



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:

The protection of vulnerable adults is a key aspect of safeguarding. It holds equal importance as the safeguarding of children and young people.

What is meant by the term vulnerable adult

“Aged 18 years or over; Who 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”.

Safeguarding Adults NHS England 2017

Good safeguarding provision looks beyond official definitions of what might be a vulnerable adult. A vulnerable adult is any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and or support. This also applies to moments in the life of any adult when he or she might feel particularly vulnerable. Such moments might be brief, longer term or recurring. They would include admission to hospital, periods of ill health, bereavement and other losses, life adjustments, transitions and other times of personal stress and distress.

Responsibility

The responsibility to care for and protect vulnerable adults is a shared one. Whilst as a registered charity, the World Community for Christian Meditation has a responsibility to safeguard vulnerable adults who come for many reasons to the various aspects of our work, it is also important to remember that there will be times when staff and volunteers might also find themselves vulnerable.

In exercising this important duty of care the World Community for Christian Meditation will be required to comply with the recording and reporting procedures which are in line with current practice in the UK. This will include reporting as required to the statutory services, health, social care and the police. To assist in this process it would be beneficial for each 'centre' in the UK to have a named police and social work contact. Centres in other countries should seek to link in a similar way to members of the appropriate civil authorities.

All staff, officers and volunteers for the World Community for Christian Meditation should:
understand their personal responsibility to report all vulnerable adult concerns in accordance with local authority procedures

be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;

be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to vulnerable adults;

share information as requested by the local authority social services department so that an assessment can be made of the vulnerable adults needs and circumstances;

contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the welfare of any vulnerable adult

Definitions of abuse and neglect:

The abuse of vulnerable adults is a serious cause for concern within safeguarding. The serious nature and the inherent risks must be given a priority so that staff and volunteers are vigilant. Adults and children who have any form of vulnerability or additional needs are at a higher risk of being abused.

So often assumptions can be made that adults can take care of themselves or indeed that bullying is encouraged and enabled because it is part of the culture of the group and only meant as fun.

When abuse happens it is rarely identified as one form of abuse. Alongside sexual abuse there is often physical and emotional abuse. Within a faith context this is often further complicated by spiritual abuse.

Physical abuse

As with the definition of physical abuse of children, the same applies for vulnerable adults and can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness. Other types of physical abuse include unnecessary restraint, deliberately making a vulnerable adult feel physical uncomfortable, force feeding or withholding of food and water, not responding to a call for assistance and physical punishments.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional or psychological abuse of vulnerable adults often happens under the generic term of bullying. It can also include name calling, failure to observe privacy, verbal abuse, intimidation, isolation, failure to attend to their needs, swearing and speaking to them in a patronising manner.

Sexual Abuse

As with the sexual abuse of children, the sexual abuse of adults includes grooming, forcing or bullying a vulnerable adult to participate in sexual contact or non-contact of a sexually abusive nature. It is important to remember that sexual abuse might not include direct physical contact and would include forcing a vulnerable adult to watch pornography, look at pornographic images or to watch others engaged in sexual activity.

Sexual abuse of vulnerable adults can include rape, prostitution, penetrative or non-penetrative activities, inappropriate touch and exposure.

Spiritual Abuse

Any abuse which takes place within a faith context can include spiritual abuse. It is not unusual for the sexual and psychological abuse of vulnerable adults to be placed in a spiritual context as if that is happening is the will of God or His divine judgement. It is very similar to emotional abuse in that it includes grooming behaviours but in a religious context. It can include coercive behaviours, the use of scripture or sacramental rituals, the teaching authority of the respective faith group, the power and position of authority held by those in leadership, the imposing of guilt and shame, encouraging emotional dependency.

Neglect and Acts of Omission

Any failure to meet the needs of a vulnerable adult is a form of neglect. It can include failure to provide access to the basic requirements of food, shelter and clothing. It can also include: failure to provide medication as prescribed, isolation, not allowing the person to communicate his or her needs. It includes acts of omission such as failing to ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing of a vulnerable adult who might be displaying signs of self-neglect.

Staff awareness

All staff will be made aware of this policy, in relation to the importance of safe-guarding vulnerable adults as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for volunteers officers of the community and for all staff.

Where necessary or possible, staff will be expected to attend appropriate training courses and dependent on their role, they should attend regular update training sessions.

Reviewing the Policy and Procedure

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every year, this will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

Allegations Involving a Members of Staff, Officer or Volunteer The World Community for Christian Meditation is committed to having effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including checking all staff and volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people. Where appropriate, key staff involved in recruitment processes will undertake Safer Recruitment Training.

However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. Allegations against those who work with children or vulnerable adults, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances.

All allegations of abuse of children or vulnerable adults by those who work with them or care for them must be taken seriously. All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to The Safeguarding Officer.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with vulnerable adults has:

Behaved in a way which has harmed a vulnerable adult, or may have harmed a vulnerable adult;
Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a vulnerable adult;

Behaved towards a vulnerable adult in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

The allegations may relate to the persons behaviour at work, at home or in another setting.

The Safeguarding Officer will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral to the local authority safeguarding team is required and/or whether action pending a disciplinary investigation is appropriate.

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to the local authority safeguarding team and the Police; but common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a vulnerable adult is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, the Safeguarding Officer will immediately refer the matter to the local authority safeguarding team and ask for a Strategy Discussion/Meeting to be convened straight away.

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by the local social services department. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation. Consequently the Safeguarding Officer should be informed

of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to come within the scope of this procedure so that he or she can consult Police and social care colleagues as appropriate.

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

- 1) The police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- 2) Enquiries and assessment by Adult Social Care Services as to whether the vulnerable adult is need of protection or in need of services;
- 3) Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

Change Record
