



The Arc Community Hub

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The Arc Community Hub

Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy

Reviews

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

This policy was last reviewed
on (date):

2/02/2024

Signed: _____



Name:

Sue Halford

Safeguarding Officer, The Arc Community Hub

Date of next review:

2/2/2025



Introduction

This policy applies to everyone working in or for The Arc Community Hub, including the board of trustees, all committee members, paid employees, volunteers and people running activities and sessions, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of The Arc Community Hub

The purpose of this policy:

The Arc Community Hub is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, engaged in the breadth of its activities. The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of employees, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of The Arc Community Hub in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse. All adults have the right to be safe from harm and should be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To explain the responsibilities of The Arc Community Hub charity and its employees, volunteers and trustees have in respect of vulnerable adult protection.
- To provide employees, 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.

Where services or activities are provided separately by another organisation, The Arc Community Hub's Board of Trustees will seek assurance in writing that the organisation concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard and protect adults, complying at least with this policy.

Context

For the purpose of this document 'adult' means a person aged 18 years or over. Some adults are less able to protect themselves than others, and some have difficulty making their wishes and feelings known. This may make them vulnerable to abuse.

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".

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults. To this end it is the responsibility of all employees, volunteers or Trustees to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect (see the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person/agency. For the purposes of ensuring consistent and widely understood terminology, these policy and procedures will use the phrase 'Vulnerable Adults' to identify those eligible for interventions within the procedures.



Legal framework

This guidance reflects the principles contained within the Human Rights Act 1998, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005, covering England and Wales, provides a statutory framework for people who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves, or who have capacity and want to make preparations for a time when they may lack capacity in the future. It sets out who can take decisions, in which situations, and how they should go about this.

The Human Rights Act 1998 gives legal effect in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) created a framework for whistle blowing across the private, public and voluntary sectors. The Act provides almost every individual in the workplace with protection from victimisation where they raise genuine concerns about malpractice in accordance with the Act's provisions.

The role of employees, volunteers and trustees

All employees, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of The Arc Community Hub have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults. Employees, volunteers and trustees may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy will enable everyone to make informed and confident responses to specific adult protection issues. Grange Park Centre is committed to providing safeguarding training to all employees, volunteers and trustees.

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. 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 into 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. The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets' report suggests the following 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 racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Procedure in the event of a disclosure

It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions 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 should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual. A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information. The report should include:

- The person's known details including name, date of birth, address and contact numbers.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times, specific factors and any other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The person's account if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Accounts from others, including colleagues and parents.

Responding to an allegation

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must first be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), the Designated Safeguarding Trustee, or other Trustee if the DSO is not available. The recipient of the allegation or disclosure shall then telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local adult social services duty social worker. 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. Contact details for the notification can be found at the end of this policy.

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
- React Calmly
- Reassure the person that they were right to tell you and that they are not to blame and take what the person says seriously
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Be careful not to be deemed as putting words into the person's mouth, the easiest way of doing this is by asking questions
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support
- Make a full and written record of what has been said as soon as possible and don't delay in passing on the information

DO NOT

- Promise Confidentiality
- 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



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 safeguarding officer.

Confidentiality

Vulnerable adult protection raises issues of confidentiality which should be clearly understood by all. Employees, volunteers and trustees have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and adult social services. Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all. 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. If an adult confides in an employee or volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the employee or volunteer tells the adult sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies. Within that context, the adult should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent should 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.

Where a disclosure has been made, employees or volunteers should let the adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result. Employees or volunteers should assure the adult that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The adult's involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account 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.



Contact details

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):

Sue Halford, The Arc Community Hub, Operations Manager

Email: sue@arc-hub.org.uk

Phone: 07562 467356

Designated Safeguarding Trustee (DST):

Mike Ellerby

Email: mike@arc-hub.org.uk

Phone: 07855 307233

Leicestershire Adult Social Care:

Adult social care: 0116 305 0004

Out of hours adult social care: 0116 255 1606

Emergency services: 999