
Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy Statement

Putting safety at the heart of training.

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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.

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

General

Van Elle Training & Assessment completes enhanced CRB checks on all employees and volunteers prior to commencement of employment in order to assess their suitability for working with vulnerable adults.

Staff training will be provided for all staff who deal with learners in high-risk groups. A comprehensive sign-posting list is available for all staff to ensure that there is easy access to expert advice and guidance.

Appropriate insurance is in place at all Van Elle Training & Assessment premises, and Health and Safety vetting checks are carried out to ensure that all placements/employers are adequately covered.

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 mis-user
- Is homeless

This document is essential information for all staff and volunteers.

Section One: Abuse

Types and Signs of Abuse

There are a number of types of abuse:

- **Physical** - when responsible adults deliberately injure a vulnerable adult or do nothing to prevent it. This not only includes physical violence but also giving vulnerable adults alcohol or drugs. The most serious cases can result in brain damage and even death.
- **Emotional** - when responsible adults continuously fail to show love and affection to a vulnerable adult. This might include sarcasm, threats, criticism, yelling and taunting. The effects are serious and long-lasting.
- **Neglect** - when responsible adults fail to meet a vulnerable adult's basic needs for food, warmth, clothing or medical attention.
- **Sexual** - when an adult uses a vulnerable adult for sexual gratification. This might mean forcing a vulnerable adult to carry out sexual acts, or deliberately showing a vulnerable adult, magazines or adult pornographic videos, and filming or photographing children in a sexual way. The effects of sexual abuse are enduring and highly damaging.
- **Financial** - when a responsible adult poses improper pressure to sign over money from pensions or savings, and even theft.
- **Discriminatory** - when a vulnerable adult is being harassed due to their ethnic origin, sex or religious beliefs.
- **Personal exploitation** - any person's involvement in denying an individual his/her rights or forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will.
- **Violation rights** - when any person tries preventing an individual speaking his/her thoughts and opinions.
- **Institutional** - when responsible adults fail to provide a choice of meals or failure to ensure privacy or dignity.
- **Cyber-bullying** - can be as simple as continuing to send e-mails to someone who has said they want no further contact with the sender, but it may also include threats, sexual remarks, pejorative labels (i.e. hate speech), ganging up on victims by making them the subject of ridicule in forums, and posting false statements as fact aimed at humiliation.

The following are typical signs that could point towards abuse. Be aware that there can be many other, non-abuse related, reasons for these behaviours.

Common Signs of Abuse

Sexual Abuse

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the vulnerable adult
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn

Section One: Abuse

Sexual Abuse cont...

- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a relative or family friend
- Becoming worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Bald patches
- Chronic running away
- Fear of medical help or examination
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Fear of physical contact - shrinking back if touched
- Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive
- Fear of suspected abuser being contacted

Emotional Abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-deprecation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc')
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Untreated medical problems
- No social relationships
- Compulsive scavenging
- Destructive tendencies

Section One: Abuse

Financial

- Reluctant to discuss financial circumstances
- Recent poverty
- Unexplained inability to pay bills or buy food or other essentials
- Missing belongings or money

If you suspect abuse discuss this only with your Designated Person. Do not under any circumstances discuss this with your colleagues. This is for your protection as much as for the protection of the learner.

Section Two: Responsibilities of staff and volunteers

1. When any person has knowledge or suspicion that a vulnerable adult is either being abused or is at risk of abuse, or that a carer has seriously neglected or failed to protect the vulnerable adult **he/she has a personal duty to report this to the Designated Person.**
2. Concerns may be as a result of information other than direct observation or evidence of abuse to a vulnerable adult such as evidence of domestic violence or substance abuse.
3. However **the role of staff and volunteers is to Respond, Recognise, Report and record. Do not to investigate.** Therefore you should not seek to try and determine whether any concern of description of abuse is valid. There are however actions we are expected to have taken before making a referral and you may also be asked to assist with assessments where appropriate.
4. **All staff and volunteers must be aware of definitions and indicators of abuse. (See Section One)**
5. **All staff and volunteers must be aware of the course of action to follow** when they have a concern or have received a direct description of abuse.
6. All staff and volunteers **are required to attend appropriate training opportunities.**
7. **Any referral must be confirmed in writing, using a copy of the referral form. (See Section 4 Annex A).**
8. All staff and volunteers must undergo an enhanced CRB clearance.

Section Three: Reporting Concerns to the Social Services or the Police

If a crime is suspected or has occurred the Designated Person should contact the Police for consultation, advice and/or information.

A first consultation with the police can be made without identifying individuals. The senior Designated Person will make the decision about whether contact with the police is simply for consultation, advice or information or an actual referral.

It is the police's job to investigate crime. The consultation with the police is usually the first strategy discussion if a crime is involved and will lead to a decision about how to/who will investigate if an investigation is needed.

All allegations or suspicions relating to the abuse of a vulnerable adult must also be reported by the Senior Designated Person to Social Services.

The Senior Designated Person should follow up their local policy for respective reporting mechanisms to Social Services.

The Designated Person will usually be responsible unless directed otherwise by the senior Designated Person for arranging a Strategy meeting or discussion usually within 48 hours; this will include a representative from the Trust, Social Services and the police if a crime is suspected. The purpose of the Strategy meeting or discussion is to decide whether to proceed further and if so who will be responsible for leading the investigation

Dealing with allegations against staff

- If there is clear actual or circumstantial evidence to support the allegation for example, the incident was witnessed, or if there are strong indications that the incident took place, then the matter **must** be discussed with the Designated Person.
- If the allegations appear to be unlikely for example the circumstantial evidence does not appear to support the allegation then the same action should be taken. It is the decision of the Designated Person whether to refer the matter to Social Care or to deal with it internally.
- If the allegations are demonstrably false for example the alleged perpetrator was known not to be anywhere in the vicinity of the vulnerable adult then the same action is taken as above. There would be no referral to Social Care, and the matter would only be investigated internally.
- In all of these situations it is essential that appropriate records are made and kept regarding the concerns, evidence collected and action taken so that these are available for external monitoring and further intervention in future if appropriate.
- Consideration should always be given to the possibility that the vulnerable adult may be displacing abuse that is happening elsewhere in their lives.

Section Four: General Advice and Guidance

General Dos and Don'ts

All this may sound a little legalistic and unfriendly. During any activity you will not get to know much about your charges and you certainly do not and will not know every detail of their backgrounds. Don't assume an instant "I'm your friend" approach. Remember that you are not one of them but a supervisory figure who knows very little of the participant's life.

Keeping this in mind may help you understand the reasons for the following list of do's and don'ts:

- Do not touch the learners'. Resist a comforting hug or pat on the back. There is a fine line in a learners' perception of where comfort stops and harassment/assault starts.
- Do not make jokes about students' personalities, gender, ethnic status, appearance, family, religion, etc.
- Be on the lookout for anyone looking worried or upset. Let your Designated Person know about such learners.
- Do not spend any time alone with a learner in a room unless unavoidable. If the situation cannot be avoided always inform another member of staff either before or immediately afterward.
- Remember: we are not going to be able to solve every issue and all problems for learners'. We do not have to be experts on everything but we do need to know where to refer learners for more expert help.
- If a serious problem arises, do not feel you must handle it on your own. There should always be at least one Designated Person in any premises.
- Please do not threaten learners with serious sanctions unless these sanctions are clearly documented and have been discussed in advance with the learner.
- In conversation with students do not be overly familiar and do not be sarcastic whatever the provocation. Respect all confidences. Do not talk about one learner to another under any circumstances.
- NEVER promise complete confidentiality. We may not always be able to keep to this as in any real emergency or serious situation we will be legally forced to contact the police.

Fire

If you are teaching or supervising learners indoors be aware of the fire regulations for your venue and know where the fire extinguishers are and where the fire exits are. The procedure for evacuating your venue and the location of Muster Points are set out clearly in each training room within the Quality Manual and the Health and Safety Policy.

Impress on the learner that if there is an unplanned alarm they must stay at the Muster Point to be registered to check that no one is missing. If the fire alarm in your venue goes off you must **KNOW** and carry out your role using the proper procedure for evacuation and registering of evacuees. If you need any clarification of your role contact Ivan Manning the Health and Safety Officer for a briefing.

Section Four: General Advice and Guidance

Information for Delivery Staff

Learners should be supervised at all times whilst in a learning situation.

You should have a list of learners that you expect to attend your session.
A register should be completed.

Please do not release learners early from a specialist session without advance notice.

Mobile telephones: insist that they are not to be used and that they must be switched off in all your sessions.

External Visits

In accordance with our Health and Safety policy and procedures Van Elle Training & Assessment will ensure all locations are properly insured and properly aware and concerned about safety aspects.

Here are some general points about visits you need to be aware of:

- You need to be absolutely sure of who is and who is not in your party. You should have a copy of a register.
- As an escort on visits you need to make sure that your learners do not engage in any dangerous behaviour at any time.
- Please do report serious incidents as soon as possible. Do not hesitate to seek assistance. We should be over- rather than under-protective. Do not let anyone in your party go off on their own anywhere.
- Please do not condone bad or irresponsible behaviour.
- Remember that external trips and activities are designed to be fun and part of widening learners' horizons. Use your good judgment and experience to decide when a line has been stepped over.



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