

## Sample text for Volunteer Handbook and related procedures



*The Volunteer Handbook should be easily available on your web site, to volunteers and at your base. This is a guidance only to give you an idea of what to include within a Volunteer Handbook. As good practice the finalised document should be agreed by the local steering group.*

### Welcome

Welcome to << name of project >>! Thank you for wanting to be a part of this organisation, it is thanks to people like yourself willing to give up your time to help and support people in << town >> making the town a safer place to be.

Street Angels was launched in Halifax in November 2005 and since then the project has started in over 100 towns and cities across the UK and overseas. We have also branched out into work at festivals, inside clubs and pubs, around communities, chaplaincy and more. Locally we launched << details >>

The aims and objectives of Street Angels are:

- To provide a safe place for people who may be vulnerable to come to, get a drink, call a taxi and/or anything else they may need help with.
- We provide support around the town centre by going out into the town in teams and giving support to people in need, making the town a safer place to be.

Nothing we have done could have been done without the support of our highly dedicated volunteers, many of whom commit week after week to supporting the work of Street Angels in << town >>.

For any further information on Street Angels feel free to head over to << web site >>, or arrange a visit on our website to come along to << address of project >> and see for yourself. Our project is part of ROC Angels who support and resource a variety of local projects. See [streetangels.org.uk](http://streetangels.org.uk) for details.

If you would like to volunteer then please read this Volunteers Handbook carefully – it will outline what we do, why we do it and how we approach the work we do. This will ensure

that all that is done whilst volunteering is done in the safest and most professional way. Volunteers are the foundation of << town >> Street Angels << may be good to include a local quote >>

## Street Angels Job Description and Skills Needed

- Street Angels agree to adhere to the advice given on the following pages of the Volunteer Handbook. This is vital to the on-going professional role that << name of project >> provide.
- A wide range of tasks will need to be undertaken. Within the Cafe visitors need to be greeted with care and respect. Drinks will be offered as appropriate. Everyone is expected to work as a team, and not leave jobs to just one or two others. Washing up, cleaning surfaces, emptying bins, sweeping and mopping are all integral to ensuring that the cafe runs smoothly. On the street you are expected to act with professionalism, treat everyone we meet with patience, tolerance and respect and ensure all members of the Street Angel teams are safe. Roles on the street include talking to people, assisting people who have become vulnerable, picking up bottles and placing them in the bin and observing from a safe distance any crimes or acts of aggression which may be taking place.
- Street Angels are expected to treat others and what they say with respect. Other team members need to be listened to and advice taken (e.g. if a team member is uncomfortable being involved in any given situation this should be respected and acted upon). At Street Angels we recognise that different people have different boundaries. Street Angels should never endanger themselves or any member of their team. For guidance on any of these things whilst out you can speak with your team leader or speak to the Project Coordinator for any advice or guidance.
- Street Angels use Nightlink Radios and these are an important part of the work we do, before you can use these radios you will be put through training on how to correctly use them, if you do not wish to use them however do not worry. The radio system must not be used for anything other than 'official business'. Once you have signed out a radio it becomes your responsibility, so ensure you don't leave the radio unattended. If a radio goes missing in your care you are responsible for any costs incurred in re-setting the town centre radio network (approx £2000).
- Above all Street Angels is fun! Volunteers are encouraged to enjoy themselves and recognise what an important contribution they are making to << town >>.

## Street Angels Policies and Procedures

These are guidelines for all volunteers of << project >>. They need to be read and understood by each volunteer. If you have any questions feel free to contact your project coordinator at << email / phone contact >> or ask your team leader.

- A minimum of three volunteers are to be in the cafe / safe place at all times. Teams should be a mix of male and female whether on the streets or in the cafe. On the streets we work in teams of three minimum or five maximum. If someone joins a team as an observer they are not counted as a part of the numbers. We try not to leave the cafe unmanned, however if this is needed the cafe is to be locked and a sign to be displayed. DBS clearance must be held by volunteers, this will be arranged for you (cost met by the Street Angels) if/when you become a volunteer.
- Street Angels are not to be involved in any violent incident. Distance should be kept at all times, you may observe and make notes of the incident however you are not to get involved. Be sure to use your night life radio to let CCTV know where the incident is occurring and if required contact the emergency services.
- Never put yourself in a vulnerable position such as giving lifts home or to the hospital. As a Street Angel when faced with conflict you are expected to walk away- watch your back as you are leaving and be sure to look out for the other members of your team.
- All incidents witnessed or involving our volunteers must be recorded on the computer in the cafe. Give all the important details but do not give any names of those involved. This report is to protect volunteers from any future come back and ensure that any questions regarding an incident involving volunteers can be answered. Police may occasionally take statements about incidents witnessed- if this leads to court attending this will be a personal choice.
- There is a radio link to CCTV which also links to door security staff, nightclub managers and police (though this is limited). We need to sign on (our call is 'Street Angels') before we start and sign off - all Street Angels must be back at the base before signing off. More guidance on radio use will be given later.
- << name of project >> can be contacted through << name and phone >>
- Street Angels should find out as much information as they can about any given incident in order to work out what their next logical step should be. For example if the person has been raped you should first find out if they wish to report the incident to the police, if they do you should recommend that they do not have a drink or use the toilet as it will destroy any DNA evidence (See Sexual Assault Guidelines).

- There are limited funds available for taxis/bus fares for those in desperate need to get home. Ensure that a receipt is written out by the driver which contains the destination and the cost, and pass this onto the project coordinator.
- Although funds are available some people are not eligible. These are generally people known to Street Angels who have misused funds in the past. Teams should let one another know who these people are.
- We are to respect the café and contents. This means the café is to be left clean and tidy at the end of each weekend. As well as the Street Angels base the café is also a business during the week so we must see that all relevant standards are upheld.
- You are not permitted to visit other Street Angel projects unless authorised. If you wish to visit another project speak with your project coordinator and they will pass on your request and get back to you.
- We show respect to all, we care for those in need of our help and we do so without judgement. Street Angels is a Christian charity although we welcome anyone as long as they are respectful of our Christian ethos. Evenings begin with prayer and reflection and volunteers may throughout the night discuss their faith, however we do not force this upon others.
- Phones are not to be used whilst on patrol. People using their phones can look unprofessional and this can lead to complaints. Often whilst on patrol volunteers need to be aware of their surroundings both for themselves and for their team mates. There are however many opportunities for volunteers to use their phones back at the base, and if you are expecting an urgent call just let the project coordinator or team leader know.
- Photographs should not be taken with those you help as we often support people in vulnerable situations. If you wish to take photographs of other team members please ask permission before you do. Often members of the public will request photos with you which is down to your / team members discretion. We recognise social media is a great way to spread the message of what Street Angels do.

## Nightlife Radio Users Guide

If you hire radios locally then they will have guidelines for use and those should be included. This is for guidance if using your own radios.

When the radio is not in use it must be placed in a secure area out of sight. Radios must not be left in areas where customers can listen in (in the café 2 Street Angels need to have the radios and relay information as appropriate)

On the streets radios must be kept in the inside pocket and used only as appropriate.

Using the radio for the first time can be quite an unnerving experience, the best way of getting over this is to relax, take a deep breath, talk slowly and clearly.

When using the radio always hold it about 6" away from your face - this will ensure that the message you are transmitting will not be distorted.

When passing a message ensure the talk button is pressed in for at least 1 second before talking. Use your call sign first ( << call sign >>) and the call sign of the business you are contacting. Once you have received a response pass your message keeping it clear and as precise as possible. Always try and reply back with the word "received".

The more information you pass the easier it will be for others to respond to you and for them to identify people.

All messages must be relevant - non relevant messages could prevent other serious messages from getting through. Street Angels must not respond to calls over the radio to attend any incident of an unsafe nature or attend other premises to provide First Aid.

Do look after the radio - a lost or misused radio can result in potentially dangerous situations.

The radio is not a direct link to police and these may need to be called on a mobile / café phone.

Please remember to sign on and sign off at the start / end of each night.

## Conflict Training Overview

This is from training provided by West Yorkshire Police (the full day training is recommended).

There is a need to recognise that different agencies work under different policies and procedures, as we are not police or SIA Security, we need to adhere to Street Angels conflict policy.

Physical and verbal assaults are equally damaging therefore Street Angels need to report any assault (physical or verbal) they are victim to whilst on duty. If you are affected in any way, discuss it with other Street Angels, take time out, and ask for on-going support if needed.

It is a greater advantage to be a good witness than being involved.

People will watch how we behave - need to be professional and trained. One disrespectful comment after an incident can ruin all our work.

Our attitude must be positive - as this will affect the behaviour of others. Body Language makes up 55% of communication; tone of how you speak 38%; and words spoken 7% - attitude (reflected by body language) is key.

How we stand is important - hands must be above your waist with hands clasped in front of you, as though praying. This will enable you to quickly move your arm into a self defence movement to block an attack. Please keep your arms open and not folded in front of you as this communicates a willingness to fight. When stationary keep your body facing sideways, supported by one leg which is sideways behind your body. This will stop you from being pushed backwards onto the ground by your attacker. This will also prepare you better to walk or run away from your attacker.

Remember, the person standing in front of you may not be the person who attacks you. Therefore Street Angels must remember to protect themselves and the surrounding area.. Always keep your path out clear - don't fight flight! Keep an eye on people who act aggressively towards you. The best form of self defence is to get away.

Street Angels need to recognise the different forms of violence i.e. grabbing / pushing; punching / slapping; kicking; weapons displayed / used. While on patrol,

Angels must judge effectively the levels of violence as some seemingly violent behaviour could just be horse play, while other forms of aggression could result in the death of the victim.

Common Law says "a person has a right to defend themselves from attack... Only reasonable force to be used to repel attack".

To ensure that the personal space of the other person is kept is important - if we get too close they may feel threatened. You only get within 18" of people we love or want to kill! Personal space varies from person to person.

Recognise warning signs - if any of one of these happens we should begin to move away: prolonged eye contact; facial colour darkens; standing tall / head back; ground kicking; large movements; accelerated breathing; non-verbal adapter.

When the behaviour progresses to danger signs we should get out quick: fist clenching; facial colour pales; lips tighten over teeth; eyebrows / chin drop; hands above waist; shoulders tense and stance changes; target acquisition glances; body lowers.

Use natural barriers or create barriers when you see warning / danger signs. Personal Attack Alarms need to be at ready. Establish a position away from any fights / action. Get out!

We need to keep ourselves safe, watch out for other Street Angels, and listen to advice of others especially if the attack is towards you. As Street Angels never stand your ground or aim to win an argument - to move away is the best course of action! Keep these guidelines in mind and don't let personal attitude affect your work...

## **Sexual Assault Guidelines**

When we come across someone who says they are a victim of sexual assault what the victim says is true - this must be our starting point. We need to treat the person with understanding and ensure their comfort and well-being. It is good practice to let them speak to a person of the same gender. The victim can be either male or female - treat both with the same respect.

Street Angels need to contact the police straight away (check with the person this is ok with them). To protect evidence we need to encourage the victim to refrain from washing, changing clothing or visiting the toilet - though we can not stop them. If the assault involved oral sex then encourage the victim to refrain from drinking and clearing out the mouth as this too could destroy evidence.

Leave questions to the police - do not ask leading questions, take in depth notes of any conversations that take place with Street Angels (you will need to ask the person's permission) as this can be used as evidence.

**Rape Crisis England & Wales - 0808 802 9999**

## Health and Safety Rules and Procedures

The following rules are for your safety and apply to all Street Angels

**Yellow Jackets** - When on patrol Street Angel Jackets or vests must be worn. This is both so as to identify you to members of the public, and so that we can easily see each other. Please do not wear Street Angel jackets away from Street Angels.

**Radios** - At least one, ideally two people with radios to be left in the Café at all times with ear pieces in and information related as relevant. Each Patrol Group to take at least one, preferably two radios. This allows for ease of access to a radio if necessary, even if the group gets split up.

**Possible Exposure to Blood & / or Body Fluids** - Always wear gloves (even when picking up bottles from the street), and dispose of them securely. Any accidental exposure to be washed with Anti-bacterial / disinfectant type hand wash.

**Records** - Record all incidents on the PC. Record all injuries to Street Angels or other Volunteers on the incident log as well and inform and in the Accident Book. This is a requirement under Health and Safety Executive rules.

**Sharps** - Any injury, no matter how small, if caused by exposure to Sharps (Needles, knives, etc.) must be recorded in the Accident Report book and should be referred to a Doctor as soon as possible.

**Fire** - Do not prop fire doors open with anything, especially the fire extinguisher. Ensure you are aware of where the Fire Alarm-points, Extinguishers, etc. are. Read the notice informing you of what to do in case of fire.

**Smoking** - No Smoking in the Café or at the Café door at any time. This applies both to volunteers and to visitors. Smoke detectors are fitted and will be set off by the smoke.

**Alcohol** - No volunteers are to drink alcoholic beverages during their time on duty, and must not be under the influence of alcohol when on duty. No alcoholic drinks are to be brought into the café by volunteers or visitors. Visitors should leave bottles, etc. outside if they wish to come in.

**Drugs** - No drugs will be tolerated in the café at all. Any breach at all of this rule will result in the person being asked to leave / ejected from the café.

## Risk Assessment (sample):

HAZARD	LIKELIHOOD	CONTROLLED MEASURES	CONTROLLED
Assault	Low / Serious	Radio / minimum of 3 persons per team and in café / never on own / CCTV / Police / Training / CCTV in café	Yes - radio training in handbook and on first use / Conflict Awareness in Handbook and 'on job' training
Infection from bodily fluids	Low / Serious	Provision of barrier gloves / training / disinfectant and cleansers / sharps box	Yes - induction training on reason for use of gloves
Road Traffic Injury	Very low / Very Serious	High viz jackets / training / Street Angel First Aiders	Yes - induction training on road sense
Allegation of Improper actions of behaviour	Low / Potentially Costly	Training / team working / rules / records of all incidents for traceability / CRB / volunteer recruitment procedure	Yes - induction and handbook training covers / Appropriate Checks made on volunteers
Fire (in café)	Low / Serious	Signage for information/ fire alarm / fire extinguishers	Yes - covered by café structures
Accidental Injury	Low / Low Serious	Street Angel First Aiders / First Aid kit suitable for size of site / mobile phone (personal) to call ambulance	Yes - Street Angels First Aid trained are on the radio scheme / First Aid kit in café and on street

[The Health and Safety Executive site has guidance on managing risks and a sample Risk Assessment template.](#)

## **Environmental Policy:**

<< project >> promotes and provides storage for recycling of products at the base. All Street Angels are asked to recycle as much as possible. << project >> relies on the use of the Internet for communication, publications and information sharing thus minimising the use of paper. We also encourage, where possible, car sharing between Street Angels as a means of getting to and from the base.

## **Child Protection / Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

A full copy of the various policies relating to this can be found on our web site and at our base. Below is a copy of the Code of Behaviour for volunteers:

### **You must:**

treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect

provide good practice that you wish others to follow

ensure there is always more than one adult present during activities with children and young people or have an at least within sight or hearing of the activity. As a minimum precaution have another adult within sight or hearing of the activity

respect the right to privacy that young people have, also encourage young people and adults to trust and feel comfortable to point out behaviour or attitudes that are disliked

remember that actions, including physical contact, towards children and young people (and vulnerable adults) can be misinterpreted, even if good intentions were behind the action

challenge unacceptable behaviour and report allegations/suspicions of abuse or harm

### **You must not:**

have unacceptable physical or verbal contact with children and young people

be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour / make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children and young people

either exaggerate or trivialise issues of abuse towards children and young people

rely on your good name or that of your organisation to protect you

take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more sensible approach

All Street Angel volunteers will need to undergo a DBS (Disclosure Barring Services) check and references taken. Street Angels will never work "one to one" with people and always in groups of at least two generally three. The above guidelines must be adhered to.

## **Where We Patrol**

Street Angels operates within the town centre, there are a number of practical reasons for this and below is a map which covers the area within which we operate. If for any reason a team feels they need to go beyond this and it is safe to do so they may, but only after they have contacted the project coordinator.

One of the key reasons for this is that Street Angels are linked to the nightlife radios and CCTV beyond this map teams are outside of much of the CCTV coverage and are therefore not being watched, and if any incident was to occur there is little Street Angels could do, if you suspect something is happening outside of our operating area contact the required emergency service.

**A Volunteers Handbook may also need to include a map, list of steering group, charity details, web site, Facebook and Twitter links, logos and pictures.**

**You may also want to include a sign up form for volunteers though this may be better placed on your web site as an on-line form. The form needs to indicate that by signing up the volunteer will read and adhere to the policies and procedures of the project. Please ensure you collect information such as:**

**Name, address, email, mobile, reference, emergency contacts. All volunteers need to give permission to taking a DBS check (this will need to be arranged locally).**

**Other documents that you need to make available at your base, on your web site and to volunteers:** These should be distributed to your steering group and agreed at a meeting.

## **Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy for << name of project >>**

### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **1.1 Why a Child Protection Policy?**

<< name of project >> have a responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted in their care. The need for written guidelines is important in ensuring that this is done with understanding and clarity.

#### **1.2 Aims**

The aims of this policy are to:

- Create a safe and friendly environment in which children and young people are valued and are able to fulfil their personal potential
- Ensure that children and young people know and understand that they will be listened to and supported - their welfare is paramount
- Designate a named person to be responsible for Child Protection issues throughout the organisation
- Put in place training programmes to ensure that employees and volunteers recognise symptoms of abuse and are aware of how to act on their concerns in an appropriate manner
- Have clear procedures and mechanisms for dealing with Child Protection issues
- Work with parents and all relevant agencies to ensure best practice in Child Protection

### **2.0 Awareness of Abuse**

All employees and volunteers need to be aware of the following definitions of abuse in order to be able to deal with concerns in the appropriate manner, which may lead to informing the Child Protection Coordinator aware of concerns.

Abuse may be described as an act, or failure to act, by the person responsible for the care of the child. It may involve cruelty, exploitation or neglect.

Abuse takes many forms - below are the four categories of abuse.

- **Physical injury:** inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm, to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child, including deliberately causing ill health, poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.
- **Neglect:** the persistent or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, including failure to provide adequate food, shelter or

clothing, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive. Also includes neglect or fail to respond to child's basic emotional needs.

- Emotional abuse: actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of the child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category should be used where it is the sole or main form of abuse.
- Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include involving children in looking at, or production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **3.0 What to do if you suspect abuse or an allegation is made:**

3.1 You must report any concerns as soon as possible to the Child Protection Coordinator (details at end of policy).

3.2 You should not discuss your suspicions with any one other than the above including anyone related to the child. You should not speak to the parent until you have consulted with the Child Protection Coordinator. If unable to contact the above seek advice from Social Services or Area Child Protection Committee.

### **3.3 In the situation of a child disclosing information to you about abuse:**

1. Let the individual know that you will have to pass on any information to the Child Protection Coordinator.
2. Allow the child to speak, but do not ask any leading questions.
3. If there is immediate danger to the child or young person, you may feel it necessary to contact Social Services or the Police. This must be done in consultation with the Child Protection Coordinator. If unable to contact the above seek advice from Social Services or Area Child Protection Committee.
4. Make a detailed written record of what was said and anything else that may be important and pass to the Child Protection Coordinator.

### **4.0 Role of Child Protection Coordinator**

4.1 Once you have referred a child to the Child Protection Coordinator, he or she will act on the organisation's behalf in referring suspicions or allegations of neglect or abuse to the Social Services Child Protection Officer. The Child Protection Coordinator does not have to refer every suspicion to the Social Services Child Protection Officer. It is important that care is taken by the Child Protection Coordinator to ensure that he or she neither under-reacts nor over-reacts. If in doubt he or she may seek legal advice from Social Services.

The Child Protection Coordinator may share limited information on a need-to-know basis amongst the Board, carefully respecting the need for confidentiality.

Under no circumstances will the Child Protection Coordinator attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse; neither will he or she discuss the concerns with anyone else. The role of the Child Protection Coordinator is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the statutory authorities. It is the statutory authorities' task to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children's Act 1989.

4.2 All prospective workers and volunteers will be asked to read this policy and sign a copy that will be kept on file.

The Child Protection Coordinator is:

Name:

Position:

Contact Details:

Address:

Telephone Number:

I confirm that I have read and understand the requirements of this policy.

Name.....

Signed..... Date.....

Useful telephone Numbers / websites:

Social Services Emergency Team:

NSPCC: 01422 339500 / 0800 800 5000 / [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Child-line: 0800 1111 / [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

# Working with Vulnerable Adults

## Purpose

These guidelines aim to:

- Outline the << name of project >> ethos which underpins its work with vulnerable adults.
- Define abuse in relation to a vulnerable person.
- Identify risk factors associated with abuse.
- Establish a standard procedure to be followed when abuse is suspected or takes place.

It is important to note that protection guidelines for vulnerable adults differ significantly from those that apply to children. In particular it should be noted:

- Adults have the right to make their own decisions unless there are clear grounds to override this as a result of their lack of capacity or if a wider public interest is involved.
- The law in relation to adults offers far fewer opportunities or responsibilities in relation to intervention. The norm is clearly one of negotiation.

## Guiding Principles

These guidelines reflect ROC Angels / << local project >> values and beliefs:

- All individuals, no matter what their disadvantage or disability, should have the greatest possible control over their own lives.
- Individuals should be able to live as independently as they wish and be encouraged to make informed decisions about their own lifestyles, including taking risks if they choose to do so.
- Individuals have a right to express their own wishes and priorities and be personally involved in all planning for their futures. Every effort has to be made to allow individuals to say what they want in a way that is appropriate for them.
- Human and civil rights should always be made clear to the individual and be respected.
- Clients can expect that information about them or which they share with the Trust will always be treated with care and, wherever possible, with confidentiality.

## Rights

The clients have the following rights:

- To use our facilities and / or services without fear and free from abuse from staff, volunteers or other service users.
- To make informed choices about intimate relationships without being exposed to exploitation or sexual abuse.
- To have their money and possessions treated with respect.
- Through appropriate support and education, to make choices about their own lives.
- To be given information on the projects policies and procedures about keeping themselves safe and exercising their rights and responsibilities.

- To be supported in making their own decisions about how they wish to proceed in the event of abuse and in whom they wish to confide. These wishes will only be overridden if it is considered necessary for their own safety or that of another vulnerable person.
- To receive appropriate support and practical help from the Trust in the event of them suffering abuse.

**Staff and volunteers have the following rights and responsibilities:**

- To report any concerns about abuse of vulnerable people who use our services.
- To be given appropriate education and training to enable them to exercise their responsibilities in relation to abuse.
- To be guided always by the individual's best interests while recognising any statutory or legal obligations.
- To be protected, in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act, from any adverse consequences when reporting any concerns about abuse in our services.
- To ensure that any concern about the potential for abuse in the project is conveyed to a member of the management or trustees.
- To ensure that any complaints in relation to care or support of a vulnerable person are followed through in accordance with the relevant Complaints Policy.

**Definitions**

These guidelines assume that some of the adults using our services will be very capable of protecting themselves, but others may be quite vulnerable and in need of support and protection. It is important that the concept of vulnerability is understood and whether the link between it and these guidelines should apply to any individual. The following questions need to be asked:

- Which adults are 'vulnerable'?
- What actions or omissions constitute abuse?
- Who may be the abuser(s)?
- In what circumstances may abuse occur?
- Are there patterns of abuse?
- What degree of abuse justifies intervention?

**1. Vulnerability**

The broad definition of a '*vulnerable adult*' referred to in the 1997 Consultation Paper *Who Decides?*, issued by the Lord Chancellor's Department, is a person...

*"who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation".*

*Significant harm* refers to

*“... ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of abuse that are not physical); the impairment of, or an unavoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health, and the impairment of physical, emotional, social or behavioural development”.*

## 2. Forms of Abuse

The following categories are not mutually exclusive and a vulnerable adult may be subjected to more than one type of abuse at the same time. It needs to be understood that abusive situations are rarely as tidy or straightforward as these categories may suggest – as situations may involve a number of abusive elements.

- **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; it may also include serious teasing or innuendo;
- **psychological abuse** including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, including use of foul language, 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 necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating
- **discriminatory abuse** including racist, sexist and homophobic, based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Any of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance, and may be perpetrated by both individuals and institutions where users of services are forced to sacrifice their own lifestyles to the needs of the institutional routines or the preferences of individuals working in them.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts.

## 3. Thresholds

These adult guidelines are linked to an age threshold of 18 years to reflect the law with regard to children's services and those provided by the NHS and Community Care Act. Issues related to young people 17 years or less will be dealt with under Safeguarding Children procedures.

Not all conduct that most people would regard as abuse is unlawful and the state may have neither the right nor the power to intervene.

Self-neglect on the part of an adult will not of itself require these protection guidelines to be instigated unless the situation involves a significant act of commission or omission by someone else with established responsibility for the care and support of that individual.

## **Recognition**

### **1. Assessment**

The seriousness or extent of abuse is often not clear when anxiety is first expressed. It is important, therefore, when considering the appropriateness of intervention, to approach reports of incidents or allegations with an open mind. In making any assessment of seriousness the following factors need to be considered:

- the *vulnerability* of the individual;
- the *nature and extent* of the abuse;
- the *length of time* it has been occurring;
- the *impact* on the individual;
- the risk of *repeated* or *increasingly* serious acts involving this or other vulnerable adults.

What this means in practice is working through a process of assessment to evaluate:

- Is the person suffering harm or exploitation?
- Does the person suffering or causing harm / exploitation meet the NHS and Community Care Act (1990) eligibility criteria?
- Is the intervention in the best interests of the vulnerable adult fitting the criteria and / or in the public interest?
- Does the assessment account for the depth and conviction of the feelings of the person alleging the abuse?

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults. To this end it is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers, members of the management and trustees to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse, assault, neglect, oppression or discrimination and to pass on their suspicions to a senior member of the organisation.

### **2. Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to protect confidentiality, unless the adult consents for it to be shared, but this may be overridden by:

- a risk to a child;
- an active police investigation;
- a significant risk of suicide;
- a significant risk of harm to a third party;
- a need to safeguard an adult who has been abused or is at risk of further abuse where that adult lacks the capacity to make an informed choice.

### **3. What to Do**

In the event that abuse is suspected, witnessed or reported it is important to take action:

**Do**

- Listen and take seriously.
- Offer reassurance, comfort and support.
- Ask straightforward, non-leading questions simply and without making any judgements in order to establish the facts.
- Make sure the adult fully understands the nature of the concerns and the choices facing them and obtain consent for the way forward.
- Consult the relevant senior manager to decide what action to take if the adult is unable to give informed consent.
- Make careful factual notes of what is said, including time and place, as soon as possible, and certainly before finishing work for the day.
- Take precautions to preserve any forensic evidence and where there is a major injury contact the Ambulance Service and inform medical staff who attend that the injury may have been caused by abuse.
- Inform the police where there is an allegation of a criminal act.
- Inform the senior manager and ensure that the relevant statutory authority is contacted.
- Ensure that copies of your report go as soon as possible to the senior manager.
- The senior manager will need to have information about the complaint in readiness for further action, such as response to foreseeable publicity and will inform the trustees.

### **Do not**

- Be dismissive of the individual's concern.
- Assume information.
- Be judgemental.
- Ask leading questions or investigate beyond that which is necessary to establish basic facts.
- Make promises that cannot be kept, especially regarding confidentiality.
- Go it alone by investigating the situation without reporting it formally.
- Take action without the informed consent of the adult concerned and the Trust manager.

### **Good Practice in Preventing and Reducing Abuse**

#### **Choices**

Ensure that clients exercise as much choice as possible in their daily lives. To this end:

- Ensure that clients have adequate information on which to base decisions.
- Facilitate clients to exercise choice regarding their personal affairs in a context of an agreed notion of what constitutes acceptable risk.
- Ensure that a reasonable balance is achieved between self determination, degree of risk involved and impact upon other people.
- Create safeguards to ensure that any limitations placed upon clients' rights to exercise choice are explained, justified and reviewed regularly.

#### **Rights**

Ensure that due regard is paid to clients' rights by:

- Ensuring that they are not subject to inhuman or degrading treatment, whether physical or mental.

- Encouraging them to exercise their right to complain, hold opinions, and to receive and impart information.
- Respecting confidentiality of personal affairs and personal space.
- Ensuring they receive appropriate information and support to enable and encourage them to exercise their rights.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers deal discreetly with the affairs of clients and safeguard confidentiality of any information held.
- Safeguarding individual rights without unlawful discrimination.
- Ensuring that where it is deemed necessary to interfere with or restrict an individual's rights, such actions are recorded, explained to the individual and other interested parties, and reviewed regularly.

## **Independence**

To ensure that clients achieve a level of independence compatible with their wishes and abilities:

- Listen and understand their wishes regarding independence.
- Help and encourage them to think and act independently as far as this is compatible with their own abilities, their impact on other people and the risks involved.
- Provide support that encourages clients to do as much as possible for themselves.

## **Dignity**

Staff and volunteers should recognise the intrinsic value of all regardless of their circumstances by:

- Respecting the uniqueness and individuality of people.
- Respecting the whole person as they are now in the context of their previous life experiences.
- Recognising and catering for cultural needs and norms.
- Ensuring that practices are established that relate to the needs of clients.
- Ensuring that an open access policy is maintained to information kept about them.
- Responding sensitively and promptly to any complaints from clients.

## **Investigating and Reporting Abuse**

If a staff member or volunteer believes a service user has been subjected to abuse, he or she should refer the circumstances to his or her line manager (or another manager if appropriate for full investigation. If the alleged perpetrator of abuse is another staff member or volunteer, the circumstances will be investigated fully. If necessary, the Charity will refer details of the circumstances to the Police so that details of the alleged perpetrator may be added on a provisional basis to the POVA list, pending the outcome of disciplinary procedures. Upon full investigation, when the allegations are shown to be clearly groundless, the Charity will take action promptly to have this person's name removed from provisional POVA listing. If, following full investigation of the circumstances, the Charity determines that the perpetrator should be dismissed from the Charity on the grounds of abuse, the perpetrator's details will be referred to the Secretary of State for inclusion on the POVA list.

**Adopted and Reviewed**

Date.....

Signature.....

Chair

Reviewed: (Date)..... (Signed).....  
(Date)..... (Signed).....  
(Date)..... (Signed).....

## **Code of Behaviour for Safeguarding Children for << name of project >>**

Support and guidance must be given to those who are inexperienced

### **You must:**

- treat all children and young people with respect
- provide good practice that you wish others to follow
- where possible ensure there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people or have an adult within sight or hearing of the activity
- respect the right to privacy that young people have, also encourage young people and adults to trust and feel comfortable to point out behaviour or attitudes that are disliked
- remember that actions, including physical contact, towards children and young people can be misinterpreted, even if good intentions were behind the action
- remember when discussing sensitive issues with children and young people special caution must be taken
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report allegations/suspicions of abuse or harm

### **You must not:**

- have unacceptable physical or verbal contact with children and young people
- be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour/make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children and young people
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- either exaggerate or trivialise issues of abuse towards children and young people
- show favouritism to individuals
- rely on your good name or that of your organisation to protect you
- believe "it could never happen to me"
- take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more sensible approach

## **Equal Opportunities Statement of Intent**

We recognise that many people in our society experience discrimination or lack of opportunities for reasons, which are not fair. These include: race, religion, creed, colour, national and ethnic origin, political beliefs, dietary belief or medical requirement, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability(including mental illness), HIV status, marital status, responsibility for dependants, appearance, geographical area, social class, income level or criminal record.

We will not discriminate in any way in support of clients.

We will challenge discrimination and lack of opportunity in our policies and practices and will help other organisations and individuals to do the same.

We aim to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences and to promote a good and harmonious environment in which all persons are treated with respect.

Our clients will be expected to respect each other and to observe this equal opportunities policy. Any failing to comply may result in withdrawal of support.

All volunteers, employees, committee members and member organisations must support the objectives of this Equality and Diversity policy.

Any breach or misconduct of the Equal Opportunity policy may lead to the volunteer having to leave their role within the organisation.

The trustees have overall responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each volunteer shares this responsibility, and trustees expect volunteers to abide by the policy and help create the equality environment which is its objective.

Staff, volunteers or clients who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter with a member of management team or trustee.

Every effort will be made to ensure that anyone making a complaint will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with promptly, seriously and confidentially.

The effectiveness of our equal opportunities policy will be reviewed at least annually and action taken as necessary.



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