

POLICY STATEMENT

Safeguarding is a key governance priority for charities and VOS should proactively safeguard and promote the wellbeing and welfare of its service users and ensure that those who come into contact with the charity do not come to harm. Safeguarding Adults at Risk depends on people understanding and doing the following things:

- being aware of the risks of abuse and neglect that vulnerable adults can face;
- knowing what help is available;
- understanding their responsibilities;
- working together to report and investigate concerns;
- working together to prevent abuse and neglect.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (DSL)

The VOS Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the Clinical Manager. If the Clinical Manager is unavailable, the Operations Manager should be informed as the Deputy DSL.

CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

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 they have not consented to or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

1. Physical abuse: including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions including female genital mutilation.
2. Domestic violence: including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, including 'honour' based violence and forced marriage.
3. Sexual abuse: including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.
4. Psychological abuse: including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
5. Financial or material abuse: including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

6. Modern slavery; encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
7. Discriminatory abuse; including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
8. Organisational abuse; including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice because of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
9. Neglect and acts of omission; including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating
10. Self-neglect; this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT AN ADULTS WELFARE OR AN ADULT TELLS YOU ABOUT ABUSE

- Take all allegations seriously;
- Stay calm, listen and reassure;
- Say that you must tell the DSL and why (see below);
- Report to the DSL within the same working day;
- If you suspect that a crime has been committed, contact the police if it is an emergency and report to the DSL;
- Record your conversation;
- Pass all notes to the DSL.

****IF IN DOUBT ALWAYS REPORT****

CONFIDENTIALITY

If an Adult at Risk makes an allegation to you asking that you keep it confidential, you should inform the person that you will respect their right to confidentiality as far as you are able to, but that you are not able to keep the matter secret and that you must inform your safeguarding lead. A person's right to confidentiality is not absolute and may be overridden where there is evidence that sharing information is necessary in exceptional cases on a 'need to know' basis and to prevent:

- Serious Crime;
- Danger to a person's life;
- Danger to others;
- Danger to the community;
- Danger to the health or welfare of the person.