



Safeguarding Adults with Care and Support Needs

Trustee adoption Next review	July 2023 (amendment may 2024) July 2024
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Aims

Our work at Volunteer Action brings us into contact with adults with care and support needs every day. The circumstances of these meetings and conversations will vary but every one presents an opportunity to be made aware of safeguarding concerns. This policy sets out how we manage this.

Volunteer Action will not tolerate the abuse of adults in any of its forms and is committed to safeguarding adults with care and support needs from harm.

This policy outlines the steps Volunteer Action will make to safeguard an adult with care and support needs if they are deemed to be at risk. This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of Volunteer Action in working together with other professionals and agencies in promoting the adult's welfare and safeguarding them from abuse and neglect.

Volunteer Action will ensure that decisions made will allow adults to make their own choices and include them in any decision making. We will also ensure that safe and effective working practices are in place.

This policy is intended to support staff and volunteers working within Volunteer Action to understand their role and responsibilities in safeguarding adults. All staff and volunteers are expected to follow this policy.

The key objectives of this policy are for all employees and volunteers of Volunteer Action to:

- have an overview of adult safeguarding
- be clear about their responsibility to safeguard adults
- ensure the necessary actions are taken where an adult with care and support needs is deemed to be at risk

Under the Human Rights Act 1998, everyone has the right to live free from abuse and neglect. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights/human-rights-act>

Copies of this policy are available on the Volunteer Action website. Volunteer Action will not tolerate the abuse of adults in the organisation and staff and volunteers will be made aware of how this policy can be accessed.



What is Safeguarding adults?

'Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.'

Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Department of Health, updated February 2017

All adults should be able to live free from fear and harm. But some may find it hard to get the help and support they need to stop abuse.

An adult may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to many reasons, including their mental or physical incapacity, sensory loss or physical or learning disabilities. This could be an adult who is usually able to protect themselves from harm but maybe unable to do so because of an accident, disability, frailty, addiction or illness.

Remember that the overwhelming majority of vulnerable adults, whom you will meet through your work, are likely to experience a perfectly safe and happy life.

It is also recognised, that a percentage of the vulnerable adults that you may meet will, through the nature of their experiences, demonstrate behaviours that might be indicators of abuse.

It is important to distinguish between "abuse", "vulnerability" and "risk". People often face risks or will be vulnerable within their lifetime, however this should not be confused with abuse. There may be many factors associated with disadvantage which can also result in a vulnerable adult's behaviour being affected, thereby making the identification of abuse even more difficult. You are not expected to become expert in the protection of vulnerable adults, nor are you expected to investigate abuse. You are expected to be sensible, alert and to comply with these procedures. In situations where people are at risk or will be vulnerable, but there is no indication of abuse, it is more appropriate to refer to other agencies to try to identify and work with the individual to reduce and manage any risk or vulnerability.

Volunteer Action adheres to following the six key principles that underpin safeguarding work (See Care Act guidance)

- **Empowerment:** adults with care and support needs are involved in decisions and informed consent is obtained
- **Prevention:** it is better to take action before harm occurs
- **Proportionality:** ensure that the safeguarding action agreed is the least intrusive response to the risk
- **Protection:** give support and representation for those in greatest need
- **Partnership:** partners from the community should be involved in any safeguarding work in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability:** Volunteer Action will be transparent and accountable in delivering safeguarding actions



The Mental Capacity Act 2005 is to be used when decisions on behalf of those adults with care and support needs who are unable to make some decisions for themselves. Refer to the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice>. You will need to involve an advocate if the person lacks capacity to make decisions about the safeguarding concern.

Similarly, staff and volunteers may encounter concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children. For more information about children's safeguarding, refer to Volunteer Action Children's safeguarding policy <L:\Policy Documents\Volunteer Action policies\Child protection.docx>

What is Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)?

MSP means a case should be person-led and outcome-focused. The individual should be involved in identifying how best to respond to their safeguarding situation by giving them more choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.

We will ensure that adults are involved in their safeguarding arrangements and each individual is dealt with on a case by case basis. As adults may have different preferences, histories and life styles, the same process may not work for all.

Who do adult safeguarding duties apply to?

The Care Act 2014 sets out that adult safeguarding duties apply to *any* adult who:

- has care and support needs, and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect, and
- is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect, because of those needs.

Who do I go to if I am concerned?

The named responsible person for safeguarding duties for Volunteer Action is Rachel Dixon (the manager). Office hours 01832 275433, out-of-hours 07835 958683

All staff and volunteers should contact the manager for any concerns/queries they have in regards to safeguarding adults. A log of the concern must be kept.

The manager will be responsible to make decisions about notifying adult social services if required and consider alternative actions, where necessary.

The manager will also ensure that the safeguarding adults policies and procedures are in place and up to date. They will ensure a safe environment is promoted for staff and volunteers and adults accessing the service. The manager will ensure they are up to date with their safeguarding adults training.



What should I do if I am concerned?

Staff and volunteers at Volunteer Action who have any adult safeguarding concerns should:

1. Respond
 - Take emergency action if someone is at immediate risk of harm/in need of urgent medical attention. Dial 999 for emergency services
 - Get brief details about what has happened and what the adult would like done about it, but do not probe or conduct a mini-investigation
 - Seek consent from the adult to take action and to report the concern. Consider whether the adult may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other people's safety and wellbeing. If you decide to act against their wishes or without their consent, you must record your decision and the reasons for this.
2. Report
 - To the police if a crime has been committed
 - To the designated safeguarding lead (see above: the VA manager)
3. Record
 - As far as possible, records should be written as soon as possible, dated and signed.
 - Keep records about safeguarding concerns confidential and in a location where the alleged abuser will not have access to the record. Access should not be given to any unauthorised person for accessing confidential information including the sharing of passwords.
4. Refer

In making a decision whether to refer or not, the designated safeguarding lead should take into account:

- (1) the adult's wishes and preferred outcome
- (2) whether the adult has mental capacity to make an informed decision about their own and others' safety
- (3) the safety or wellbeing of children or other adults with care and support needs
- (4) whether there is a person in a position of trust involved
- (5) whether a crime has been committed

This should inform the decision whether to notify the concern to the following people:

- the police if a crime has been committed and/or
- Northamptonshire Adult Social Services
- relevant regulatory bodies such as Care Quality Commission, Ofsted, Charities commission
- service commissioning teams
- family/relatives as appropriate (seek advice from adult social services)



The designated safeguarding lead should keep a record of the reasons for referring the concern or reasons for not referring.

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and may affect one person or more. Staff and volunteers should look beyond single incidents to identify patterns of harm. Accurate recording of information will also assist in recognising any patterns.

What are your roles and responsibilities?

All staff, management, trustees and volunteers at Volunteer Action are expected to report any concerns to the named person for safeguarding. If the allegation is against one of Volunteer Action members, volunteers, trustees or directors, seek advice from Volunteer Action safeguarding lead, Rachel Dixon. If the allegation is against the safeguarding lead, seek advice from Peter Burrows, safeguarding lead for the trustees, who can be contacted through the office by speaking to other members of the team.

The designated safeguarding adults lead should be responsible for providing acknowledgement of the referral and brief feedback to the person raising the original concern. Feedback should be given in a way that will not make the situation worse or breach the Data Protection Act. If the police are involved, they should be consulted prior to giving feedback to the referrer to ensure any criminal investigation is not affected.

The local authority will decide who will lead on a safeguarding enquiry should it progress to that stage. The named organisation should not conduct its own safeguarding enquiry unless instructed to do so by the local authority.

Staff and volunteers should ensure that the adult with care and support needs is involved at all stages of their safeguarding enquiry ensuring a person-centred approach is adopted.

Complaints procedure

Volunteer Action promotes transparency and honesty when things go wrong. All staff and volunteers should apologise and be honest with service users and other relevant people when things go wrong.

If anyone is unhappy with Volunteer Action's decision about the safeguarding concern, refer them to <L:\Policy Documents\Volunteer Action policies\Complaints Procedure 2019.docx>

Why is it important to take action?

It may be difficult for adults with care and support needs to protect themselves and to report abuse. They rely on you to help them.

Confidentiality and information sharing

Volunteer Action expects all staff, volunteers, trustees to maintain confidentiality at all times. In line with Data Protection law, Volunteer Action does not share information if not required.

It should however be noted that information should be shared with authorities if an adult is deemed to be at risk of immediate harm. Sharing the right information, at the right time, with the right people can make all the difference to preventing harm. For further guidance on information sharing and safeguarding see: <https://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/safeguarding-adults/sharing-information/keymessages.asp>

Recruitment and training

Volunteer Action is committed to safe employment. Safe recruitment practices, such as Disclosure and Barring checks reduce the risk of exposing adults with care and support needs to people unsuitable to work with them.

- Volunteer Action will apply for an enhanced DBS check for all volunteers who take part in 'regulated activities' and for all those working in the office who manage them. This includes all drivers who will be taking members to medical appointments.
- Volunteer Action will apply for a standard DBS check for all volunteer befrienders where they are part of the visiting service.
- The importance of this safeguarding policy will be brought to the attention of all new recruits as part of their induction and will be signed as seen in the volunteer agreement.
- All volunteer drivers, befrienders and staff will attend compulsory safeguarding training before beginning work for Volunteer Action and will be asked to complete a training update every 3 years. A certificate date within 3 years from another organisation is also acceptable.
- In line with our separate 'Recruitment of ex-Offenders' policy, all applicants are encouraged to reveal convictions beforehand. The revelation of convictions at any time in the recruitment process is dealt with by the 'Recruitment of ex-Offenders' policy. <L:\Policy Documents\Volunteer Action policies\Ex-Offenders Policy and Equality.pdf>
- Volunteer Action will pay all costs associated with obtaining mandatory DBS checks.

Prevent

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.

Appendix 1

What are the types of safeguarding adults abuse?

The Care and Support statutory guidance sets out the 10 main types of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological
- Financial abuse
- Discriminatory
- Organisational
- Domestic violence
- Modern Slavery
- Self-neglect

However, you should keep an open mind about what constitutes abuse or neglect as it can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual case should always be considered.

What are the possible signs of abuse?

Abuse and neglect can be difficult to spot. You should be alert to the following possible signs of abuse and neglect:

- Depression, self-harm or suicide attempts
- Difficulty making friends
- Fear or anxiety
- The person looks dirty or is not dressed properly,
- The person never seems to have money,
- The person has an injury that is difficult to explain (such as bruises, finger marks, 'non-accidental' injury, neck, shoulders, chest and arms),
- The person has signs of a pressure ulcer,
- The person is experiencing insomnia
- The person seems frightened, or frightened of physical contact.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour
- The person is withdrawn, changes in behaviour

You should ask the person if you are unsure about their well-being as there may be other explanations to the above presentation.

Who abuses and neglects adults?

Abuse can happen anywhere, even in somebody's own home. Most often abuse takes place by others who are in a position of trust and power. It can take place whether an adult lives alone or with others. Anyone can carry out abuse or neglect, including:

- partners;
- other family members;
- neighbours;
- friends;
- acquaintances;
- local residents;
- people who deliberately exploit adults they perceive as vulnerable to abuse;
- paid staff or professionals; and
- volunteers and strangers

Appendix 2

Raising a safeguarding concern

Vulnerable adults will occasionally disclose abuse to an individual they have come to feel they can trust. This happens for many reasons, but the important thing to remember is that if they do tell you, it may be in the hope that you will act to stop it happening, even if they ask you not to do anything with the information.

Vulnerable adults may feel as if they are betraying someone they are close to and whom they love. It is not unusual for a vulnerable adult to love the abuser, but want the abuse to stop, especially when that person is a family member or carer. Equally, it may be someone they fear e.g. a person whom they perceive to be able to influence decisions concerning their future. Either way, it takes great courage for a vulnerable adult to talk about abuse and your response can be crucial.

It is important to remember too, that it can be more difficult for some vulnerable adults to tell than for others. Vulnerable adults who have experienced prejudice and discrimination, for example through racism, may well believe that people from other ethnic groups or backgrounds do not really care about them. They may have little reason to trust those they see as authority figures and may wonder whether you will be any different.

Vulnerable adults with a disability will have to overcome barriers before disclosing abuse. They may well rely on the abuser for their daily care and have no knowledge of alternative sources.

If a vulnerable adult discloses abuse to you in the course of your work it is important to react appropriately.

<p>DO: Remain calm and receptive Listen without interrupting Only ask questions of clarification if you are unclear what the vulnerable adult is saying Make it clear you take them seriously Acknowledge their courage in telling you Tell them they are not responsible for the abuse Check what they have said to you with them to ensure your understanding is right Let them know you will do what you can to help them and, where possible, get their consent to inform your Manager and Northamptonshire Adult Social Care team Be aware of your own safety Make a written record</p>	<p>DO NOT: Ignore the allegation Allow your shock or distaste to show Probe for more information/ask other questions Make assumptions/judgements or speculate 'Defame' anyone Make negative comments about the alleged abuser or anyone Make promises you cannot keep Agree to keep the information secret Make contact with the alleged abuser</p>
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It is essential that everything possible is done to protect the vulnerable adults who place their trust in us. If someone tells you that they are being, or have been, abused you must:

- make an immediate record of what the vulnerable adult has said, using their own words;
- follow the instructions for reporting to the Manager, as set out in the procedure; and
- tell them that you will have to inform the Manager and that, if appropriate, the Northamptonshire Adult Social Care team will also have to be informed.