



# WHIPPERSNAPPERS CIC SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS' POLICY

## 1 AIM

- 1.1 All adults have the right to be safe from harm and must be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- 1.2 Whippersnappers CIC is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use our services are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of such abuse.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of staff, volunteers and Directors working on behalf Whippersnappers CIC in relation to Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

## 2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The objectives of this policy are to explain the responsibilities Whippersnappers CIC and its staff, volunteers and Directors have in respect of vulnerable adult protection.
- 2.2 To provide staff with an overview of vulnerable adult protection.
- 2.3 To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where vulnerable adult protection issues arise.

## 3 CONTEXTS

- 3.1 For the purpose of this policy 'adult' means a person aged 18 years or over.
- 3.2 **What do we mean by vulnerable adults?**
  - 3.2.1 Vulnerable adults are over 18 years of age and are getting or may need help and services to live in the community. Vulnerable adults may be unable to take care of themselves and unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by other people.
  - 3.2.2 This could include people with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people and people with a physical disability or impairment. It is important to include people whose condition and subsequent vulnerability fluctuates. It may include an individual who may be vulnerable as a consequence of their role as a carer in relation to any of the above.
  - 3.2.3 It may also include victims of domestic abuse, hate crime and anti-social abuse behaviour. The persons' need for additional support to protect themselves may be increased when complicated by additional factors, such as, physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, drug or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, poverty or homelessness.



3.2.4 Many vulnerable adults may not realise that they are being abused. For instance, an elderly person, accepting that they are dependent on their family, may feel that they must tolerate losing control of their finances or their physical environment. They may be reluctant to assert themselves for fear of upsetting their carers or making the situation worse.

### 3.2 What do we mean by abuse?

3.2.1 Abuse can include physical, financial, material, sexual, psychological, discriminatory, emotional abuse and neglect. Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetuated by anyone.

### 3.3 TYPES OF ABUSE

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent.

Abuse can occur in any relationship, and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

'Significant harm' can be taken to include not only ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical), but also 'the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioral development'.

3.3.1 The following can be considered as the main types of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** - including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse** - including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** - including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** - including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** - including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational



services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

- **Discriminatory abuse** - including race, sex, culture, religion, politics, which is based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment, hate crime.
- **Institutional abuse** - Institutional abuse although not a separate category of abuse, requires specific mention simply to highlight that adults placed in any kind of care home or day care establishment are potentially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. This can be especially so when care standards and practices fall below an acceptable level as detailed in the contract specification.
- **Multiple forms of abuse** - Multiple forms of abuse may occur in an ongoing relationship or an abusive service setting to one person, or to more than one person at a time, making it important to look beyond single incidents or breaches in standards, to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence or ignorance.

#### 4. THE ROLE OF STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND DIRECTORS

4.1 All staff, volunteers and Directors working on behalf Whippersnappers CIC have a duty to identify abuse and report it in addition to promoting the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults.

4.2 Staff, volunteers and Directors may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy will enable staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific adult protection issues.

##### 4.2 Responsibilities of the Board of Directors are:

- To ensure volunteers are aware of vulnerable adult's need for protection.
- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected.
- To support and where possible secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability.
- To DBS check volunteers that have access to or work with Vulnerable Adults.

##### 4.3 Responsibilities of staff and volunteers are:

- To be familiar with the vulnerable adult protection policy.
- To take appropriate action in line with this policy.
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions.

## 5 Support for those who report abuse



5.1 All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they are staff, volunteers, Directors or members of the general public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously.
- Their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared with the appropriate authorities if they or others are at significant risk.

## **6 The Vulnerable Adult has 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.

## **6 PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF A DISCLOSURE**

6.1 Staff, volunteers and Directors may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults who are at risk. The following procedure will enable staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific adult protection issues.

6.2 It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

6.3 This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a vulnerable adult has been abused.

6.4 Promises of confidentiality must not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

6.5 A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

6.6 This must include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

## **7 RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION**

7.1 Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Adult Protection Lead or Senior Manager on that working day where possible.



7.2 The nominated member of staff shall telephone and report the matter to Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Board. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made, and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 24 hours.

## **8 RESPONDING APPROPRIATELY TO AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE**

8.1 In the event of an incident or disclosure:

### **DO**

- Make sure the individual is safe.
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them.
- Listen.
- Offer support and reassurance.
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts.
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them.
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed.
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence.
- Follow correct procedure.
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to your manager for support and guidance.
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation.
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

### **DON'T**

- Confront the alleged abuser.
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion.
- Be dismissive of the concern.
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts.
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence.
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation.
- Ask leading questions.
- Assume Information.
- Make promises.
- Ignore the allegation.
- Elaborate in your notes.
- Panic.

8.2 It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional adult protection agencies, following a referral from the designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer.

## **9 CONFIDENTIALITY**

9.1 Vulnerable adult protection raises issues of confidentiality which must be clearly understood by all.



9.2 Staff, volunteers and Directors (SVD) have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and adult social services.

9.3 Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

9.4 All personal information regarding a vulnerable adult will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only record details required in the initial contact form.

9.5 If an adult confides to an SVD that the information is kept secret, it is important that the SVD tells the adult sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.

9.6 Within that context, the adult must, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

9.7 Where possible, consent must be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority.

9.8 Where a disclosure has been made, the SVD must let the adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.

9.9 Staff must assure the adult that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The adults' involvement in the process of sharing information must be fully considered and their wishes and feelings considered.

9.10 This policy needs to be read in conjunction with other policies for the organisation including:

- Safeguarding children and young people

## **10 THE ROLE OF KEY INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES**

### **10.1 Adult Social Services**

10.1.1 The Department of Health's recent 'No secrets' guidance document requires that authorities develop a local framework within which all responsible agencies work together to ensure a coherent policy for the protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse.

10.1.2 All local authorities have a Safeguarding Adults Board, which oversees multi-agency work aimed at protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults. It is normal practice for the board to comprise of people from partner organisations



who can influence decision-making and resource allocation within their organisation.

## 10.2 The Police

10.2.1 The Police play a vital role in Safeguarding Adults with cases involving alleged criminal acts. It becomes the responsibility of the police to investigate allegations of crime by preserving and gathering evidence. Where a crime is identified, the police will be the lead agency and they will direct investigations in line with legal and other procedural protocols.

## 11 ROLE OF DESIGNATED VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION OFFICER

11.1 The role of the designated officer is to deal with all instances involving adult protection that arise within the organisation. They will respond to all vulnerable adult protection concerns and enquiries.

11.2 The Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Lead for the organisation is Caroline Burghard and Abigail Davey. Should you have any suspicions or concerns relating to Adult Protection, contact: [cburghard@whippersnappers.org](mailto:cburghard@whippersnappers.org) / [adavey@whippersnappers.org](mailto:adavey@whippersnappers.org) - 02035199340

## 12 Complaints procedure

12.1 Whippersnappers CIC has a complaints procedure available to all staff, volunteers and Directors.

## 13 Recruitment procedure

13.1 Whippersnappers CIC operates procedures that take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults, including arrangements for appropriate DBS checks and written references on new staff, volunteers and Directors where applicable. The Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Lead is responsible in ensuring that the above is complied to a reasonable standard.



## Professional Boundaries and Safeguarding Policy

**Purpose:** To ensure the safety and well-being of all clients by maintaining appropriate professional boundaries between staff and clients.

**Scope:** This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, and contractors who interact with clients within the scope of their duties.

### Policy Statement:

- Maintaining Professional Boundaries:** Employees must maintain professional boundaries with clients at all times. Personal relationships with clients that extend beyond the scope of professional duties are strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, sharing personal contact information (such as phone numbers or social media accounts) and meeting clients outside of scheduled activities or sessions.
- Safeguarding Responsibilities:** Employees are required to ensure the safety and well-being of clients by adhering to safeguarding protocols. Any request from a client to engage in activities or communications outside of professional settings must be politely declined and reported to a supervisor or the designated safeguarding officer.
- Responding to Client Requests:** Employees should handle requests for personal contact or social engagements outside of professional activities with sensitivity and professionalism. Employees should explain that such interactions are not permitted under the organization's policies to protect both the client and the employee. Alternative suggestions for social engagement within the bounds of the service should be provided where appropriate.
- Reporting and Documentation:** Any requests from clients to engage in personal relationships outside of professional settings must be documented and reported to a supervisor or safeguarding officer. This ensures transparency and allows the organization to provide appropriate support and guidance.

### Examples of Professional Boundaries:

- Do not share personal phone numbers or social media profiles with clients.
- Do not meet clients outside of scheduled, supervised activities.
- Keep all interactions within the context of professional duties.

**Violation of Policy:** Any breach of this policy will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or contract.

**Review and Training:** All employees will receive regular training on maintaining professional boundaries and safeguarding protocols. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and up-to-date.

**Contact Information:** For questions or concerns regarding this policy, please contact Designated Safeguarding Officer's – Abigail Davey [adavey@whippersnappers.org](mailto:adavey@whippersnappers.org) or Eleanor Payne [epayne@whippersnappers.org](mailto:epayne@whippersnappers.org)





We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Adopted on: 27.06.2023

Reviewed date: 27.06.2023



## ANNEXE 1

# **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults – Initial Cause of Concern Form**

*This form must be completed and discussed with Designated Vulnerable Protection Officer within 24-48 hours of a disclosure, complaint or after an action/incident which raises suspicion.*

**Date**

**Time**

**Name of individual cause for concern is about**

**Age (if known)**

**Address (if known)**

**Describe your concern and action taken**

**Observations to support cause for concern**

**Description and location of any visible marks, bruising etc**

**Name of alleged abuser, relationship with vulnerable adult (if known)**

**Name of person completing form:**

**Signature:**

**Date:** 24.03.2022

**Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Lead**