



PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Introduction

This document does not form part of your contract of employment or volunteer agreement and may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements, and to ensure that business needs are met.

You will be consulted and advised of any changes as far in advance as possible of the change being made, unless the change is required by statute.

The characteristics of adult abuse can take a number of forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s). Victims may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach with their worries.

There may be some situations where victims are unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this information to others.

Aim of Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all volunteers and staff members are clear about their responsibilities.

Responsibilities

All volunteers and members of staff have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions that they might have concerning adult abuse.

Definition

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

This **may** include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental illness including dementia
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability



- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Please see below **some** examples of the forms abuse can take:

- Physical abuse e.g. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, neglect or abandonment
- Sexual abuse e.g. involvement in any sexual activity against his/her will, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism
- Emotional/psychological abuse e.g. intimidation or humiliation
- Financial abuse e.g. theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money from pensions or savings etc.
- Neglect or acts of omission e.g. being left in wet or soiled clothing, or malnutrition
- Discriminatory abuse e.g. racial, sexual or religious harassment
- Personal exploitation – involves denying an individual his/her rights or forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will
- Violation of rights e.g. preventing an individual speaking his/her thoughts and opinions
- Institutional abuse e.g. failure to provide a choice of meals or failure to ensure privacy or dignity

Rights of Vulnerable Adults

The vulnerable adults have the right to:

- be made aware of this policy
- to have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
- to receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
- to be involved in any process as appropriate
- to receive information about the outcome.

Reporting Procedures

All those making a complaint, allegation, or expression of concern, whether volunteer, staff, service, users, carers or members of the public should be reassured that they:

- will be taken seriously



- their comments will usually be treated confidentially but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk

If service users, they will be given immediate protection from the risk of reprisals or intimidation

If members of staff or volunteers they will be given support and afforded protection.

If an allegation is made to a member of staff or volunteer or there is any suspicion of abuse then the member of staff or volunteer should inform their line manager as soon as possible. The line manager should make a written record of the allegation or suspicion of abuse and contact local Social Services. If a staff member or volunteer has been told about the allegation of abuse in confidence, they should attempt to gain the consent of the person to make a referral to another agency. However, the gaining of the consent is not essential in order for information to be passed on.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- The scale of the abuse
- The risk of harm to others
- The capacity of the victim to understand the issues of abuse and consent

If there is any doubt about whether or not to report an issue to Social Services then it should be reported.

In emergency situations (e.g. where there is the risk or occurrence of severe physical injury), where immediate action is needed to safeguard the health or safety of the individual or anyone else who may be at risk, the emergency services must be contacted.

Where a crime is taking place, has just occurred or is suspected, the police must be contacted immediately.

Recruitment and Training

The organisation will ensure that all volunteers and staff whose roles include working with vulnerable adults are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

Disclosure Checks



As part of the recruitment procedure, all newly appointed volunteers or staff that have contact with vulnerable adults will be disclosure checked at a level appropriate to their role.