



Safeguarding Policy for working with vulnerable adults

Age Concern Gosport
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Charity number 211876

1. Policy Control

Version	Description	Date
1	Policy Updated	1/9/2018

2. Statement of Intent

All vulnerable adults have the right to be protected from harm in all elements of their lives including when engaged in voluntary activities. Age Concern Gosport is committed to working with and involving vulnerable adults in its own and others' community work. Trustees, staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that the welfare of vulnerable adults is always paramount when involved in activities or attending events run or supported by Age Concern Gosport.

A **vulnerable adult** is defined (by the Law Commission) as a person over 18 years, who is or maybe in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is unable to take care of or protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

The aim of this policy is to:-

- a) Provide vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Age Concern Gosport staff and volunteers; and
- b) Enable all staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific vulnerable adult protection issues.

Appendix A provides a code of guidance for staff and volunteers.

Age Concern Gosport will strive towards best practice at all times. We will adopt and adapt our code of guidance in line with recommendations and best practice adopted by our local authority and other statutory partners.

All Trustees, staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report any concerns to their peers or line manager. Such concerns will be responded to swiftly and appropriately.

A copy of this policy is made available to all individuals working with, for or on behalf of Age Concern Gosport. Training will be offered where appropriate with support from the Chief Officer and the relevant District or Borough Council's Adult Services nominated Officer.

3. Recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers

Age Concern Gosport recognises that anyone may have the potential to cause harm in some way and it is therefore important and appropriate that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with vulnerable adults.

Age Concern Gosport's recruitment process will therefore include the following:

- a) All volunteers and staff will complete an application form. The form will seek information about the applicant's work experience and ask for self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- b) Where appropriate and relevant to the role, consent will be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service and the appropriate check will be carried out - usually an enhanced disclosure. Checks will be carried out on all front line staff and volunteers where there is regular and/or frequent work involving vulnerable adults,

Records

All records will be kept locked and secure with other personnel records. Access is limited to the Chief Officer and the Age Concern Gosport Coordinator where appropriate. Individual staff and volunteers have the right to see their own records.

Unsolicited information from third parties

Information will be received on a confidential basis and records kept secure as delegated by the Chief Officer and Coordinator. An individual concerned will be informed that it has been received. Any actions taken will be after discussion with the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The individual concerned would be able to appeal to the Trustee Board in the event of any action being taken.

Equal Opportunities

It is important to realise that some groups in society may be more likely to have a criminal record that will not be relevant to their ability to carry out our work, e.g. non-payment of fines. Therefore the results of disclosure must be read carefully and sensitively considered.

Relevance of Criminal records

We shall not assume that any criminal record makes someone unsuitable to work at Age Concern Gosport. However, given the nature and extent of our work with vulnerable adults, it will not be appropriate to take on any staff or volunteers who are listed on the sex offenders register or where their disclosure relates to this area. If other offences are revealed, a judgement will be made with a case by case approach and an assessment of risk to the organisation as a whole.

Age Concern Gosport therefore undertakes to treat all applicants for positions within the organisation fairly and undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against volunteers or paid staff who voluntarily reveal that they have a criminal conviction. Equally, it undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DSB disclosure on the basis of a criminal conviction or other information revealed.

A disclosure will be requested for a post only after a risk assessment has indicated that it is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. Guidance is that there are risks posed by staff with access to clients which may necessitate a DBS check. For those positions where a disclosure is appropriate, recruitment literature will contain a statement that a disclosure would be requested in the event of appointment. Should a criminal record be revealed, a decision whether or not to maintain employment must have regard to the nature of crime, when it was committed, the client group involved and the reputation of the service. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought would play a significant part in the making of that decision.

When considering risk, Age Concern Gosport will look at:

- Risk to those we work with - is there a risk of harm in any way? What supervision is in place or could be put in place to reduce the risk?
- Reputation of the organisation - will this be affected if it became known that the organisation had employed someone with a criminal record?
- Impact on staff and volunteers - should the offence become known to everyone at Age Concern Gosport.

4. Responding to suspicions or allegations

If a member of staff or volunteer has any concerns about possible abuse or inappropriate behaviour, they have a responsibility to report it. They do not have to decide whether or not abuse or inappropriate behaviour has actually taken place.

Remember an individual may be at risk of further harm if suspicions or allegations go unreported.

The steps to be taken are:

1. Concerns reported to senior manager and/or Adult Services Officer (currently Chief Officer or their deputy).
2. A record is made of what has been said or seen. Include the location, time and date. (See Appendix B)

3. Chief Officer will refer the allegation to Adult Services or other appropriate body with a copy of record (a copy to be kept by the individual reporting the concerns) who may need to involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.
4. The Chief Officer will report the matter to the Chair of Trustees.
5. The carers of the client will be contacted as soon as possible, following advice from Adult Services department, Safeguarding Board or other appropriate body.

Where neither the Chief Officer or their deputy are not available, contact should be made with the Chair of Trustees. In the unlikely event that none of them are available, contact should be made as detailed below:

(NB The Age Concern Gosport service currently operates Mon-Fri 10am-12pm.)

What you should do if have concerns for the safety of an adult:

Contact Hampshire Adult Services

0300 555 1386 between 8.30am to 5pm Monday - Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday
0300 555 1373 after 5pm until 8.30am Monday - Thursday, after 4.30pm Friday to 08.30am Monday and all day on Bank Holidays.

In an emergency and if it is suspected someone is in immediate danger, 999 should always be called.

Concerns about conduct of member of staff or volunteer

Where the concern relates to a member of staff or volunteer it should be reported to the Chief Officer or their deputy, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the client in question, and any other client who may be at risk. If the Chief Officer is the subject of the concern, the report must be made direct to the Chair of Trustees - who will refer the allegation to HCC Adult services.

There may be three types of investigation:

- a) A criminal investigation;
- b) A vulnerable adult protection investigation;
- c) A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and adult protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily. If, following investigation and consideration, the concerns have arisen as a result of poor practice; the Chief Officer may deal with this as a misconduct issue.

Age Concern Gosport will fully support and protect any member of staff or volunteer who, in good faith, reports their concern that a client or colleague is, or may be, abusing a vulnerable adult.

Allegations of Previous Abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with vulnerable adults). Where such an allegation is made, staff and volunteers should follow the

procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the HCC Adult Services or the police.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for **all** concerned. Information should be handled securely and sensitively and will only be disclosed following advice of Adult Services or the police. Depending on the circumstances, information may need to be disclosed and shared with the following people:

- The Chief Officer and Chair of Trustees
- The parents or carer of the person who is alleged to have been abused;
- The person making the allegation;
- Adult Services and the Police;
- The alleged abuser.

Age Concern Gosport records of the concerns will be kept secure in accordance with the Data Protection policy.

Guidelines for use of photographic or other imaging equipment

The taking of photographs, film or other images of vulnerable adults is not appropriate without consent from parents or nominated guardians or carers. Staff must ensure that such consent is in place before making any such image of a client.

When such images are properly obtained then they must be used only for the purpose consented to. Special care must be taken when using any image in general publicity or in publications such as annual reports, press promotions or on websites. If there is doubt about the appropriate use of an image then staff **must not use it**.

Appendix A: Code of guidance for staff and volunteers on protection of vulnerable adults

Appendix B: How to record concerns

APPENDIX A

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS ON SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS

Introduction

Abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the caring support environment. There is a risk that some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with vulnerable adults in order to harm them.

A paid worker or volunteer may have regular contact with vulnerable adults and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection.

All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported to your line manager and or relevant authorities following the guidelines in this document.

When an individual, who has been subjected to abuse outside the Age Concern Gosport environment, comes into contact with Age Concern Gosport staff, we must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the individual receives the required support.

Good Practice Guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within our activities.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets).
- Treating all vulnerable adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each person first, e.g. before partners or ourselves.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with clients (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a client or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust, which empowers individuals to share in the decision-making process;
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility when travelling in a volunteers car).
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking, using inappropriate language or drinking alcohol in the company of clients.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of vulnerable and disabled adults.
- Securing carer consent in writing to *act in loco parentis*, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.

- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Written parental/carer consent of Age Concern Gosport staff or volunteers are required to transport vulnerable adults in their cars.
- This consent will be obtained at the time of taking the bookings for the voluntary transport or community transport schemes.

Practice to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of the clients carers. For example, a vulnerable adult sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent/carer fails to arrive to pick a vulnerable adult up at the end of a session

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with vulnerable adults away from others
- Avoid taking vulnerable adults to your home where they will be alone with you.

Practice which should never occur

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a vulnerable adult.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to an individual, even in fun.
- Reduce anyone to tears as a form of *control*.
- Allow allegations made by a vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for vulnerable or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow clients to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

NB. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for an individual, e.g. if they are vulnerable or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents or carers. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing or where there is physical contact, lifting/assisting to carry out particular activities.

Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to your line manager or other appropriate colleague, and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents or carers of the vulnerable adult are told.

- If you accidentally injure or cause discomfort to a client.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a client appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a client misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

APPENDIX B

HOW TO RECORD CONCERNS

Information passed to the Adult Services or the police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern. Information should include the following:

- The name of the vulnerable adult.
- Age of individual and date of birth
- Home address and telephone number
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or those of someone else?
- What is the nature of the allegation? Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information. Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Are behavioural signs or indirect signs evident?
- Witnesses to the incidents.
- The vulnerable adults' account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents/carer been contacted? If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If it is not the vulnerable adult making the report has the individual concerned been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? If yes, record details of the allegation made, including the identity of the alleged abuser, the person making the allegation and the time and date.