

SURF Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy

Adopted: March 2010

Last reviewed: December 2022

Responsibility of: Samuel Munderere (Chief Executive)

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.

Aim of Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all staff members 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
- Is traumatised

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 - involves 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 provide a choice of meals or failure to ensure privacy or dignity

Reporting Procedures

If the allegation or suspicion of abuse is discovered by a staff member then they should inform the Chief Executive as soon as possible. If the allegation is tabled against the Chief Executive, the Chair should be informed.

The Chief Executive should make a written record of the allegation or suspicion of abuse (see form below) and discuss the situation with the Chair (or Vice-Chair if the allegation is directed at the Chair). The Chief Executive or Chair should conduct an investigation as a priority and compile a report with recommendations on steps required.

If the staff member has been told about the allegation of abuse in confidence, they should attempt to gain the consent of the vulnerable adult 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:

- The scale of the abuse
- The risk of harm to others
- The capacity of the survivor to understand the issues of abuse and consent

If there is any doubt about whether or not to report an issue 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, the emergency services must be contacted.

Where a crime is taking place, has just occurred or is suspected, the police must be contacted immediately.

Responsibilities

All members of staff have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions that they might have concerning adult abuse.

Review and revision of the policy

The policy will be reviewed each year by the Board of Trustees at a Board Meeting. Any changes to the policy can be proposed before that time, and if required will be agreed and adopted at the next scheduled Board Meeting.

SURF Incident Report Form

Name:

Email:

Telephone:

Briefly describe what happened (include times and dates):

Names and contacts of witnesses:

Name of person completing form:

Date:

Name of Trustee responsible for investigation:

Date:

Action taken: