

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Introduction

This safeguarding policy is to provide an understanding of safeguarding and to establish internal procedures which demonstrate the Charity's values and commitment in this particular area. It provides guidance for trustees, employees and volunteers about what to do in specific circumstances.

Within the area of safeguarding adults, it is vital that all employees including volunteers, know what to do if they are concerned about a person at risk. It is equally important that others are aware that the Charity takes the safety and welfare of people at risk into consideration in every activity that is undertaken.

The Charity accepts that having a policy and procedures are not enough in themselves to cover the wider remit of caring for adults at risk which is primarily about prevention; the Charity will also develop suitable training and provide advice to trustees, employees and volunteers where necessary.

In this policy the following definitions apply:

An Adult at Risk - An adult at risk is a person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may be because their circumstances e.g. chronic illness, disability, age, mental health issues or their lifestyle causes them to be at risk in some situations.

What is abuse? - Abuse is mistreatment by any other person or persons that violates a person's human and civil rights. Abuse can happen anywhere – in a person's own home, in a residential or nursing home, in a supported living setting, a hospital or GP surgery, a prison, day centre or educational setting, library, sports centre, within the workplace, or within the community. Examples of abuse could include (not an exhaustive list):

- physical abuse: including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking or injuring someone and misuse of medication;
- sexual abuse: including rape, sexual assault or pressuring someone into sexual acts they haven't consented to, don't understand or feel powerless to refuse;
- emotional abuse: including threats of harm or abandonment, isolation, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, or withdrawal from services or supportive networks;
- financial or material abuse: including theft, fraud, and misuse of property, possessions, benefits, and deliberate / premeditated mismanagement of finances by people in positions of trust;
- neglect and acts of omission: including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, withholding medication, nutrition and heating;

- discriminatory abuse: including abuse that is racist, sexist, or based on disability or age, or other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; or
- institutional abuse: sometimes this happens in places such as residential homes, nursing homes, hospitals or prisons where people are mistreated because of poor or inadequate care / support, neglect and poor working practice that affect the whole of that service.

Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy

The Charity is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all adults, recognising its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect adults at risk from harm, abuse and exploitation. The Charity acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse/harm.

Trustees, employees, volunteers and the Charity's members will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults. In implementing this policy, the Charity will:

- ensure that all trustees, employees, volunteers and members understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect adults at risk from harm, abuse and exploitation;
- ensure that all trustees, employees, volunteers and members understand their responsibility to work at all times towards maintaining high standards of practice;
- ensure that all trustees, employees, volunteers and members understand their duty to report concerns that arise about an adult at risk, or a trustee, employee, volunteer or member's conduct towards an adult at risk, to the **Charity's designated person for safeguarding issues which will be Vini Jones**;
- ensure that the designated person understands their responsibility to refer any safeguarding concerns to the statutory agencies (i.e. Police and / or Adult Safeguarding);
- ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of trustees, employees or volunteers are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner;
- provide opportunities for all trustees, employees or volunteers to develop their skills and knowledge, particularly in relation to the welfare and protection of adults at risk;
- ensure that adults at risk are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues and will have access to the Charity's Complaints Procedure; and
- endeavour to keep up-to-date with local and national developments relating to the welfare and safeguarding of adults.

Commitment

The Charity is fully committed to protect and promote individual human rights, the capacity for independence and improved wellbeing so that adults stay safe, are treated with dignity and respect, enjoy a sustained quality of life and are at all times protected from abuse, neglect, discrimination or poor treatment.

The central purpose of the Charity's policy and procedures is to ensure that people know how to recognise signs of abuse and neglect and, where they do occur, that there is an appropriate response to protect those affected from further harm.

Procedure for what to do if you suspect abuse

All trustees, employees, volunteers and members must take the following action where appropriate:

- ensure the person is safe;
- **listen carefully to what the person has to say, but do not ask questions other than to clarify what has been said;**
- inform the person disclosing abuse that you cannot keep this information confidential and must pass this information on to the Charity's named person for safeguarding issues;
- contact the emergency services if urgent medical help is required;
- contact the designated person immediately. **If you are unable to contact the designated person because you suspect they may be involved in the abuse or if they are unavailable, you should contact the Chairman;**
- the designated person or second person will decide whether to contact the Single Point of Referral (SPOR) for Adult Safeguarding (444440);
- the designated person or second person will decide whether to contact the Police if it is suspected that a crime has been committed (Tel: 612612 or 999);
- take care to preserve any evidence e.g. clothing, bedding, weapons, text messages, letters etc; and
- record the allegation or your suspicion of abuse as accurately as possible.

Do Not:

- question the victim as this may affect any police action;
- discuss the allegation / abuse with the person alleged to have caused harm;
- discuss the allegation / abuse with other staff members, other than the designated person or second person;
- take any other action without first discussing this with the designated person or second person;
- promise to maintain confidentiality; or
- delay reporting the incident / allegation.

Raising Concerns

All **trustees**, employees volunteers and members have a clear professional and moral duty to report any allegations or suspicions of abuse or potential abuse of an adult to the designated person or second person.

Any individual within the Charity who is involved directly or indirectly with adults at risk has the responsibility to be aware of the possibility of abuse. They have a responsibility to take appropriate action whenever there is concern that abuse may have taken place or may occur, unless someone does something to stop it. This is called 'alerting'. It is important that

any allegation of abuse is taken seriously, however insignificant it may seem on first appearance to the person receiving the information. There are four key questions to be kept in mind when deciding whether an alert becomes a referral:

- 1) Is the person 18 or older?
- 2) Is the person in need of or may be in need of community care services by virtue of frailty, mental disorder, disability or other condition or illness?
- 3) Do the circumstances indicate actual or potential risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation or significant harm?
- 4) Is the person unable or likely to be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or exploitation?

Who to Tell – Alert and Referral

When a suspected incident of adult abuse is reported, the designated person, or second person, must take it seriously and decide whether the allegation needs further investigation. If it appears that there are grounds to believe that adult abuse is or may be happening, the designated person or second person, must ensure that an alert is acted upon at the earliest possible opportunity and no later than at the end of the working day in question.

If the adult is in immediate danger or in need of urgent medical attention, action must be taken to ensure their immediate safety and well-being. This may include contacting the appropriate emergency services by calling 999. If there is reason to believe a crime has been committed, seek the adult's consent to inform the Police. If the adult gives permission, ensure the situation is discussed with the designated person or second person, and then contact the Police. If the adult does not give permission to involve the Police, this information should be passed on to the designated person, or second person as soon as possible, and clearly recorded as appropriate. If other service users are considered to be at similar risk, discussion with the Police may occur taking into account the service user's wishes.

If there is a belief the vulnerable person lacks the capacity to give consent and there is reason to believe a crime has been committed, action can be taken in their best interests. However, individuals must act in accordance with the vulnerable adult's wishes, wherever possible.

In cases where serial allegations of abuse are made, each allegation must be treated separately and in accordance with this policy and procedure, taking into account the adult's wellbeing.

Allegations against employees, including volunteers

Where an allegation concerns the actions of an employee or volunteer (who may also be a colleague), it is the clear duty of all those concerned to report the matter as set out above. When it comes to raising adult abuse concerns, no distinction should be made between employees and other persons. The adult at risk's wellbeing is paramount. If an allegation is made against an employee or volunteer, the designated person or second person, will need

to clarify with the investigating team what action they intend to take under the Disciplinary Policy.

It is important to ensure that the action taken:

- protects the rights and wishes of the adult at risk;
- protects the rights of the member of staff concerned;
- enables the designated person or second person, to take appropriate action either on behalf of the adult at risk or against the staff member where appropriate; and
- does not compromise any criminal investigation.

Anyone who has contact, with a person thought to be at risk has a responsibility to report actual or suspected abuse. This includes family members, volunteers, health workers, managers and employees. **Doing nothing is not an option.**



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