



Supportmatch  
Homeshare Service

[www.supportmatch.co.uk](http://www.supportmatch.co.uk)

# Supportmatch CIC

## Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults Policy

**Policy Title:** Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults

**Issued:** October 2020

**Revised:** October 2023

**Reviewed:** October 2024

**Next Review Due:** October 2025

### 1. Policy Statement

Supportmatch is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing and dignity of all vulnerable adults involved in our Homeshare service. We recognise our legal responsibilities under the Care Act 2014, which provides the statutory framework for safeguarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect. The welfare of the vulnerable adult is paramount. Every adult, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or culture, has the right to live free from abuse, harm, and exploitation. All concerns, suspicions, or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to promptly and appropriately. All staff, volunteers, and associates of Supportmatch Homeshare share a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns.

### 2. Policy Aims

The purpose of this policy is to promote good practice and support informed, confident responses to safeguarding issues. It ensures all staff, volunteers, and Homesharers understand how to identify signs of abuse and know the appropriate reporting procedures. This policy also establishes clear professional boundaries, prohibiting any personal, emotional, or romantic relationships between staff, volunteers, Homesharers, and vulnerable adults. Supportmatch is committed to upholding the six principles of adult safeguarding: Empowerment, Prevention, Proportionality, Protection, Partnership, and Accountability.

### 3. Definition of a Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult, also referred to in legislation as an “adult at risk”, is a person aged 18 or over who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not these needs are being met),
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- As a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves from the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Examples include older adults, individuals with physical or learning disabilities, sensory impairments, long-term conditions, or mental health needs.



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#### 4. What Is Abuse?

Abuse is a violation of a person's rights and dignity by another individual or individuals. It may be a single or repeated act. It can be deliberate or the result of neglect or ignorance. Abuse can occur in personal, social, or institutional settings.

Types of abuse include:

- Physical abuse (hitting, slapping, over-medication, physical restraint)
- Sexual abuse (unwanted sexual contact, coercion, assault)
- Psychological abuse (intimidation, threats, isolation, verbal abuse, humiliation)
- Financial abuse (theft, fraud, coercion about wills or property)
- Neglect (failing to meet basic needs such as food, warmth, or personal care)
- Discriminatory abuse (harassment based on race, gender, age, disability, religion, or sexuality)
- Institutional abuse (poor care practices, rigid routines, lack of personalisation)
- Self-neglect (where a person's own behaviour puts their wellbeing at risk)
- Domestic abuse (including coercive control, economic abuse, and threats)
- Modern slavery (including forced labour, servitude, and human trafficking)

#### 5. Where Can Abuse Happen?

Abuse can occur anywhere, including the individual's own home, another person's home, residential or nursing care settings, day centres, hospitals, GP surgeries, workplaces, or public spaces.

#### 6. Who Might Abuse?

Abusers may include family members, friends, neighbours, paid or volunteer carers, health or social care professionals, other service users, or strangers and opportunists.

#### 7. Prohibited Personal and Emotional Relationships

To maintain professional boundaries and protect vulnerable adults, staff, volunteers, and Homesharers must not form or pursue personal, emotional, or romantic relationships with vulnerable adults they support or are matched with. They must not exploit trust, dependency, or power imbalance for personal gain or attachment. Any such behaviour will be treated as a serious safeguarding breach and may lead to dismissal, removal from the programme, or referral to the police or relevant authorities.



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## 8. Responding to Concerns

If you suspect abuse or receive a disclosure, you must:

1. Ensure the immediate safety of the individual, if there is a risk of harm.
2. Remain calm and listen carefully, without leading questions or expressing shock.
3. Do not investigate. Report the concern to your line manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
4. Complete a Safeguarding Concern Form accurately and promptly.
5. The Safeguarding Lead will assess the situation and make a referral to the local authority safeguarding team and the police if necessary. If there is doubt about the individual's mental capacity, the Safeguarding Lead will follow the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

## 9. What Not to Do

- Do not confront the alleged abuser.
- Do not promise to keep concerns confidential – explain that the information must be shared appropriately.
- Do not dismiss or ignore the concern.
- Do not delay reporting the concern.

## 10. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

All safeguarding information will be treated confidentially and shared only on a need-to-know basis, in accordance with GDPR and the Caldicott Principles. Safeguarding records will be securely stored and must include:

- The adult's name, date of birth, and contact details
- Details of the concern or disclosure
- Observations, injuries, or behavioural changes noted
- The individual's account, where applicable
- Actions taken and outcomes
- Names of any persons involved or witnesses

## 11. Investigation and Follow-Up

Where abuse is reported, Supportmatch may be involved in a multi-agency response, which could include:

- A police-led criminal investigation
- A safeguarding enquiry led by the local authority
- An internal disciplinary investigation

Depending on the outcome, actions may include staff dismissal, service withdrawal, or a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).



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## 12. Training and Responsibilities

All Supportmatch staff, volunteers, and Homesharers must complete safeguarding training during induction and receive regular updates according to their level of involvement. Everyone has a duty to report concerns without fear of reprisal. Whistleblowing protection applies to anyone raising safeguarding issues in good faith.

## 13. Contact: Support&Match CIC

Email: [info@supportmatch.co.uk](mailto:info@supportmatch.co.uk)

Phone: 0203 633 6066

Website: [www.supportmatch.co.uk](http://www.supportmatch.co.uk)

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