



Safeguarding vulnerable adults policy and procedures

Working with vulnerable adults is framed by government guidance:

- *No Secrets*, Department of Health, 2000
- The review of the above published in 2009
- The standards and guidance published by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services
- Anti-discrimination legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005
- Nation specific legislation such as the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.

1. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 acet UK is committed to safeguarding vulnerable adults and ensuring their well-being.
- 1.2 We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, spiritual, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- 1.3 We recognise the personal dignity and rights of vulnerable adults and will ensure all our policies, procedures and practices reflect this.
- 1.4 We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of life.
- 1.5 We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with vulnerable adults, or who will be in positions of trust. We will promote safer practice and support, resource and train and regularly review those who undertake this work.
- 1.6 We will keep up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding. We will follow statutory, denominational and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding adults and we will ensure that all workers will work within the agreed procedure of our safeguarding policy.
- 1.7 We will implement the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 and all other relevant legislation.
- 1.8 We will support everyone in the place of worship/organisation who may be affected by abuse of any kind.

2. WHO IS A VULNERABLE ADULT?

- 2.1 Various pieces of legislation give different definitions of who is a vulnerable adult, or is an adult at risk, and to determine who qualifies for criminal record disclosure checks. In this policy, we will use the definition: *'Any adult aged 18 or over 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'*.
- 2.2 It should be noted that reaching a certain age or having a particular disability does not, in itself, mean that a person is vulnerable, any more than we are all vulnerable in certain situations. Clearly, those in residential care, in need of community care services or who require help and support in their daily lives do fit that category.

3. WHAT IS ADULT ABUSE?

- 3.1 Adult abuse may be defined as the mistreatment and violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. Such abuse can take many forms, from treating someone with disrespect so as to significantly affect his or her quality of life, to causing actual physical suffering.
- 3.2 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 or coerced to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent.
- 3.3 Abuse can occur within any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. See *No Secrets*.
- 3.4 An adult is at risk if another person's conduct is causing (or is likely to cause) the adult to be harmed, or the adult is engaging (or is likely to engage) in conduct which causes (or is likely to cause) self-harm.
- 3.5 Abuse can take many forms:
- 3.5.1 **Discriminatory abuse** is the inappropriate treatment of an adult because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality, or disability. Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals.
 - 3.5.2 **Physical abuse** is to inflict pain or physical injury, which is either caused deliberately, or through lack of care. Examples include hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, burning, hair pulling, misuse, or using inappropriate restraint or sanctions.
 - 3.5.3 **Psychological or emotional abuse** is acts or behaviour which causes mental distress or anguish or negates the wishes of the adult. It is also behaviour that has a harmful effect on the adult's emotional health and development – or any other form of mental cruelty. This includes verbal abuse, humiliation, bullying, blaming, the use of threats of harm or abandonment, being deprived of social or any other form of contact, or being prevented from receiving services or support.
 - 3.5.4 **Financial or material abuse** is the inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions including theft, fraud, exploitation, applying pressure in connection with wills, property or

inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

- 3.5.5 **Sexual abuse** is the involvement in sexual activities to which the person has not consented, or does not truly comprehend and so cannot give informed consent. Or it may occur where the other party is in a position of trust, power or authority and uses it to override or overcome lack of consent or to which they felt pressurised into consenting such as rape, or sexual assault.
- 3.5.6 **Neglect** or acts of omission are the repeated deprivation of help that an adult needs which, if withdrawn, will cause them to suffer. This includes failing to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous to the adult, or to others.
- 3.5.7 **Institutional abuse**, which may happen in nursing and residential homes or hospitals, is the mistreatment or abuse of an adult by a regime or individuals within an institution (e.g. hospital or care home) or in the community. It can occur through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect, or poor professional practice, or ill treatment.
- 3.5.8 **Spiritual abuse** is coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack. This abuse may include:-manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context. (Oakley, 2013 in Oakley & Kinmond, 2013 p21) taken from [http://files.ccpas.co.uk/documents/Help-SpiritualAbuse%20\(2015\).pdf](http://files.ccpas.co.uk/documents/Help-SpiritualAbuse%20(2015).pdf)
- 3.5.9 **Exploitation** can take a variety of different forms, including exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Vulnerable adults who are exploited are often vulnerable because of chaotic or traumatic experiences in their lives, making them targets for perpetrators, gangs and networks. Suspicion of exploitation of any type will be responded to fully, following our safeguarding procedure.

4. WHO MIGHT BE AT RISK?

- 4.1 Some adults might be more at risk than others. The following factors could increase the risk of abuse:
 - 4.1.1 Learning, sensory or physical disability.
 - 4.1.2 Old age and frailty, especially if creates dependency on or needing help from others.
 - 4.1.3 Mental health problems.
 - 4.1.4 Dementia or confusion.
 - 4.1.5 Severe illness.
 - 4.1.6 Addiction to alcohol or drugs.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES

- 5.1 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- 5.2 An **acet UK** employee or volunteer may suspect abuse because:
 - 5.2.1 You have a general concern about someone's well-being.
 - 5.2.2 You see or hear something which could be abusive.
 - 5.2.3 Someone tells you that something has happened or is happening to them which could be abusive.
 - 5.2.4 A person may tell you what they intend to do or have already done to a vulnerable adult.
- 5.3 In these circumstances, **acet UK** staff and volunteers should contact either the Safeguarding Lead in London (the Chief Executive) or the Safeguarding Lead in Chester (the Esteem Network Director).
- 5.4 Where the safeguarding lead is concerned that a vulnerable adult may have been - or is in - danger of being abused they should contact Adult Social Services immediately.
- 5.5 If the safeguarding lead is not sure whether an official referral is warranted, but they nevertheless have legitimate concerns, they should still contact Adult Social

Services to discuss the matter. Alternatively, they may contact CCPAS for advice on 0845 120 45 50.

- 5.6 The primary responsibility for managing any investigation process rests with the managers of Adult Social Care social services teams.
- 5.7 When the concern involves someone in residential care, the Care Quality Commission will be involved.
- 5.8 Where a crime may have been committed, the police will investigate.
- 5.9 Adult Social Care Teams operate Emergency Duty Teams (EDT), outside regular office hours, at weekends and over statutory holidays. They are available to offer advice and will also take action to protect a vulnerable adult, including arranging emergency medical treatment and, where appropriate, contacting the police.
- 5.10 Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is preserved; although this may well be subject to what may be an overriding need to protect someone who has been, or is at risk of, abuse. Everyone working with vulnerable adults must be clear that it is not possible to keep information about suspected or actual abuse confidential. The needs of the vulnerable adult and any potential risk to others means that any such suspicion must be reported to the safeguarding lead immediately.
- 5.11 Please refer to our online safeguarding policy for how we safeguard vulnerable adults when engaging in online learning situations using video conferencing tools.

6. POLICY REVIEW

This policy was last reviewed in July 2024, July 2023. It is next due for review in July 2025.