

Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy

The Company subscribes to the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board e-newsletter and receives notification of any changes to the law or best practice which inform updates to this Policy.

Statement of Policy

We wish to protect our vulnerable adult members both from any kind of abuse and from accidents wherever possible.

The Company recognises that 'abuse' – the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons – can take many forms. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or a failure 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. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. (See attached notes for further information on types of abuse, who may be the abusers, where it may take place, and recognising the signs and indicators of abuse).

The Company is committed to a code of practice that not only protects vulnerable adults from harm but also enables them to take as full a part as possible in the Company's decision-making processes. All members of the company, whether or not they are vulnerable adults themselves, accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of these issues.

The Company believes that:

The welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount.

Some risks must be taken if people are to live a full life.

All vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Involvement of External Agencies:

The Single Point of Access (SPA).0300 470 9100 (9-5 Monday to Friday) or 01483 517898 (out of hours).

The Police on 999.

The Company will ensure that:

All Company members will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.

A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers everyone to play a full part in the life of the Company.

Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.

All members and employees of the Company are fully informed on how to respond appropriately in situations of alleged abuse or accident.

The Company keeps informed of changes in legislation and policy for the protection of vulnerable adults.

The Company will undertake relevant training.

The Company will maintain a register of all people working with the company and will retain a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.

This Policy will be monitored and will be subject to regular review by the Trustees of the company.

The Board of Trustees will appoint a Safeguarding lead and sub-Committee of at least two members.

Procedures for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults

This document defines the procedures to be followed both to mitigate risks and in case of abusive or accidental harm.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks are required for all adults carrying out regulated activities during the course of their work for the Company.

Responsibilities of the Company

Risk assessments will be made of any new venue used by the company.

Risk assessments will be made of each production as it evolves to ensure the safety of all concerned.

Unsupervised contact between visitors and our vulnerable adults will not be permitted unless they have DBS disclosure.

Every potential worker and volunteer must provide references, attend an interview and undergo a DBS check if their work brings them into contact with vulnerable members. All references must be taken up.

Ongoing training will be provided to all Company Members so that issues of harm and abuse are clearly understood and everyone is confident that concerns will be addressed.

The whereabouts of all Company Associates and Volunteers must be known while they are at work.

Two Company Associates or Volunteers shall be present at all times.

Up to date contact details for all Company Members will be kept to hand in case of emergency.

Up to date medical information for all Company Members will be kept to hand and communicated to the relevant Associates and Volunteers to enable them to act in a way that protects individuals from harm. Information will be shared only as necessary, and with reference to our Data Protection Policies.

Relevant staff will know how to get in touch with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub in case it needs to report a concern about abuse.

The Company will seek permission from individuals and/or their carers to use photographic material for promotional or other purposes.

The Company's web-based materials and activities will be carefully monitored for inappropriate use.

The Company will ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of its members, including the safe handling, storage and disposal of any sensitive information such as DBS disclosures.

Respect for others will be encouraged by the staff at all times, in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Individual responsibilities -

Accidents

If anyone is injured while in the care of the Company.

First aid will be administered.

If necessary the emergency services will be called.

Telephone contact will then be made with the contact nominated by the injured person.

The workshop tutor should be informed if not present at the time of the accident; the Safeguarding Lead or deputy. If a workshop tutor receives a verbal report they will make a note of the details and pass this to the safeguarding lead or deputy as soon as possible.

Details of the injury will then be recorded in full, along with date, time and place of accident. This record should be signed by the person attending.

Abuse

Suspicion of Abuse

If you see or suspect abuse of any kind:

If there is an immediate danger, phone 999.

Make your suspicions known to a member of staff or the Safeguarding Lead immediately. If a member of staff receives a verbal report they will make a note of the details and pass this to the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. In the case of an allegation being made against the Safeguarding lead or anyone else named above, this should be reported directly to a member of the Safeguarding sub-Committee.

Please make a note for your own records of what you witnessed and your response, in case there is follow-up in which you are involved.

Disclosure of Abuse

If someone confides in you that abuse has taken place:

Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow them to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer. Don't pass judgement.

Tell them that you must pass the information on, to whom and why.

Safeguard the person

Speak immediately to a member of staff or the Safeguarding Lead

Record the words of the person in writing as soon as is practical (see 'Recording' below).

Do Not:

Confront the alleged abuser.
Begin an investigation on your own.
Damage or destroy possible evidence.

In cases of suspected or reported abuse you must speak to a member of staff or the Safeguarding Lead who will ensure that the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub is contacted if necessary. In an emergency, phone 999.

Responsibilities of the Safeguarding Lead when suspected abuse is reported:

Listen carefully to what has been said. Allow them to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer. Don't pass judgement.

Make a detailed note of what has been reported.

If there is an immediate concern for a person's safety, dial 999 and ask for the Police. Whether or not the concern is judged to be serious, inform the Safeguarding sub-Committee what you are doing about it.

If the suspected victim and/or abuser has a primary carer or social worker who is known to Freewheelers, contact them to discuss your concerns.

If the primary carer / social worker is not known to Freewheelers, the Safeguarding Lead will contact MASH within 24 hours of the concern being raised.

Additional responsibilities of the Safeguarding Lead in the case of allegations against Company Members:

If a serious allegation is made against any member of the Company, assisting volunteer, etc., that individual will be suspended immediately until the investigation is concluded. This decision should be made in conjunction with a Trustee.

In all cases, listen carefully to what has been said, and make a detailed note of any conversation.

Whether or not the concern is judged to be serious, inform a Trustee or another member of Senior Management what you are doing about it.

If necessary, put temporary measures in place, with reference to the Company Violence at Work Policy, to prevent any further instances occurring.

Follow the Company Complaints Procedure and resolve disputes internally where possible.

If you suspect that a crime has taken place, dial 999 and ask for the Police.

If you have concerns for the ongoing welfare of a Vulnerable Adult, follow the steps listed above (Responsibilities of the Safeguarding Lead when suspected abuse is reported)

The above actions will be carried out by the Safeguarding sub-Committee in the case of an allegation being made against the Safeguarding Lead.

Recording

In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, the details of an allegation or reported incident must be recorded, regardless of whether or not the concerns have been shared with a statutory protection agency.

An accurate note shall be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure; the parties involved; what was said or done and by whom; any action taken to investigate the matter; any further action taken, e.g. suspension of an individual; where relevant the reasons why the matter was not referred to a statutory agency; and the name of the persons reporting and to whom it was reported.

The record will be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

Rights and Confidentiality

If a complaint is made against a member of the Company he or she will be made aware of their rights under the Company's disciplinary procedures.

Both the alleged abuser and the person who may have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 2018. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.

In criminal law the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Additional Guidance Notes for the Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

(From the Surrey Multi-Agency Procedures for Protecting Vulnerable Adults)

What is abuse?

Abuse is defined as: 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 be broadly defined under the following categories:

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the non-accidental infliction of physical force that results (or could result) in bodily injury, pain or impairment. Signs might include burns, bruising, scratches or accidents that cannot be explained, misuses of medication or forcing someone, for example, to stay in a care home.

Neglect

Neglect is when a vulnerable adult does not have their basic needs met, such as adequate food or warmth or help with personal hygiene. Signs might include deteriorating health, appearance or mood.

Financial abuse

Financial abuse is when a vulnerable adult is exploited for financial gain, e.g. by a relative or door-to-door salesman. Often valuables will go missing in the home or there may be a change in financial circumstances that cannot be explained.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity that the vulnerable adult has not or could not consent to or was pressurised or manipulated into. Signs can include changes in physical behaviour or physical discomfort.

Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse is that which impinges on the emotional health and development of individuals. It might be emotional abuse such as threats of harm or abandonment, enforced isolation blaming or controlling behaviour, or verbal and racial insults. Signs may be fear, confusion or disturbed sleep.

Discriminatory abuse

Discriminatory abuse consists of abusive or derisive attitudes or behaviour based on a person's sex, sexuality, ethnic origin, race, age or disability.

Professional abuse

This is the misuse of a therapeutic power and abuse of trust by professionals and the failure to act on suspected abuse/crimes.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts.

Who may be abusers?

People who abuse:

Are often well known to their victims but can be strangers.

Might be a relative, partner, son or daughter, friend or neighbour, a paid or voluntary worker, or a health or social care worker.

Could be another vulnerable adult, service user or group member.

May not realise they are abusing and can sometimes act out of character and abuse because of the stress of caring.

Where does abuse take place?

Abuse can take place in a wide range of settings such as:

The vulnerable adult's home

Transportation including a carer's vehicle
A carer's home
A day centre
A community centre
A care home
A hospital
The workplace
Educational institutions
Company venues
Theatres and other places visited by the Company

Recognising the signs and indicators of abuse

Where abuse has occurred one or more of the following signs or indicators may have been present. None of these definitively suggest abuse, however, suspicions should be heightened if one or a combination of these indicators exists.

Changes in a person's behaviour
Unexplained changes in a person's circumstances
Physical signs of abuse
Withdrawal of verbal communication
A person appearing withdrawn
Unexplained reactions towards particular individuals or settings
Dislike of being touched and flinching on being touched
Disturbed sleep patterns
Frequent or regular visits to the General Practitioner or the accident and emergency department or hospital admissions
Panic attacks
Absconding/wandering
Obsessive or challenging behaviour
Self harm
History of domestic violence.

END OF POLICY

Next review Jul 2020
