

# TRANSITION CHICHESTER



## PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS

### INTRODUCTION

The characteristics of adult abuse can take a number of forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s). Victims may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach with their worries. There may be some situations where victims are unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this information to others.

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults involved in Transition Chichester's activities by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all staff and volunteer activity leaders are clear about their responsibilities.

### DEFINITION

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** include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental illness including dementia
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless

### WHAT IS ABUSE?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take a number of forms:

- Physical abuse, e.g. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, neglect or abandonment.
- Sexual abuse, e.g. involvement in any sexual activity against his/her will, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism.
- Emotional/psychological abuse, e.g. intimidation or humiliation.
- Financial abuse, e.g. theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money from pensions or savings etc.
- Neglect or acts of omission, e.g. being left in wet or soiled clothing, or malnutrition.
- Discriminatory abuse, e.g. racial, sexual or religious harassment.
- Personal exploitation, e.g. denying an individual his/her rights or forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will.
- Violation of rights, e.g. preventing an individual speaking his/her thoughts and opinions.
- Institutional abuse, e.g. failure to ensure privacy or dignity.

### REPORTING PROCEDURES

A Welfare and Protection Officer (WPO) will take responsibility for the protection of children and vulnerable adults. The WPO will be appointed by the Board of Trustees and should be contacted at once if ever a concern should arise.

The role of the WPO is to:

- Record as soon possible all allegations and disclosures in a designated book.
- Ensure that all records are kept properly and confidentially.
  
- Know how to and which agency to report concerns to should they arise.
- Make sure that appropriate information is available at the time of a referral and the referral is confirmed in writing.
- Ensure that Trustees, Project Leaders and employees have access to Transition Chichester's Vulnerable Adults Protection Procedure.
- Help any other employees and volunteers with all issues relating to the protection of vulnerable adults.
- Keep people who need to know aware of any action taken and any further action to be taken e.g. disciplinary.
- Contact different organisations to review the protection of vulnerable adults' policy regularly to check that procedures are correct and comply with current good practice.

Key Transition Chichester contact(s) will be DBS checked to an appropriate level in order to supervise those involved in activities in a manner that protects vulnerable adults, volunteers and staff of TC. The key Transition Chichester contact(s) will make themselves known those involved in activities, so that concerns about the protection of vulnerable adults can be raised and dealt with.

If a volunteer or staff member has concerns, they should report them to a key contact or the WPO straight away by telephone or in person. The WPO should also then receive a written report signed and dated within 24hrs to put in the designated book. It is of the utmost importance that these procedures be carried out as quickly as possible so as not to threaten the welfare of the adult concerned. If the concerns relate to a member of staff the DCPD should be contacted immediately by telephone.

If an allegation of abuse has been made in confidence, the WPO should attempt to gain the consent of the person to make a referral to another agency. However, the gaining of the consent is not essential in order for information to be passed on. Consideration needs to be given to:

1. The scale of the abuse
2. The risk of harm to others
3. The capacity of the vulnerable adult concerned to understand the issues of abuse and consent

If there is any doubt about whether or not to report an issue to Social Services then it should be reported. In emergency situations (e.g. where there is the risk or occurrence or severe physical injury), where immediate action is needed to safeguard the health or safety of the individual or anyone else who may be at risk, emergency services must be contacted. Where a crime is taking place, has just occurred or is suspected, the police must be contacted immediately.

## **RECRUITMENT**

The protection of vulnerable adults shall always be a major priority for Transition Chichester in selecting staff and volunteers, and appropriate recruitment procedures shall be followed.

### **Recruitment of volunteers:**

When recruiting volunteers to work with vulnerable adults, there will be a clear description of all roles available, so the most suitable appointees can be selected. For volunteers working unsupervised with vulnerable adults, a DBS check will be required.

### **Recruitment of staff:**

When recruiting staff to work with vulnerable adults

- An appropriate level DBS check will be required, and a copy kept with successful applicants' details.
- Several selection techniques shall be used to maximise the chance of staff recruitment (interview, reference, checks).
- At least one member of the Board of Trustees of Transition Chichester shall meet with applicants to view and evaluate their attitudes towards working with vulnerable adults.

- All applicants must sign a declaration of previous convictions with submission to formal check.

The Board of Trustees will nominate a person to handle the verification of identification documents required for DBS checks.

### **3. Training and supervision of volunteers and staff**

Transition Chichester expects all staff and activity leaders to be aware of the Vulnerable Adults Protection Procedure and ensure that it is adhered to at all times. Training will be given when it becomes apparent that staff and volunteers will be working with vulnerable adults.

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Board of Trustees has overall and final responsibilities in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults. The Vulnerable Adults Policy is, however, the direct concern of all those involved in Transition Chichester activities. The effectiveness of this general policy statement will be reviewed annually and revised when necessary