

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

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SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY STATEMENT

This policy will enable Gaydio and Gaydio Brighton to demonstrate its commitment to keeping safe the vulnerable adults with whom it works alongside. Gaydio and Gaydio Brighton acknowledges their duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

It is important to have the policy and procedures in place so that staff, volunteers, service users, and the board of directors can work to prevent abuse and know what to do in the event of abuse.

The Policy Statement and Procedures have been drawn up in order to enable Gaydio and Gaydio Brighton to:

- Promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm, abuse and coercion occurring.
- To ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported.
- And to stop that abuse occurring.

The Policy and Procedures relate to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

Vulnerable adults are defined as people aged 18 or over:

- Who are receiving or may need community care services because of learning, physical or mental disability, age, or illness
- Who are or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

The policy applies to all staff, including senior managers, the board of directors, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, students and anyone working on behalf of Gaydio or Gaydio Brighton.

It is acknowledged that significant numbers of vulnerable adults are abused and it is important that Gaydio and Gaydio Brighton has a Safeguarding Adults Policy, a set of procedures to follow and puts in place preventative measures to try and reduce those numbers.

These guidelines are for the use of all paid staff, volunteers and visitors. We will make them available to the carers of the vulnerable adults to whom we offer a service. Through them, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- Vulnerable adults are listened to, valued and respected
- Staff are aware of the need to be alert to the signs of abuse and know what to do with their concerns
- All paid and unpaid staff are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures
- All paid and unpaid staff are given appropriate support and training

All concerns should be acted upon immediately. If you are concerned that a vulnerable adult might be at risk or is suffering abuse, you should tell the designated safeguarding officer within your organization.

3. Your designated officer is: Ian Wallace - 0844 682 8301

If the designated officer is not available, speak to a Gaydio or Gaydio Brighton Director on the Contacts List in Section 6.

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1. RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE

It can often be difficult to recognize abuse. The signs listed in these guidelines are only indicators and many can have reasonable explanations. People may behave strangely or seem unhappy for many reasons. It is nevertheless important to know what could indicate that abuse is taking place and to be alert to the need to consult further.

Someone can abuse a vulnerable adult by actively inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can take place within a family, in an institutional or community setting, by telephone or on the Internet.

If you are worried about a vulnerable adult it is important that you keep a written record of any physical or behavioural signs and symptoms. In this way you can monitor whether or not a pattern emerges and provide evidence to any investigation if required.

“Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons” (No Secrets: Department of Health, 2000)

Abuse includes:

- Physical abuse: including hitting, slapping, punching, burning, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint
- Sexual abuse: including rape, indecent assault, inappropriate touching, exposure to pornographic material
- Psychological or emotional abuse: including belittling, name calling, threats of harm, intimidation, isolation, online bullying
- Financial or material abuse: including stealing, selling assets, fraud, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
- Neglect and acts of omission: including withholding the necessities of life such as medication, food or warmth, ignoring medical or physical care needs
- Discriminatory abuse: including racist, homophobic, sexist, that based on a person’s disability and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment
- Institutional or organisational: including regimented routines and cultures, unsafe practices, lack of person-centred care or treatment
- Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts.

People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be doctors, nurses, social workers, advocates, staff members, volunteers or others in a position of trust. They may also be relatives, friends, neighbours or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse.

2. WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CONCERNS?

In the event that a vulnerable adult makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against another individual, it is important that you:

- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour;
- Let them know that you take what they are saying seriously;
- Do not attempt to question or interview them yourself; \

- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else in order to help them.
- Do not promise to keep what they tell you secret;
- Inform your designated safeguarding officer as soon as possible;
- Make a written record of the incident or events.

Sometimes you may just feel concerned about a vulnerable adult but do not know whether to share your concerns or not. In this situation you should always raise your concerns with your designated safeguarding officer, who will help you to decide what to do.

If it is decided that a safeguarding investigation needs to be pursued, you should:

- Work closely and collaboratively with all professionals involved in the investigation, in order to keep the vulnerable adult safe;
- Attend a safeguarding protection conference if you are invited. You will be asked to provide information about your involvement with the vulnerable adult, which is why it is important to keep records of your concerns;
- Attend any subsequent safeguarding review conferences as required

3. ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS

Organizations that work or come into contact with vulnerable adults need to be aware of the possibility that allegations of abuse will be made against members of their staff. Allegations will usually be that some kind of abuse has taken place. They can be made by vulnerable adults and they can be made by other concerned adults. Allegations can be made for a variety of reasons. Some of the most common are:

- Abuse has actually taken place;
- Something happens to a vulnerable adult that reminds them of an event that happened in the past – the vulnerable adult is unable to recognize that the situation and the people are different;
- Vulnerable adults can misinterpret your language or your actions because they are reminded of something else;
- Some vulnerable adults know how powerful an allegation can be; if they are angry with you about something they can make an allegation as a way of hitting out;
- An allegation can be a way of seeking attention.

All allegations should be brought to the notice of the designated safeguarding officer immediately. In cases where the allegation is made against this person, the complainant should approach a more senior official or take the following action him or herself:

- Make sure that the vulnerable adult in question is safe and away from the alleged abuser
- Contact the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Team relevant to where the adult lives
- Contact the next of kin or carers of the vulnerable adult if advised to do so by the social worker/officer in charge of allegations
- Irrespective of any investigation by social workers or the police, you should follow the appropriate disciplinary procedure; common practice is for the alleged abuser to be suspended from work until the outcome of any investigation is clear
- Consider whether the person has access to children or vulnerable adults anywhere else and whether those organizations or groups need to be informed
- Act upon the decisions made in any strategy meeting. All incidents should be investigated internally after any external investigation has finished, to review organizational practice and put in place any additional measures to prevent a similar thing happening again

4. SAFE RECRUITMENT

The application of rigorous procedures for the recruitment of any staff who come into contact with vulnerable adults, both directly and indirectly, can reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse being made that are founded. As an absolute minimum, the following standards should be followed:

- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should complete an application form which asks for details of their previous employment and for the names of two referees
- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should have a new DBS disclosure before they start employment with you – anyone who refuses to do so should not be employed
- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should be interviewed to establish previous experience of working in an environment where there is contact with vulnerable adults and perceptions of acceptable behaviour
- Nobody should start work before references have been received. Referees should be reminded that references should not misrepresent the candidate or omit to say things that might be relevant to their employment
- All appointments to work with vulnerable adults should be subject to an agreed probationary period
- New members of staff should be clear about their responsibilities and wherever possible, work to an agreed job description

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- These guidelines should be available to everyone and fully discussed as part of an induction process.

5. GOOD PRACTICE

Every organization working with vulnerable adults should have a designated safeguarding officer who must undergo safeguarding training. Project staff and the Directors also undergo this training. This is renewed every three years. It is the responsibility of this person to make themselves available for consultation by staff, volunteers, visitors, vulnerable adults and their families;

All staff are responsible for vulnerable adults while on these premises and must make sure that health and safety guidelines are adhered to;

All staff working with vulnerable adults should receive regular supervision from a more experienced staff member and to attend basic child protection training;

No member of staff should be left alone with a vulnerable adult where they cannot be observed by others;

Under no circumstances should visitors be allowed to wander around the premises unaccompanied when vulnerable adults are present;

Where possible there should always be at least two adults present with a group of vulnerable adults –

Use of premises by other organisations

In the event that a room or rooms on the premises are used by other organizations, the letting agreement should ensure that the hiring organisation works to approved safeguarding procedures and/or that they read and agree to abide by these guidelines

6. CONTACTS

Gaydio and Gaydio Brighton Directors:

Ian Wallace - 0844 682 8301

Toby Whitehouse - 0844 682 8302

Review Date: 061120 AB