



**Kent Fire &
Rescue Service**

Service Delivery Service Orders

Safeguarding Vulnerable People
Service Order

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Introduction

Staff working for the Authority spend a lot of time in people's homes either operationally or when giving safety information, such as during a Home Safety Visit. During this work staff may come across people whose lifestyle and general well-being might cause concern.

Under good practice guidance all employees have a responsibility to help safeguard the most vulnerable members of the community. A Vulnerable Adult is defined as:

A person aged 18 years or over who is in receipt of, or may be in need of, community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself from significant harm or exploitation (Department of Health 2000).

So that all agencies involved in safeguarding approach the issue in a similar way, the Authority is a signatory to the Kent and Medway multi-agency Adult Protection policy, protocols and guidance document.

Abuse can take many forms and may include physical, sexual, financial, psychological or discriminatory abuse or neglect. People may be considered vulnerable for a number of reasons, including:

- Ill health
- Addiction problems
- Disabilities
- Housing conditions
- Mental health problems
- Age related (e.g. elderly person who is unable to cope)
- Domestic abuse

Scope

This policy is applicable to all Members as in the course of their duties they may come into contact with vulnerable adults, and may be requested to access assistance on their behalf. It is also applicable to all staff when delivering services to the public.

This policy covers vulnerable adults but it does not cover child protection. This is covered by the Safeguarding Children policy.

Policy

- 1 The Authority recognises that all staff have a role to play in safeguarding when they come into contact with potentially at-risk adults. The Authority recognises that it is every adult's right to live in a safe environment free from harm.
- 2 The Authority will support and train staff to recognise the signs of potential vulnerability, and work with other agencies to promote the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

Regulations

Training

- 3 Staff within the organisation who come into regular contact with vulnerable adults will receive identified training to assist in undertaking their role and this will be refreshed regularly.
- 4 Vulnerable People Team members will attend a variety of different multi-agency training sessions to maintain an enhanced ability to work with vulnerable people. This will include: domestic violence, mental health and substance misuse awareness sessions.

Roles and responsibilities

All staff

- 5 Any member of staff may become aware of a potentially vulnerable adult in a number of ways including attending operational incidents, community safety activities or by a referral from another agency or member of the community.
- 6 When considering referring a potentially vulnerable adult to another agency, if possible the individual's permission for referral should be sought. However, it should be remembered that where doubts exist over the capacity of the person to understand the potential consequences fully, it is not necessary to receive their permission to refer.
- 7 Staff may need to raise a concern about someone who does not present a fire safety risk, but who appears to be unable to care for or protect themselves, or others dependent on them. This assessment will be made by Social Services or other appropriate agencies as identified by their needs. (Our concerns may assist this process).
- 8 What to do if concerned - Any member of staff with concerns about a Vulnerable Adult must follow the process set out in the paragraphs below:

- 9 If there are concerns for the wellbeing of a person and it is felt that the individual poses an imminent serious risk to themselves or others, immediate Police attendance shall be requested as a matter of urgency.
- 10 If there is no need for immediate action then, as soon as practicable, staff must send an email to vulnerable.people@kent.fire-uk.org. The email must include details of the concern, any contact information for the individual and any relevant additional information. Staff must ensure that all referrer contact details are included. The referrer will receive an immediate email response confirming receipt. If you do not receive this the email should be re-sent, checking all details are correct.
- 11 If completing a Home Safety Visit and a vulnerable person is identified, staff must select the “high risk referral” field on the electronic Home Safety Visit form. This will automatically generate a referral to the Vulnerable People Team who will arrange appropriate action.
- 12 If a referral comes from an external source (family member, public) the above process will be followed. In addition, the contact details of the referrer should be included in the initial email.
- 13 Vulnerable people can often form attachments to people who are helping them. Staff should be aware of this and ensure that professional boundaries are maintained at all times.

Vulnerable People Team

- 14 The Vulnerable People Team administration officer will confirm receipt of the email as soon as practicable, usually within 24 hours. A safeguarding adult champion will assess the referral and decide on the course of action to take. This may include:
 - Agency enquiries
 - Home visit by a member of the Vulnerable People Team
 - Referral to Social Services
- 15 On completion of the action, the Vulnerable People Team will provide feedback on the outcome to the referrer.

Guidance

- 16 Further guidance is available as part of the Adult Protection procedure. Guidance on available support packages is also available at Appendix A.

Introduced by	Director, Service Delivery
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Review by	5 July 2015

Appendix A: Support Package Guidance - Vulnerable Adults

Each case will need to be assessed individually, but there are a number of support packages and a suite of options below which may be utilised to help reduce the risk from fire:

Specialist Home Safety Visits

Community Safety Officers from the Vulnerable People Team will undertake tailored home safety visits to identify risk and suggest measures to reduce the risk to the individual. The visit will include advice on the following areas:

- appropriate smoke alarm selection fitting, testing and maintenance,
- night-time routines,
- escape plans,
- fire loading / hoarding,
- safe use of portable heating appliances,
- cooking safety and safer smoking.

Advice is also available to help with some of the following issues that can increase risk: hearing impairment, restricted mobility, mental health problems, addictions, firesetting/fireplay, threats of arson attack.

Community Safety Staff Attendance at Multi-Agency Meetings

Community Safety staff may be part of a multi-agency group who meet on a regular basis to review the risks to the individual and assist in deciding appropriate action plans to aid the individuals and include: multi-agency public protection arrangements; multi-agency risk assessment conferences; or joint meetings of health professionals and partners to decide on plans for vulnerable people.

Assistance in Funding and/or Installing Home Fire Safety Improvements

The Community Safety department can suggest and signpost customers to a number of available options which may help to reduce risk from fire. Where justification can be demonstrated, limited funding is available to assist in providing some items,

The list below is indicative of the resources available and should not be considered exhaustive:

1. **Automated Alerting** - There are a number of available services which provide remote monitoring of smoke alarms and other safety devices aimed at assisting with independent living and reducing risk to those with mobility problems.
2. **Flame resistant bedding packs** - Where there remains a risk from fire through smoking, flame-resistant bedding can be substituted to reduce the risk of accidental ignition.
3. **Cooker Isolation switches/stickers** - For people suffering from memory impairment timed cooker switches can be fitted to reduce the risk of cooking-related fires. If the switch is not activated manually the cooker will switch off after the elapsed time. Stickers are available to place on items to remind people to turn off appliances.
4. **Smoke alarms for the hearing impaired** - For those with a hearing problem, specialist equipment can be provided which includes strobe light warning devices and vibrating pillow pads.
5. **Fireproof letter boxes** - Where there is a threat of arson, letter boxes can be a vulnerability. To overcome this, the sealing of letter boxes can be considered and an external mail box supplied.
6. **Firesetter referral** - Where a visit identifies firesetting/fireplay behaviour then a referral will be made to the Authority's firesetter intervention scheme. The scheme uses specialist advisors to educate people in the dangers of fireplay.
7. **Publicity and communications resources** - There is a wide range of resources available which includes multi-language leaflets, safety leaflets covering specific topics i.e. cooking safety, electrical safety, safety advice in braille, audio- safety advice for the visually impaired and a DVD with signed safety advice for the hearing impaired.
8. **Domestic Sprinklers** - In cases of severe risk of fire and where the home owner agrees, a domestic sprinkler system may be considered.