



The Gate
Your Community Arts Centre

The Gate Arts and Community Centre
Glenwood Faith Community

Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy

The Gate is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use our service are not exploited or abused, and that working practices minimise the risks of such abuse. If abuse is reported, or staff or volunteers feel concerned about a situation of potential abuse, the following policy and procedure should be implemented.

Staff and volunteers should be aware of, and guard against, possible discrimination because of assumptions about class, gender, sexuality, race, disability, religion and age.

Definitions

The term 'vulnerable adults' refers to people of 18 and over, "who are, or may be, in need of community care services, by reason of age or illness, mental or other disability, or lack of opportunity; and who are, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation."

Exploitation concerns the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons.

Abuse can include: verbal, physical, financial/material, sexual, psychological, discriminatory, emotional abuse and neglect. Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetrated by anybody.

Awareness

As a member of staff or a volunteer, you are not responsible for diagnosing abuse. However, all staff and volunteers involved in the provision of the service have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a vulnerable adult.

Not all concerns relate to abuse, and there may well be another explanation. It is important, while being vigilant, to keep an open mind. If at all possible, you should discuss your concerns discretely and in confidence with the Pastoral Team Leader, and seek help through supervision, if you are concerned about a vulnerable adult or a member of staff.

Further Action

1. Having raised the issue with the Pastoral Team Leader, you should make a confidential personal note of the circumstances and, if appropriate, check whether there were any witnesses present.
2. As part of the pastoral care process, you should arrange support for the vulnerable person with a counsellor, to feel empowered to participate in appropriate protective action in conjunction with Glenwood Faith Community and relevant agencies.
3. The vulnerable adult should be informed that you will be discussing the matter with the Pastoral Team Leader at Glenwood Faith Community, and it may need to be referred to appropriate statutory services. If the person who says they are being abused asks you to do nothing at all, you should inform them that, while respecting this, you must share the information with the Pastoral Team Leader, as we are legally obliged to protect people who may be being abused, but that you will inform them that you do not want anything more to happen at this stage.
4. Do not carry out an Investigation yourself. This must be left to the relevant agencies.
5. If physical and/or sexual abuse/assault is reported, the vulnerable adult and/or their representative should be asked to report it to the police, and offered support to do so.
6. The Pastoral Team Leader will treat the matter as top priority and inform the Chair of Trustees. The Pastoral Team Leader will seek advice urgently. This may involve discussing the situation with Social Services or with the Police. Social Services will instigate an assessment of the person's needs under the Community Care legislation.
7. The Pastoral Team Leader will keep the Chair of Trustees informed in writing, of all action taken to date.
8. The Pastoral Team Leader will keep the vulnerable adult informed at all times, as to action being taken.

Support for Staff

The member of staff or volunteer reporting incidents of suspected or potential abuse may find that the vulnerable adult is very upset or angry. The Pastoral Team Leader will offer support as appropriate. Other support, for example, may include counselling provided by an outside body, if required, or by request.

Suspected abuse by an employee

Where a member of staff or a volunteer is suspected of abuse, the following actions should be taken;

1. The Pastoral Team Leader should make arrangements for interviewing the suspected victim; this should be done with a Trustee or appropriate staff member, and a representative of the victim present.
2. The Pastoral Team Leader should interview the suspected member of staff or volunteer, with a witness or representative of their choice present.
3. The purpose of these meetings is not to investigate, but to establish whether there are grounds for the allegation.
4. The procedure outlined under Further Action should then be followed.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is crucial to all our work and relationships. You should always maintain confidentiality, except that the welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount, and takes precedence over it. Do not keep concerns relating to potential abuse of a vulnerable adult to yourself.

Confidentiality must NOT be maintained, if the withholding of information or evidence will prejudice the welfare of the adult.

Contact Information

Allegations of alleged abuse, which occurred when the person is over the age of 18 years old falls under the Protection of Vulnerable Adults legislation.

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