate that a child or an adult in vulnerable circumstances is at risk, immediate action should be taken. Initial advice can be sought from our safeguarding advisor (Jane Jones – contact details below), **but only if the activity being undertaken is under the auspices of Manresa Link**. Otherwise, advice can be sought from the police.

Personal Safety

When operating alone, sometimes prayer guides meet retreatants in either their own home or that of the retreatant. However, this should only happen after a first meeting in a public place (e.g. a coffee house, church etc). When meetings subsequently take place in private homes, the prayer guide should always make sure that someone else knows when and where those meetings are due, and at the end of the meeting, the prayer guide should call that other person by a pre-arranged deadline, to let them know they are safe.

Additional Guidance

1. Abuse is very common in our society; there are considerable numbers of adults who have suffered some form of abuse as children and for whom this issue has had an ongoing impact. Sometimes they do not share information about what happened to them until the later stages of their life. Such people may want to be listened to and allowed to say whatever they need to. Concerns about safeguarding should not inhibit openness. Whilst in certain circumstances it may be necessary to point out that action should be taken, in the case of elderly people who were abused as children it is highly unlikely that there is any current risk to others.
2. The abuse may be more recent; it is quite common, for example, for the death of a parent to enable people to speak out. In such situations there is the possibility of the alleged perpetrator continuing to cause harm. This means that the person speaking out may need help and encouragement to report what happened.
3. Adults may also speak out about something which is happening now and which could mean that there is a current risk. In these circumstances they should be encouraged very strongly to report the situation to the appropriate authorities. Anyone hearing this type of information should seek advice immediately.
4. Prayer guides are made aware in the Basic Training Course of how issues of abuse may present themselves and what action they should take. This training will be updated regularly and may be included in other ongoing training courses.
5. Listening to the stories of others may remind prayer guides of their own difficult material, perhaps of an experience themselves of abuse or neglect. If that should arise, the guide can raise it in supervision, and the supervisor can explore with them how they wish to deal with that.

N.B. This document will be distributed to everyone who is involved in the work of Manresa Link.

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