

## **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy:**

Hope Trust values, encourages and utilises the involvement of Trustees, Staff and Volunteers in its work. The time given by Trustees and Volunteers to assist the Staff in achieving the charitable aims of Hope Trust is significant and greatly appreciated.

The Safeguarding policy, whilst serious in tone, is meant to be a helpful tool so that anyone, Trustee, Staff or Volunteer would be able to look out for, and potentially recognize, abuse and then know what to do next. It is not intended to scare people away from volunteering, but rather to equip them with a number of 'next steps' should they identify abuse within the contexts of Hope Trust's work - taking services in residential homes, visiting people in residential and private homes, activities at Maidstone Hall and at other venues.

Hope Trust is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all vulnerable adults, recognising its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect vulnerable adults from harm, abuse and exploitation. Hope Trust acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. Trustees, staff and volunteers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

Through the ownership of this Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy, Hope Trust is committed to ensuring the wellbeing and safeguarding of the health, safety and general welfare of all Trustees, Staff and Volunteers as well as being fully committed to protect and promote individual human rights, the capacity for independence and improved wellbeing so that vulnerable adults stay safe, are treated with dignity and respect, enjoy a sustained quality of life and are at all times protected from abuse, neglect, discrimination or poor treatment.

The central purpose of Hope Trust's Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures is to ensure that people know how to recognise signs of abuse and neglect and, where they do occur, that there is an appropriate response to protect those affected from further harm.

### **Purpose of this Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy:**

In implementing this Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy, the Hope Trust will:

- Ensure that all Trustees, staff and volunteers understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect vulnerable adults from harm, abuse and exploitation;
- Ensure that all Trustees, staff and volunteers understand their responsibility to work at all times towards maintaining high standards of practice;
- Ensure that all Trustees, staff, volunteers and members understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a vulnerable adult, or a Trustee, staff or volunteer's conduct towards a vulnerable adult, to the Organisation's named person for safeguarding issues which will be a Pastoral Worker (Paul Taylor or Sheila Taylor.)
- Ensure that the named person Pastoral Workers and/or Chair of Trustees understand their responsibility to refer any safeguarding concerns to the statutory agencies (i.e. Police and / or Suffolk's Adult Safeguarding Board);
- Endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to the welfare and safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

## Who is a vulnerable adult?

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may be because their circumstances e.g. chronic illness, disability, age, mental health issues or their lifestyle causes them to be at risk in some situations. It should be recognised that people with special needs are able to cope in many situations, so sensitivity and common sense should be exercised.

## What is abuse?:

Abuse is mistreatment by any other person or persons that violates a person's human and civil rights. Abuse can happen anywhere – in a person's own home, in a residential or nursing home, in a supported living setting, a hospital or GP surgery, a prison, day centre or educational setting, library, sports centre, within the workplace, or within the community.

### Examples of abuse:

- **Physical abuse:** including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking or injuring someone and misuse of medication.
- **Sexual abuse:** including rape, sexual assault or pressuring someone into sexual acts they haven't consented to, don't understand or feel powerless to refuse.
- **Emotional abuse:** including threats of harm or abandonment, isolation, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse:** including theft, fraud, and misuse of property, possessions, benefits, and deliberate / premeditated mismanagement of finances by people in positions of Trust.
- **Neglect and acts of omission:** including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, withholding medication, nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse:** including abuse that is racist, sexist, or based on disability or age, or other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- **Institutional abuse:** sometimes happens in places such as residential homes, nursing homes, hospitals or prisons where people are mistreated because of poor or inadequate care / support, neglect and poor working practice that affect the whole of that service.

### Procedure for what to do if you suspect abuse:

All Trustees, staff and volunteers must take the following action where appropriate:

- Ensure the person is safe.
- Listen carefully to what the person has to say, but do not ask questions other than to clarify what has been said.
- Inform the person disclosing abuse that you cannot keep this information confidential and must pass this information on to Hope Trust's named person for safeguarding issues.
- Contact the emergency services if urgent medical help is required.
- Contact a Pastoral Worker immediately. If a Pastoral Worker is unavailable then the Chair of Trustees should be contacted. If you are unable to contact a Pastoral Worker because you suspect they may be involved in the abuse, you should contact the Chair of Trustees.
- The Pastoral Worker or Chair of Trustees will decide whether to contact the Suffolk Adult Safeguarding Board via Customer First on 0808 800 4005.

- The Pastoral Worker or Chair of Trustees will decide whether to contact the Police if it is suspected that a crime has been committed.
- Take care to preserve any evidence e.g. clothing, bedding, weapons, text messages, letters etc.
- Record the allegation or your suspicion of abuse as accurately as possible.

**Do Not:**

- Question the victim as this may affect any police action.
- Discuss the allegation / abuse with the alleged perpetrator.
- Discuss the allegation / abuse with other staff members, other than a Pastoral Worker
- Take any other action without first discussing this with a Pastoral Worker.
- Promise to maintain confidentiality.
- Delay reporting the incident / allegation.

## **Raising Concerns**

All staff, Trustees and volunteers have a clear professional and moral duty to report any allegations or suspicions of abuse or potential abuse of a vulnerable adult to a Pastoral Worker. Anyone who is involved directly or indirectly with vulnerable adults has the responsibility to be aware of the possibility of abuse. Each one has a responsibility to take appropriate action whenever there is concern that abuse may have taken place or may occur, unless someone does something to stop it. This is called 'alerting'. It is important that any allegation of abuse is taken seriously, however insignificant it may seem on first appearance to the person receiving the information.

There are four key questions to be kept in mind when deciding whether an alert becomes a referral:

- Is the person 18 or older?
- Is the person in need of or may be in need of community care services by virtue of frailty, mental disorder, disability or other condition or illness?
- Do the circumstances indicate actual or potential risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation or significant harm?
- Is the person unable or likely to be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or exploitation?

## **Who to Tell – Alert and Referral**

If you have a concern about actual or possible adult abuse, generally, you should talk urgently to a Pastoral Worker making clear what you know or suspect. The only exception to this course of action is if a Pastoral Worker may be implicated in your concerns. In these circumstances you should talk directly to the Chair of Trustees.

When a suspected incident of adult abuse is reported, the Pastoral Worker or the Chair of Trustees, must take it seriously and decide whether the allegation needs further investigation. If it appears that there are grounds to believe that adult abuse is or may be happening, the Pastoral Worker, or the Chair of Trustees, must ensure that an alert is acted upon at the earliest possible opportunity and no later than at the end of the working day in question.

If the Pastoral Worker is uncertain that abuse has occurred or is indicated, then advice should be sought from the Chair of Trustees who will contact Suffolk Adult Safeguarding Board via Customer First on 0808 800 4005 for further advice.

**The details required should include the following:**

- your name, position / relationship and contact details as the referrer

- when the incident happened
- where the incident happened
- who was involved (names and relationships)
- details of the concern or alleged abuse
- what action was taken and other organisations involved e.g. police, ambulance
- whether there is an immediate or future risk.

### **Ensuring immediate safety**

If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or in need of urgent medical attention, action must be taken to ensure their immediate safety and well-being. This may include contacting the appropriate emergency services by calling 999.

### **Police advice**

It should be noted that the Police, as well as taking a lead in any criminal investigation, are available for advice and consultation at an early stage. It is important that the Police are able to gather forensic evidence immediately and therefore they should be contacted in any case where a serious incident and / or criminal offence has occurred or is suspected of occurring.

### **Important things to consider when abuse is known or suspected:**

In all cases where a person is in immediate danger, urgent action must be taken at once, by calling the relevant emergency services.

If there is reason to believe a crime has been committed, seek the vulnerable adult's consent to inform the Police. If the vulnerable adult gives permission, ensure the situation is discussed with a Pastoral Worker or Chair of Trustees, and then contact the Police.

If the vulnerable adult does not give permission to involve the Police, this information should be passed on to a Pastoral Worker or Chair of Trustees as soon as possible, and clearly recorded. If other people are considered to be at similar risk, discussion with the Police may occur taking into account their wishes.

If you believe the person lacks the capacity to give consent and there is reason to believe a crime has been committed, action can be taken in their best interests. You must act in accordance with the wishes of the vulnerable adult, wherever possible.

However, consideration should be given to circumstances in which a vulnerable adult's wishes may be overridden. In some cases, it will be essential for other or additional services to be provided, for example residential care, to be provided immediately, before any investigation starts.

If the vulnerable adult indicates a wish for action to follow as a result of alleged or actual abuse, offer necessary support, but do not ask investigative questions. Rather, give the person reassurance that the matter is being reported and that someone will make contact with them.

In cases where serial allegations of abuse are made, each allegation must be treated separately and seriously, taking into account the vulnerable adult's wellbeing.

### **Allegations against staff**

Where an allegation concerns the actions of a member of staff (who may also be a colleague), it is the clear duty of all those concerned to report the matter as set out above. When it comes to raising adult abuse concerns, no distinction should be made between staff and other persons. The vulnerable adult's wellbeing is paramount.

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, the Chair of Trustees will need to clarify with the investigating team what action he or she intends to take under the Disciplinary Policy.

It is important to ensure that the action taken:

- protects the rights and wishes of the vulnerable adult;
- protects the rights of the member of staff concerned;
- enables the Chair of Trustees to take appropriate action either on behalf of the vulnerable adult or against the staff member where appropriate; and
- does not compromise any criminal investigation.

To achieve these outcomes it will be necessary for the Chair of Trustees to coordinate his/her responsibilities for pursuing disciplinary matters in relation to the member of staff with those of the 'investigating team', who will be working within these safeguarding adults procedures.

***Anyone who works, or has contact, with a person thought to be at risk has a responsibility to report actual or suspected abuse. This includes family members, volunteers, health workers, manager and staff.***

***Doing nothing is not an option.***

### **Useful Contact Numbers/Information:**

**Social Services:** Customer First 0808 800 4005

**Suffolk Adult Safeguarding:** [www.suffolkas.org](http://www.suffolkas.org)

**If you wish to speak to a member of staff, or Chair/Deputy Chair of Trustees, please ring the Hope Trust office (01394 272592 – office open 8.30am – 4pm Mon – Fri) and they will be happy to help you. However, if you think an issue can't wait then please ring Social Services immediately.**

This Policy applies to all Trustees, Staff and Volunteers representing Hope Trust who may have contact with vulnerable adults.

The Trustees will review this policy on a regular basis.

Signed (on behalf of Trustees' Team): Dr AH Fenning

Date of Policy adoption: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015

Date of Review: July 2018 (3 years) or as and when appropriate