

SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Purpose: -

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of employees, freelancers, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of NORCA in relation to Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

All adults have the right to be safe from harm and must be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Objectives: -

To explain the responsibilities NORCA, its employees, freelancers, volunteers and trustees have in respect of vulnerable adult protection.

To provide employees, freelancers, volunteers and trustees with an overview of vulnerable adult protection

To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where vulnerable adult protection issues arise.

Context: -

The meaning of 'abuse' in this context

Abuse of a vulnerable adult may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may occur as a result of a failure to undertake action or an act of neglect. It may be physical, verbal or psychological. Abuse can occur in any relationship and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

Who is a 'vulnerable adult'?

A vulnerable adult is a person who is over 18 years of age and who is 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. This could include people with learning difficulties, mental health problems, older people and people with a physical disability or impairment. It may also include victims of domestic abuse.

Types of abuse

Abuse can include:-

- Physical
- Financial
- Material
- Sexual

- Psychological
- Discriminatory

- Emotional abuse
- Modern slavery
- Neglect/acts of omission
- Multiple forms of abuse

Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetuated by anyone.

Radicalisation and extremism: -

Radicalisation and extremism of adults with care and support needs is a form of emotional/psychological exploitation. Radicalisation can take place through direct personal contact, or indirectly through social media.

If staff are concerned that an adult with care and support needs is at risk of being radicalised and drawn into terrorism, they should treat it in the same way as any other safeguarding concern.

The Role of the employee, freelancer, volunteer and trustee: -

All employees, freelancers, volunteer and trustees working on behalf of NORCA and Sistema in Norwich have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults.

Employees, freelancers, volunteers and trustees may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy will enable Employees, freelancers, volunteers and trustees to make informed and confident responses to specific adult protection issues.

The Role of the Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer: -

The role of the Designated Officer is to deal with all instances involving adult protection that arise within NORCA. They will respond to all vulnerable adult protection concerns and enquiries.

The Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer for NORCA is Cathie Davies, Operations Manager.

Procedure in the event of a disclosure: -

It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse. All complaints must be taken seriously.

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

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

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

This must include the following information the date, the time, the place where the alleged

abuse happened, your name and the names of anyone else who was present, the name of the complainant, and where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the name of the alleged abuser (if known), the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of the injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation. A recording form is available from the Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer

Responding to an allegation: -

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer on that working day where possible.

The Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer will report the matter to the Norfolk County Council Adult Social Care Team on either: -

Phone - 0344 800 8020 (24-hour line)

Ring - 999 if it is an emergency.

Or seek advice from the Care Quality Commission on 03000 616161

If the adult is not at immediate risk of harm an online Safeguarding Report Form can be filled in. The form can be found at: -

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/protecting-someone-from-harm/help-an-adult-at-risk-of-harm/report-a-concern>

A written record of the date and time of the report should be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported.

Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse: -

In the event of an incident or disclosure it is important to do the following:-

- 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 facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure all facts e.g. dates and names of those present are correct.
- Take all precautions to preserve any forensic evidence
- Follow the correct procedure

- Explain areas of confidentiality
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation.
- Remember the need for ongoing support

Do NOT do any of the following:-

- 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 any 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

Confidentiality: -

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

Employees, freelancers, volunteers and trustees have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly Norfolk County Council Adult Social Care Team.

Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all involved.

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 NORCA and Sistema in Norwich's GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) policy.

If an adult confides in an employee and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the employee tells the adult sensitively that he or she had a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.

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

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 individual is the priority.

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

Employees 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 taken into account.

Policy reviewed: - June 2022

Next Review: - June 2023