

NOA Neighbourly Help Scheme

Vulnerable Persons (Safeguarding) Policy Statement (2018)

1. Introduction

- 1.1. All members of NOA Neighbourly Help whether volunteers or management group members have a duty to SAFEGUARD vulnerable people who use the scheme and anyone with whom they may come into contact through the scheme.
- 1.2. They should respond to any concerns they may have regarding the physical, sexual, emotional or psychological safety of a vulnerable person or concerns relating to discriminatory or financial violation or exploitation of a vulnerable person.
- 1.3. This policy is in place to protect all vulnerable persons regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religion or faith.

2. Principles

The welfare of the vulnerable adult or child is paramount and is the responsibility of everyone. All vulnerable adults and children, without exception, have the right to protection from abuse, whether physical, verbal, sexual, bullying, exclusion or neglect. Bullying, shouting, physical violence, sexism and racism towards anyone will not be permitted or tolerated.

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1. No volunteers or the NOA Neighbourly Help Team member will have unsupervised access to vulnerable adults unless they have been through the safe recruitment procedure as set out below.
- 3.2. All suspicions or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily and appropriately.
- 3.3. All volunteers need to be aware of this policy and vulnerable adult issues

4. Safe Recruitment

- 4.1. All volunteers must undergo DBS security vetting and provide the management group with proof of the result prior to being cleared to work with the scheme.
- 4.2. On receipt of their DBS Certificate the original certificate must be presented to the Safeguarding Representative for review and recording in the schemes register. As a result of this review the following will occur:
- 4.3. Individuals with no recorded events will be cleared to work on the scheme
- 4.4. Individuals whose certificate records events will be invited to discuss his/her circumstances at a special meeting of at least 2 members of the NOA Neighbourly Help Team or the NOA board of Trustees. The volunteer will then be notified by the Neighbourly Help Team of its decision on if and how they can volunteer.

4.6. Volunteers are encouraged to provide details of their criminal records at an early stage in the volunteer application process. Such information will be held in confidence by the nominated Safeguarding representative (Centre Manager) and only be shared with the management group in the case of an event being disclosed by the DBS vetting process. Having a conviction, caution, reprimand or warning will not necessarily bar anyone from volunteering. This will depend on the circumstances of the event and the nature of the voluntary role to be undertaken. Appropriate advice and guidance will be provided to the management group and individual concerned by the

5. Reporting Incidents

5.1. The nominated Safeguarding representative (Centre Manager) will have responsibility for reporting concerns that arise (Referral), as a matter of urgency, to the local authority Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult lead agency. The representative may choose to have a confidential discussion with others in order to clear up any misunderstandings, or to corroborate and support any suspicions, before reporting a concern to the lead agency. If the nominated person is unavailable, any member of the committee may act in their place.

5.2. The nominated person should:

5.3. Know who to contact at the local authority (the first call), OSCB (children) oscb@oxfordshire.gov.uk 01865 815843 OSAB (adults) OSAB@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

5.4. Know who to contact in Social Services for advice and referrals, i.e. Adult Social Care 0345 050 7666 (out of hours – 0800 833408), but where a Social Worker is already involved, attempt to contact them directly

5.5. Know about helplines and other sources of help for children and young people and vulnerable adults. Action for Elder Abuse – 0808 8088141. (see also: rsb.org.uk/lrscblinks)

5.6. Ensure that there is an environment in which volunteers have the opportunity to raise any child protection or vulnerable adult protection concerns

5.7. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 0345 050 7666.

6. Guidelines for responding to abuse or suspicion of abuse

DO

6.1. Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and listen to what is being said

6.2. Do tell the person they are right to tell you.

6.3. Do reassure them that they are not to blame.

6.4. Do be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why.

6.5. Do tell the person what you are doing and when, and keep them up to date with what is happening.

6.6. Do take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse – tell your nominated person immediately.

6.7. Do write down everything said and what was done

6.8. Do seek medical attention if necessary.

6.9. Do inform carers, unless there is suspicion of their involvement.

DON'T

- 6.11. Don't make promises you can't keep.
- 6.12. Don't interrogate the person – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the police and social services, who have experience in this.
- 6.13. Don't cast doubt on what the person has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject.
- 6.14. Don't say anything that makes the person feel responsible for the abuse.
- 6.15. Don't Do Nothing – make sure you tell your nominated safeguarding person immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 7.1. Vulnerable adult protection raises issues of confidentiality which must be clearly understood by all.
- 7.2. Volunteers have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with professionals, particularly investigative agencies and adult social services.
- 7.3. Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.
- 7.4. 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.
- 7.5. If an adult confides in a volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the volunteer tells the adult sensitively, that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.
- 7.6. Within that context, the adult must, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.
- 7.7. Where possible, consent must be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties. However, in some circumstances, obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable, as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority.
- 7.8. Where a disclosure has been made, the volunteer must let the adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.
- 7.9. The volunteer must assure the adult that they will be kept informed of any action to be taken and why. The adult's involvement in the process of sharing information must be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

Approved by Council

Date 29/10/18