

ANGEL COMMUNITY CANAL BOAT TRUST



SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

1. Introduction

The aim of ACCT's Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy is to ensure that all our service users, who are vulnerable people, are protected from abuse and to ensure that those who have been abused receive support and protection from further abuse. The Policy sets out the steps to be taken by ACCT staff and volunteers when abuse is disclosed, identified, suspected or alleged.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy is overseen by ACCT's designated safeguarding officer, who is responsible for acting as a source of advice on vulnerable adult matters, for co-ordinating action within the organisation and for ensuring that liaison takes place with appropriate outside organisations in suspected and actual cases of vulnerable adult abuse. The Safeguarding Manager for the ACCT is the skipper and project manager.

This policy is reviewed annually and will be updated as necessary.

2. Policy Statement and Principles

ACCT aims to ensure that all our service users, who are vulnerable people, are protected from abuse and to ensure that those who have been abused receive support and protection from further abuse. The principles of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adult Policy are to:

- actively promote the empowerment and well-being of vulnerable adults through the services we provide;
- act in a way which supports the rights of the individual to lead an individual life based on self determination and personal choice;
- recognise people who are unable to take their own decisions and/or to protect themselves, their assets and bodily integrity;
- recognise that the right of self determination can involve risk and ensure that such risk is recognised and understood by all concerned and minimised whenever possible; and
- ensure that when the right to an independent lifestyle and choice is at risk that the individual concerned receives appropriate help, including advice, protection and support from relevant agencies.

3. Definitions

3.1 Vulnerable Adults

A vulnerable adult is any person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself or who is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. This may be because he or she has a mental health problem, a disability, a sensory impairment, is old and frail, or has some form of illness. Because of his or her vulnerability, the individual may be in receipt of a care service in his or her own home, in the community, or be resident in a residential care home, nursing home, or other institutional setting.



3.2 Abuse

The definition of abuse is:

‘The physical, psychological, emotional, financial or sexual maltreatment, or neglect of a vulnerable adult by another person. The abuse may be a single act or repeated over a period of time. It may take one form or a multiple of forms. The lack of appropriate action can also be a form of abuse. Abuse can occur in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust and can be perpetrated by a person/persons, in breach of that trust, who have influence over the life of a dependant, whether they be formal or informal carers, staff or family members or others. It can also occur outside such a relationship’. 1

Abuse may occur when a vulnerable adult:

- Is in training or employment environments
- Lives alone, with a relative or others
- Attends residential or day care settings
- Is receiving support services
- Is in other places previously assumed safe
- Is in public places

The main different forms of abuse are:

- Physical Abuse – such as hitting, slapping, rough handling, misuse of medication or misuse of restraint.
- Sexual Abuse – making someone carry out a sexual act they have not or cannot consent to.
- Psychological Abuse – such as use of threats, humiliation or name calling.
- Financial or Material Abuse – such as theft of money / possessions, misuse of someone’s benefits or denying someone access to their money.
- Neglect and Acts of Omission – such as not meeting a person’s basic care needs.
- Discriminatory Abuse – any form of abuse based on discrimination because of a person’s gender, age, disability, sexual orientation etc.
- Institutional Abuse – abuse or poor practice throughout an organisation.

Any or all types of abuse may be perpetrated as a result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

4. Preventing Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

While it is not possible to prevent all abuse, there are a number of steps those working or volunteering in ACCT can take to reduce the risk of abuse occurring. They should:

- (i) know what abuse is;
- (ii) understand how it can happen;
- (iii) be alert to indicators of potential abuse situations;
- (iv) know the procedures for reporting concerns and poor practice; and
- (v) provide appropriate support through good assessment and care planning.

Likely situations for abuse can reduced through the following.

1 derived from regional guidance issued by the Management Executive, Department of Health & Social Services, in 1996



- Employing rigorous recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers as appropriate.
- Informing staff and volunteers of this policy at induction.
- Requiring all staff to undertake Safeguarding training, which is updated as required and providing practical guidance for staff on:
 - The types of abuse;
 - Recognising abuse; and
 - Reporting suspected or alleged abuse.
- Encouraging staff and volunteers to be vigilant and report all concerns.
- Instructing staff / volunteers on how they can best design out sole access to vulnerable adults within their job or voluntary role.
- Promoting a culture of openness and transparency.
- Having clear service standards and policies and procedures.
- Having an effective risk assessment process.
- Having an effective quality management system.

Situations for abuse of vulnerable adults can be reduced and ACCT staff and volunteers protected from false accusations by making sure that everyone is aware that as a general rule they should not spend excessive amounts of time with vulnerable adults away from others.

Staff and volunteers must also follow specific guidance on photographs and videos as follows:

- Permission must be sought from the vulnerable adult or their representative for the use of images.
- Avoid using a vulnerable adult's name and image together unless explicit permission has been sought from the individual or their representative and that information provided with the image does not compromise the safeguarding of the vulnerable adult

ACCT makes it clear to staff and volunteers they should never:

- allow or engage inappropriate touching of any form;
- make sexually suggestive comments to vulnerable adults;
- engage in sexually provocative activity;
- engage in rough physical activity;
- let allegations a vulnerable adult makes go unchallenged or unrecorded; and
- do things of a personal nature for vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves.

5. Respect for the Individual

When abuse has been disclosed, reported or observed, it is important that the alleged victim:

- is treated with dignity;
- is involved as an equal in investigation and kept fully informed on a regular basis;



- has the right to be believed when they report abuse of themselves and others unless there is direct and unequivocal evidence to the contrary;
- has the right to appropriate education/information in order to identify behaviour which constitutes abuse; and
- is offered an appropriate means of victim support such as counselling or legal advice.

6. Confidentiality

In normal circumstances observing the principle of confidentiality will mean that information is only passed on to others with the consent of the service user. However, where there is concern about abuse, the service user needs to be made aware that information has to be shared with statutory agencies in order to protect them and also to potentially protect others or investigate an alleged or suspected criminal offence even if they are not happy for this to happen.

7. Procedure for responding to reports and incidents of abuse or alleged abuse

The primary role of the person who first suspects abuse or is told of it is to report it to the designated person or a trustee. It is important that everyone in ACCT is aware that the person who first encounters the case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not the abuse has occurred. That is the task for the professional agencies following a referral to them. The designated person or trustee will be responsible for alerting and referring cases of abuse to statutory authorities.

Alerting

Everyone working with vulnerable adults has a duty to report suspected, alleged or confirmed incidences of abuse. If the allegation relates to a member of staff, the employee's line manager/trustee should be alerted. If the allegations relate to a trustee, the matter should be reported to another trustee. Someone providing assistance to the vulnerable adult at this stage will need to obtain as much information as possible pertaining to the allegation or suspicion of abuse, particularly if a criminal offence has been committed. Only the basic facts of the suspected abuse or grounds for suspicion should be clarified at this stage. The person should avoid asking leading questions and should not discuss the allegation with the victim or the alleged perpetrator. They should be clear that their role is primarily supportive rather than investigative. On receiving an alert of an allegation or suspicion of abuse, the line manager should check that the vulnerable adult's immediate needs are being met, i.e. that they are in no more immediate danger and that medical assistance, if deemed necessary has been sought.

Referring

The Safeguarding Manager / nominated deputy is responsible for ensuring that concerns are referred to the appropriate person or organisation outside ACCT. This contact should if possible be made within the same working day.