

FRAMPTON ON SEVERN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION **(FCA) - SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of all users of FCA premises (FCA members, Affiliated Group members and any other users of FCA Premises) in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse.

All users of FCA premises have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults.

It is the policy of FCA to safeguard the welfare of all vulnerable adults by protecting them from all forms of abuse including physical, emotional and sexual harm.

All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

FCA is committed to creating a safe environment in which vulnerable adults can feel comfortable and secure while engaged in any of activities related to FCA.

FCA members, Affiliated Group members and all other users of FCA premises should at all times show respect and understanding for individual's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of FCA.

Anyone may receive disclosures of abuse or observe vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy (and the attached good practice guide) will enable them to make informed and confident responses to specific adult protection issues.

The FCA expects all Affiliated Groups and all other users of FCA premises providing activities for vulnerable adults to

- Identify who might be at risk and how.
- Draw up a code of practice if needed, specific to the activity of the group.
- Consider the risks involved in their activity and mitigate against them as appropriate.
- Ensure that members and other users are aware of the relevant policies.

For the purpose of this document 'adult' means a person aged 18 years or over.

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults.

It is the responsibility of all FCA members or visitors to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect and to pass on their concerns to the **Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Person (DVAPP)**, who, for reasons of confidentiality, is the only person who needs to know this information: Name TBD, so at present please contact any member of the Executive Committee. They will then inform the relevant outside organisation of the incident: social services, and police.

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Person.

ACTION IN THE EVENT OF AN INCIDENT OR OF DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE OR OF AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE:

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a vulnerable adult has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

This should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

The person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional adult protection agencies, following a referral from the designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer.

The nominated Executive Committee member shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local adult social services duty social worker.

A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 24 hours.

DO

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to the Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Person for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

DON'T

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone in FCA or an Affiliated Group has concerns, a record should be made. Details must include, as far as practical:

1. Name of vulnerable adult.
2. Age.
3. Home Address (if known).
4. Date of Birth (if known).
5. Name/s and Address of next of kin.
6. Telephone numbers if available.
7. Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of somebody else? If so, record details.
8. What has prompted the concerns? Include dates and times of any specific incidents.
9. Has the vulnerable adult been spoken to? If so, what was said?
10. Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details.
11. Who has this been passed on to, in order that appropriate action is taken? e.g. designated officer, social services etc.
12. Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.

The DVAPP will inform the relevant outside organisation of the incident: social services, police

RECORD-KEEPING

All records, information and confidential notes should be kept in separate files in a locked drawer or filing cabinet.

Only the designated Persons will have access to these files.

DISCLOSURE

1. Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as Vulnerable Adult protection will always have precedence over any other issues.
2. Listen to the Vulnerable Adult, rather than question him or her directly.
3. Offer him / her reassurance without making promises, and take what the Vulnerable Adult says seriously.
4. Allow the Vulnerable Adult to speak without interruption,
5. Accept what is said – it is not your role to investigate or question.
6. Do not overreact.
7. Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement
8. Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on.
9. Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
10. Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event, Use the Vulnerable Adult's words or explanations – do not translate into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the Vulnerable Adult was trying to say.
11. Contact one of the FCA Designated Persons for advice / guidance.

12. The Designated Person may then discuss the concern / suspicion with the relevant organisation, and, if appropriate, make a direct referral.
13. If either Designated Person is not available, or it is inappropriate to approach them, the volunteer with the concern should make direct contact with the relevant organisation themselves
14. Record any discussions or actions taken within 24 hours.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

FCA is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults, engaged in the breadth of its activities.

All adults have the right to be safe from harm and should be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Context

Some adults are less able to protect themselves than others, and some have difficulty making their wishes and feelings known. This may make them vulnerable to abuse. The broad definition of a 'vulnerable adult' (issued by the Lord Chancellor's Department), is a person:

"Who is or 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".

For purposes of ensuring consistent and widely understood terminology, we use the phrase 'Vulnerable Adults' to identify those eligible for interventions within the procedures.

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets' report suggests the following as the main types of abuse:-

- **Physical abuse**- including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse**- including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse**- including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse**- including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

- **Neglect and acts of omission**- including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse**- including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Confidentiality

Vulnerable adult protection raises issues of confidentiality which should be clearly understood by all.

Everyone involved with FCA has a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and adult social services.

Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

All personal information regarding a vulnerable adult will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only record details required in the initial contact form.

If an adult confides in a Committee member and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the Committee member tells the adult sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies. Within that context, the adult should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent should be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority.

Where a disclosure has been made, they should let the adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.

They should assure the adult that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The adult's involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

The role of key individual agencies

Adult Social Services - The Department of Health's recent 'No secrets' guidance document requires that authorities develop a local framework within which all responsible agencies work together to ensure a coherent policy for the protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse.

All local authorities have a Safeguarding Adults Board, which oversees multi-agency work aimed at protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults. It is normal practice for the board to comprise of people from partner organisations who have the ability to influence decision making and resource allocation within their organisation.

The Police - The Police play a vital role in Safeguarding Adults with cases involving alleged criminal acts. It becomes the responsibility of the police to investigate allegations of crime by preserving and gathering evidence. Where a crime is identified, the police will be the lead agency and they will direct investigations in line with legal and other procedural protocols.

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