

**BLOOMFIELD CARE CENTRE
STOCKING LANE, RATHFARNHAM, D.16**

POLICY STATEMENT: it is the policy of Bloomfield Care Centre to take every care to ensure that its patients/residents are protected from abuse, e.g. institutional abuse, substandard care, neglect or abuse of a physical, emotional, sexual or financial nature

Purpose: To provide guidelines to all personnel in relation to dealing with allegations of abuse.

Primary Responsibility: All Staff

PROCEDURE

1. Any staff member who receives a report of alleged abuse, or who suspects or is concerned that abuse may be taking place or that a patient/resident is at risk, has a duty to report this to their supervisor who will immediately inform the CEO, or where this is not practicable, another member of the management team. If the staff member feels unable to report the matter to their supervisor due to the nature of the allegation, they may report the allegation directly to a member of the management team.
Where possible, details should be given in writing, and should include details of the alleged abuse or concern, including dates, times and any witnesses.
2. The CEO will ensure that a preliminary enquiry is carried out promptly, to establish whether the concerns are such as to require further action. This preliminary enquiry will normally be assigned to and carried out by the Director of Nursing, Medical Superintendent, or where appropriate, the Financial Controller.
3. The person carrying out the preliminary enquiry will ensure that a written record is kept in relation to this preliminary enquiry.

4. The person carrying out the preliminary enquiry will ensure that consultation takes place with the personnel responsible for the care of the alleged victim of abuse, in order to agree the steps to be taken to ensure the safety and emotional well-being of those involved.
5. The person carrying out the preliminary enquiry will ensure that:
 - a) the patient/resident has prompt access to medical and psychological attention as required
 - b) family are informed unless the patient/resident requests otherwise
6. Where an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member, the CEO will make arrangements with the staff member's supervisor to:
 - a) Notify the staff member against whom the allegation has been made of the nature of the allegation and that a preliminary enquiry will be undertaken
 - b) Advise the staff member, in advance of any meeting held as part of the screening enquiry, of their right to be represented or accompanied at all stages of the process
7. The person carrying out the preliminary enquiry will report their findings to the CEO. Where the CEO is satisfied from this report that abuse did not occur and that no further investigation is warranted, this will be noted and the relevant parties informed.
8. Where the CEO is satisfied from the preliminary enquiry report that abuse could have occurred, the following steps will take place:
 - a) The CEO will assign an investigation team to carry out a full investigation, in conjunction with relevant personnel.
 - b) The investigation team will ensure that all information gathered during the preliminary enquiry is reviewed as part of the investigation.
 - c) The investigation team will ensure that there is a written record of meetings held in respect of the investigation and the actions agreed.
 - d) The investigation team will ensure that the alleged victim's family are informed, unless the patient requests otherwise.
 - e) The investigation team will ensure that the alleged victim has access to medical and psychological attention, and that they are informed of their legal rights and the process of investigation.
 - f) The investigation team will ensure that the Garda Síochána are informed where appropriate.
 - g) The CEO will ensure that Bloomfield's Board of Directors will be kept informed of progress in respect of the investigation and of the outcome.
 - h) The investigation team will ensure that the outcome of the investigation is communicated to the alleged victim, family, clinical governance committee and others involved in the investigation as appropriate.
 - i) All proceedings of the investigation will be kept confidential insofar as is practicable.

9. Where the full investigation relates to an allegation against a staff member, the steps outlined in paragraph 8 above will be followed. The CEO will make arrangements with the staff member's supervisor for the following additional steps to be followed:
- a) A meeting will be arranged to advise the staff member of the intention to carry out a formal investigation. The staff member will be advised of their right to be accompanied/represented at this meeting. The staff member will be given details of the complaint and given the opportunity to respond within a reasonable period of time.
 - b) Pending investigation of the allegation the staff member may be assigned to duties away from the alleged victim and other patients/residents and/or may be subject to an additional level of supervision. Alternatively, the staff member may be placed on leave with pay pending the outcome of the investigation. In these circumstances it will be explained to the staff member that this action is a precautionary rather than disciplinary measure.
 - c) If the CEO is satisfied from the conclusion of the investigation that the allegation is substantiated or there is a reasonable belief that misconduct took place, Bloomfield's Disciplinary Procedures will be invoked. If the staff member is a member of a registered professional body, this organisation will also be notified.
 - d) If the CEO is satisfied from the conclusion of the investigation that the allegation is not substantiated, this will be made known to the persons involved and to the employee.