

INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults is a matter of priority for Ready2Shine CIC. Vulnerable adults are Ready2Shine CIC customers and use Ready2Shine CIC services. This document sets out Ready2Shine CIC's policy regarding Adult Safeguarding and what is expected from staff. Everybody has a responsibility for the safety of Vulnerable Adults and in accordance with relevant legislation, Ready2Shine CIC, as a Team which has contacts with vulnerable adults across its services, has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure proper procedures are in place for their safeguarding. The purpose of this policy is to help protect the Vulnerable Adults we come into contact with and to ensure that the team are aware of issues that can cause them harm and how to respond to concerns relating to the possibility of a Vulnerable Adult suffering harm.

VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

The scope of this Policy:

This Safeguarding Policy is intended to cover all services of Ready2Shine CIC where there is the potential for direct or indirect contact with vulnerable adults. The Team at Ready2Shine CIC, sub-contractors who may carry out work for Ready2Shine CIC and relevant staff of organisations attending sessions run by Ready2Shine CIC should all be committed to practices which protect vulnerable adults from harm.

What is a Vulnerable Adult?

A Vulnerable Adult is any person aged 18 or over who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. This may be because he or she has a mental health problem, a disability, a sensory impairment, is old or frail, or has some form of illness. Because of his or her vulnerability, the individual may be in receipt of a care service in his or her own home, in the community or be resident in a residential care home, nursing home or other setting.

Values and principles underpinning this Policy:

- Access to information and knowledge – all vulnerable adults will have access to information that they can understand to make an informed choice, including signposting to expert knowledge and advocacy, as required.
- Choice – all vulnerable adults will have the opportunity to select independently from a range of options based on clear and accurate information.
- Confidentiality – all vulnerable adults will know that information about them is managed appropriately and there is a clear understanding of confidentiality and its limits among the team.
- Consent – all vulnerable adults have the right to be supported to make their own decisions and to give or withhold their consent to an activity or service. Consent is a clear indication of a willingness to participate in an activity or to accept a service. It may be signalled verbally, by

gesture, by willing participation or in writing. No one can give, or withhold, consent on behalf of another adult unless special provision for particular purposes has been made for this, usually by law.

- Dignity and respect – all vulnerable adults will be accorded the same respect and dignity as any other adult, by recognising their uniqueness and personal needs.
- Equality and diversity – all vulnerable adults will be treated equally, and their background and culture will be valued and respected.
- Fulfilment – all vulnerable adults will be invited to engage in activities and offered services that enable them to fulfil their ability and potential.
- Independence – all vulnerable adults will have as much control as possible over their lives whilst being safeguarded against unreasonable risks.
- Privacy – all vulnerable adults will be free from unnecessary intrusion into their affairs; and there will be a balance between the individual's own safety and the safety of others.
- Safety – all vulnerable adults will feel safe, and live without fear of violence, neglect or abuse in any form.
- Support – all vulnerable adults will be supported to report any form of abuse.

Ready2Shine CIC's roles and responsibilities

Ready2Shine CIC Team has ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy. They are also responsible for ensuring that they undertake the relevant training.

Participant roles and responsibilities

Participants have a duty to adhere to the Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and to notify their Safeguarding Officer on any matters regarding safeguarding vulnerable adults.

PROVISION OF SERVICES

The following areas of activity are especially relevant in the services provided by Ready2Shine CIC.

- The promotion of awareness and sensitivity in relation to vulnerable adults safeguarding issues.
- Reporting arrangements (and the waiving of confidentiality) in relation to any 'disclosure', or any apparently well-founded 'concern' in respect of an allegation of relevant misbehaviour.
- The arrangements under which Ready2Shine CIC liaises with, and reports to, social services and other appropriate external authorities.

Any Team Member working directly with clients will be DBS checked and part of their update service. All team members are required to submit a written application form prior to interview and must fully disclose any convictions or involvement in investigations relating to abuse or other charges. All Team Members are trained in the safeguarding and protection of vulnerable adults and are required to sign this policy to indicate their understanding of it. A detailed risk assessment is carried out for each client prior to them engaging with our service to ensure their own safety and

that of those around them. We also have the relevant site risk assessments in place to ensure everyone safety and wellbeing. We have a Complaints Policy in place as well as a Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.

WHAT IS ABUSE OF VULNERABLE ADULTS?

What constitutes abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Many incidents of abuse are criminal acts. The abuse of vulnerable adults is defined as: 'The physical, psychological, emotional, financial or sexual maltreatment or neglect of a vulnerable adult by another person'. It may be a single act or repeated over a period of time and may take one or multiple forms. The lack of appropriate action can also be a form of abuse and neglect. It can occur in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust and can be perpetrated by a person or persons in breach of that trust, who have influence over the life of a dependant, whether they be formal or informal carers, staff, family members or others. It can also occur outside such a relationship. Abuse can be either deliberate or the result of ignorance or caused by a lack of training, knowledge or understanding. Often if a person is being abused in one way, they are also being abused in other ways. Abuse can take many forms including the following:

Physical abuse: (Includes but is not an exhaustive list) hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, giving a person medicine that may harm them, restraining or disciplining a person in an inappropriate way. Possible signs include - fractures, bruising, burns, pain, marks, not wanting to be touched.

Psychological abuse; ((Includes but is not an exhaustive list) emotional abuse, verbal abuse, humiliation, bullying and/or the use of threats. Possible signs - being withdrawn, too eager to do everything they are asked, showing compulsive behaviour, not being able to do things they used to, not being able to concentrate or focus.

Financial or material abuse: (Includes but is not an exhaustive list) misusing or stealing the person's property, possessions or benefits. Cheating them, using them for financial gain, putting pressure on them about wills, property, inheritance, or financial transactions. Possible signs - having unusual difficulty with finances, not having enough money, being too protective of money and things they own, not paying bills, not having normal home comforts.

Where might abuse occur? Abuse can happen anywhere, but some examples include:

- In the person's own home.
- At a carer's home.
- Within day care, residential care, nursing care or other institutional settings.
- At work or in educational settings.
- In rented accommodation or commercial premises.
- In public places.

Who can abuse?

An abuser can be anyone who has contact with the vulnerable person - it could be a partner, spouse, child, relative, friend, informal carer, a healthcare, social care or other worker, a peer or, less commonly, a stranger.

Ready2Shine CIC recognises the following types of abuse:

Domestic/familial abuse-The abuse of a vulnerable adult by a family member such as a partner, son, daughter, sibling. The types of abuse can vary significantly given the different types of abuse listed above.

Professional abuse - The misuse of power and abuse of trust by professionals, the failure of professionals to act on suspected abuse/crimes, poor care practice or neglect in services, resource shortfalls or service pressures that lead to service failure and culpability as a result of poor management systems.

Possible signs of professional abuse include:

- Entering into inappropriate relationships with a vulnerable adult.
 - Failure to refer disclosure of abuse.
 - Poor, ill-informed or outmoded care practice/s.
 - Failure to support a vulnerable adult to access health care/ treatment.
 - Denying a vulnerable adult access to professional support and services such as advocacy.
 - Inappropriate responses to challenging behaviours.
 - Failure to whistle blow on issues when internal procedures to highlight issues are exhausted.
- Ready2Shine have a separate Whistleblowing Policy to consider alongside this Policy.

Peer abuse - The abuse of one vulnerable adult by another vulnerable adult within a care setting. This can occur in group or communal settings, such as day care centres, clubs, residential care homes, nursing homes or other institutional settings.

Stranger abuse - A vulnerable adult may be abused by someone who they do not know, such as a stranger, a member of the public or a person who deliberately targets vulnerable people.

CONCERNS AND DISCLOSURES

How to deal with a concern

When there are concerns or where a disclosure or allegation is made people often feel anxious about passing on the information to anyone else. Concerned individuals may ask themselves, 'What if I'm wrong?' and this may hold them back from acting. It is important for staff to know that they are neither responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred or not; nor are they responsible for conducting any investigations (this is the role of the appropriate authorities). However, they do need to pass on any concerns they have through the Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding reporting procedures. It is crucial that staff members do not attempt to deal with the situation alone.

How can you be alerted to signs of abuse or neglect?

There are a variety of ways that you could be alerted that a vulnerable adult is suffering harm:

- A vulnerable adult may tell you.
- Someone else may tell you of their concerns or something that causes you concern.
- A vulnerable adult may show some signs of physical injury for which there does not appear to be a satisfactory or credible explanation.
- A vulnerable adult's demeanour/behaviour may lead you to suspect abuse or neglect.
- The behaviour of a person close to the vulnerable adult makes you feel uncomfortable (this may include another staff member, peer or family member).
- Through general good neighbourliness and social guardianship.

Being alert to potential abuse plays a major role in ensuring that vulnerable adults are safeguarded and it is important that all concerns about possible abuse are reported.

What if a vulnerable adult discloses abuse?

In cases where a vulnerable adult discloses abuse to a staff member they should react appropriately, according to the following guidelines:

Do:

- Stay calm.
- Listen and hear.
- Express concern and sympathy about what has happened.
- Reassure the person – tell the person that s/he did the right thing in telling you.
- Let the person know that the information will be taken seriously and give information about what will happen next.
- If urgent medical/police help is required, call the emergency services.
- Ensure the immediate safety of the person is considered.
- Record in writing using the Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Report form, date and sign your report, and give it to your Safeguarding Officer at the earliest possible time.
- Act without delay.

Do not:

- Stop someone disclosing to you.
- Promise to keep secrets.
- Press the person for more details or make them repeat the story.
- Gossip about the disclosure or pass on the information to anyone who does not have a legitimate need to know.
- Contact the alleged abuser.
- Attempt to investigate yourself.
- Leave details of your concerns on a voicemail or by email.

- Delay.

Checking out:

There may need to be some initial 'checking out' with the vulnerable adult who has disclosed information to you to ensure his/her safety, for example, if a member notices a bruise on a vulnerable adult's arm, it would be appropriate to ask, 'I see you have a bruise on your arm. How did that happen?' However, be careful not to start investigating. It is also paramount that we are asking the right questions without leading individuals in terms of their response. It is important that a member of the Team understands the clear distinction between 'checking out' and investigating and understands the use and benefits of open questioning. Members should not begin to investigate alleged or suspected abuse by asking questions that relate to the specific detail or circumstances of the alleged abuse beyond initial listening, expressing concern and checking out the overall level of disclosure. Safeguarding Training and ongoing relevant/timely updates is therefore paramount to understanding appropriate and effective responses.

How to react and what to do

There is not one simple set of rules to follow in responding to these situations, but in general: It is important that members are aware that the first person who has concerns or encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred (this is the role of the appropriate authorities). However, members, participants and others do have a duty of care to report any suspicions they may have about the abuse of a vulnerable adult to allow appropriate action to be taken. Failure to report such incidents could result in disciplinary action.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RECORDING

Reporting and recording

All members should document their concerns on the relevant systems that are used within Ready2Shine as soon as possible and they should inform the local authorities. Where a service is within a care home then the concern should be reported to the Manager of the home also, or the deputy in their absence. A written email should always follow a verbal discussion. Ready2Shine strongly believes that if any member of the Team suspects any level of abuse, to adopt the approach of 'if in doubt, report it'. There may be emergency situations where it is appropriate to contact Social Services or to seek medical attention immediately. Whatever the circumstances of the concern, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, it is vital that the staff member records the details and reports to their Safeguarding Officer – Shannon Reddin (or Deputy – Jennifer Hudson) without delay.

Not every report results in a full investigation, but each case must be brought to the attention of a Safeguarding Lead within the Organisation. Ready2Shine recognises that individual reports are accumulated to build a picture about a particular situation. It may be that a report by a Ready2Shine CIC member may provide the necessary or decisive final piece of information.

Concerns about a vulnerable adult - responding to allegations or concerns about a member of staff, a contractor or other third-party person: The following procedures should be followed in each situation:

- Take the allegation or concern seriously. Always refer if you have a concern, do not investigate yourself or do nothing. A referral should always be made within 24 hours of disclosure.
- If it is an emergency contact social services, police or medical assistance immediately.
- Complete a Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding report by writing down the disclosure as soon as possible, giving all the details that you are aware of.
- Forward the report to social services.

Response to a vulnerable adult making an allegation of abuse.

The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately:

- Listen carefully to what the person is telling you.
- Find an appropriate (earliest) opportunity to explain that it is highly likely that what they are telling you will need to be shared with others.
- Ask questions for clarification only - never ask leading questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information they have given you will be shared.
- Complete a Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Report by writing down what has been said as soon as possible, giving all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the vulnerable adult's own words.
- Forward the report to social services as soon as possible, either by hand in a sealed envelope marked 'Confidential', or by a secure email with a 'read receipt' option.

We follow and refer to the Local Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board for further information and supportive guidance in relation to Safeguarding Adults and the relevant Policies and Procedures that support our everyday practice. All members of Staff are advised to refer to this guidance for additional information where necessary. Specific guidance relating to referrals and timescales are detailed on page 40 of the guidance:

[Adult Safeguarding Policy Process and Guidance June 2020 \(4LSAB\)](#)

Not all concerns will necessarily result in a safeguarding process, for example where there is no abuse, or the person requires signposting to another service or a review of their current care. To prevent a delay in raising safeguarding concerns, the Local Authority should be contacted on the following numbers:

Southampton 02380 833003

Hampshire 0300 555 1386 (Out of hours: 0300 555 1373)

Isle of Wight 01983 814980

Portsmouth 02392 680810

If working out of area or with a vulnerable adult from a different County/Area, Members of Ready2Shine must follow their local Policies, Procedures and Guidance.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

It is best and safe practice for all Team Members of Ready2Shine CIC to avoid lone working with vulnerable adults. All staff members should endeavour to work in twos at every possible opportunity. There may be times that this may be unavoidable, but this must not be on a regular basis. It is best practice and must be documented as to why this was needed and always with prior agreement from Senior Management of Ready2Shine CIC. All staff members should have a valid and current DBS check although they are able to work under supervision if a DBS is in process. Those that do not have a confirmed DBS must always work under supervision.

Where it is deemed that the work is of an extremely sensitive or risk nature then both team members must attend to safeguard the vulnerable person but also Ready2Shine CIC Staff Members.

Ready2Shine CIC team will encounter vulnerable adults in a range of situations and in a range of locations including offices, colleges, homes and other settings. It is not practical within this policy to provide definitive guidance that will cover all situations, however the principles set out below should be applied in all situations.

- Staff should avoid, where at all possible any unnecessary one to one interaction with vulnerable adults.
- Staff should record any one-to-one periods of interaction if this was deemed necessary and document why (Prior agreement to be obtained where possible).
- Staff should not take a vulnerable adult to his/her own home.
- Staff should not take a vulnerable adult alone on car journey, unless this forms part of the core activities. If it is unavoidable or necessary, these kinds of behaviours should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of a manager and where an appropriate record is maintained.

Unacceptable behaviours are those that should always be avoided in the interests of the safety of vulnerable adults and staff. For example, a staff member should never:

- Abuse, neglect, or harm / place at risk of harm vulnerable adults whether by omission or commission.
- Engage in rough physical games with vulnerable adults, including horseplay.
- Engage in sexually provocative games with vulnerable adults e.g., spin the bottle, strip poker.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to or about a vulnerable adult.
- Form inappropriate relationships with vulnerable adults.
- Gossip about personal details of vulnerable adults and their families.
- Make/accept loans or gifts of money from vulnerable adults.
- Engage in or allow any form of bullying.

We have a separate employee/volunteer disciplinary and grievance procedure.

We have a separate Behaviour Policy which covers in more detail acceptable behaviour for clients and our protocol for dealing with unacceptable behaviour. Any client who has a background of requiring restraint will be required to bring a support worker with them.

GUIDELINES FOR SHARING INFORMATION

Confidentiality and information sharing

Confidentiality must be maintained for all concerned.

Information will be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only e.g., Safeguarding officers, social services, the vulnerable adult, courts and relevant staff.

Recorded information will be stored in a secure place in line with data protection laws (e.g., that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure) and Ready2Shine CIC members must be registered with the ICO. We will securely store any safeguarding concerns in a locked filing cabinet within the Ready2Shine CIC office. Only the Managing Directors have access to this.

If enquiries arise from the public or any branch of the media, staff must not make any comments regarding the situation and all queries are referred to the Information Department/Senior Management.

Online Engagement with vulnerable Adults

Ready2Shine courses and services will be offered online for those that cannot access face to face provision for any reason. Online engagement for the purposes of group sessions and/or one to one assessments and interventions will be supported by a Lead Trainer along with a Volunteer/Member of Staff that can support. If a member of Ready2Shine is not available to support such provision on the day, lead members of staff will ensure that vulnerable adults are supported by their own support staff as a minimum requirement. The same safer practices will be considered with any work that is undertaken online. Certain functions and expectations are in place to ensure the safety of Staff and Participants during online activity. These include:

- A paid subscription (that includes encryption) to the relevant online platforms is in place.
- Waiting room functions are enabled on Online Meeting Rooms to ensure that only invitees and relevant staff can attend.
- Only the Meeting Host can share their screen/content on their PC and will take overall control of the meeting functions.
- Support Staff are always available to support the Meeting/Intervention.
- Meetings and Interventions are only recorded with agreement/consented to by all attendees.
- Meeting Room ID's are only given to relevant attendees.
- Participants agree to the working agreement of the chosen intervention-this may include expectations of online engagement.

Given that our services and provision can be bespoke according to the needs of the vulnerable adult, the set expectations and working agreements may be tailored to that service and level of need. The criteria listed above is a bare minimum in terms of ensuring the safety of vulnerable adults that we work with along with all staff required to support such provision.