

Emerging Voices: Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

1. Introduction

The Trustees of Emerging Voices recognise the need for and importance of protecting vulnerable adults. This document will ensure that policies and procedures promote safe working practices. It will inform those working with vulnerable adults about good practice, to ensure we provide a safe working environment for everyone. All staff and volunteers of Emerging Voices are expected to understand their responsibilities in safeguarding adults and follow this policy. Over and above the details contained within this policy, it is the responsibility of trustees, facilitators, volunteers, and all connected to Emerging Voices to promote healthy, respectful attitudes and behaviours within the charity being mindful that the adults with whom we work may at times experience a deterioration in their mental wellbeing.

2. Definitions

The Care Act 2014 provides a definition and framework for Safeguarding Adults.

Safeguarding adults at risk means protecting a person's right to live safely, free from abuse and neglect. An adult is anyone 18 years and over. Safeguarding involves protecting adults at risk from abuse or neglect and putting plans in place to prevent harm in future. It involves helping people to live as well as possible and to remain healthy and have their independence maintained. Safeguarding adults is everyone's business. We all have a duty of care to report concerns if we think someone is being abused or neglected.

We will enable all our staff, volunteers, trustees, and those who work with us to make informed and confident decisions regarding safeguarding issues and take all suspicions and allegations of abuse seriously. We expect everyone connected to Emerging Voices in a paid or volunteer role to have read, understood, and adhere to this safeguarding policy and accompanying procedures.

Emerging Voices is committed to:

- Adopting this policy and appointing a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who takes responsibility for safeguarding at the highest level in the organization.
- Ensuring that we have a safer recruitment process for every person or volunteer recruited by Emerging Voices and carrying out all necessary checks as required.
- Providing effective guidance and support to staff and volunteers through supervision, support, and training.
- Sharing information about safeguarding good practice with staff and volunteers and other relevant parties.
- Ensuring organisations we work with have robust safeguarding policies in place.
- Reviewing this policy and procedures and updating as appropriate.

3. Working with vulnerable adults

Emerging Voices will adhere to the following six key principles of safeguarding.

Empowerment:

People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions via informed consent.

Prevention:

It is better to take action before harm occurs.

Proportionality:

The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

Protection:

Support and representation for those in greatest need.

Partnership:

Local solutions through services working with their communities and service users.

Accountability:

Accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice

In addition to the above principles when working with vulnerable adults in a creative way Emerging Voices will strive to establish and maintain trust and confidence by:

- Communicating in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way
- Being honest and trustworthy, reliable, and dependable
- Valuing and listening attentively to what individuals have to say.
- Dealing with confidential information on a need-to-know basis and communicating to vulnerable adults when we are required to pass information to relevant authorities.
- Ensuring that we can provide suitable opportunities and spaces for vulnerable adults to disclose information.
- Ensuring that there are good channels of communication and understanding between all parties.
- Taking disclosures seriously regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, and responding to them or passing them to the appropriate person.
- Ensuring that there are good channels of communication and understanding between all parties.
- Taking complaints seriously and responding to them or passing them to the appropriate person.
- Taking relevant steps where possible to ensure that an individual's behaviour does not harm themselves or other people.

- Recognising that people have the right to take risks and help individuals to identify and manage potential and actual risks to themselves and others.

4. Consent Confidentiality and Information Sharing.

The designated Safeguarding Lead, John Ashton (safeguarding@emergingvoices.org.uk) will be responsible for making decisions about sharing information with external agencies including the police and local authority.

Adults have a general right to independence, choice, and self-determination, including control over information about themselves. In certain circumstances it is the duty of the organisation to share information internally and with relevant authorities on a need-to-know basis to:

- Prevent death or serious harm
- Coordinate effective and efficient responses
- Enable early interventions to prevent the escalation of risk
- Prevent abuse and harm that may increase the need for care and support
- Maintain and improve good practice in safeguarding adults
- Reveal patterns of abuse that were previously undetected and that could identify others at risk of abuse
- Identify low-level concerns that may reveal people at risk of abuse
- Help people to access the right kind of support to reduce risk and promote wellbeing
- Help identify people who may pose a risk to others and, where possible, work to reduce offending behaviour
- Reduce organizational risk and protect reputation

5. Safer Recruitment

Emerging Voices will endeavour to do everything possible to minimize the risk of involving unsuitable people in our work with adults who have experience of poor mental health. All staff and volunteers will have a clear role or job description relevant to their area of activity.

Enhanced DBS checks will be undertaken for individuals who are undertaking regulated activity, and DBS checks for all roles. This will include volunteers, freelancers working on behalf of Emerging Voices, and any paid staff.

Depending on their role, these individuals must receive training on the content of this policy every two years. In addition, the charity will initially obtain two written references confirming that the referee knows no reason why the individual should not work with vulnerable adults. Our safe recruitment culture relies on the following principles:

- Acknowledgement that abuse could happen during the charity's activities and that staff, volunteers and beneficiaries can be the perpetrators of abuse

- Putting in place clear procedures to report concerns about the behaviour of staff and volunteers and beneficiaries
- Support for vulnerable adults and staff who raise concerns, and a commitment to act on them
- Good induction and if staff are employed, use of probationary periods .
- A commitment from all involved with Emerging Voices to safeguard and protect vulnerable adults and to maintain an ongoing culture of vigilance

6. Record Keeping

Emerging Voices will ensure that accurate and factual records of all safeguarding concerns are kept and will be stored securely. Records must be factual, accurate, and legible and include a date, time, and signature. A Safeguarding Reporting form has been developed to support this requirement.

7. Training

All staff trustees and volunteers will receive appropriate safeguarding training in line with their roles and responsibilities, which will include basic awareness training as a minimum requirement. Freelancers must adopt the EV Safeguarding Policy and attend an induction session to familiarise themselves with this policy

8. Reporting a Concern

Any member of staff, volunteer, or trustee who becomes aware of a safeguarding concern must raise the matter immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (safeguarding@emerginvoices.org.uk) The Emerging Voices Safeguarding Procedures (see appendix 1) will then be followed. If in the event of a concern coming to light in relation to a child or young person under the age of 18 then the same reporting requirements apply, and the matter must be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

9. Whistleblowing

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor safeguarding practice within Emerging Voices, and any concerns will be taken seriously.

10. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Emerging Voices Trustees and amended, when necessary, should any relevant new legislation require this.

APPENDIX 1

Emerging Voices is committed to ensuring that safeguarding is paramount when conducting or delivering any activity that involves working with vulnerable adults.

It is the responsibility of Trustees to ensure that this safeguarding procedure is followed and support to staff, freelancers and/or volunteers is provided to ensure good practice in safeguarding is upheld. At Emerging Voices, we operate an ignore nothing report on everything policy. Due to the nature of our work, vulnerable adults may reach out to staff members, volunteers and/or trustees to share information about abuse or neglect and may talk spontaneously individually or in groups when they are present. If somebody makes a safeguarding disclosure to you:

- Listen to the person making the disclosure. Do not ask direct or leading questions
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information the person has shared
- Give the person time and attention without making notes while they talk
- Allow them to give a spontaneous account and do not interrupt them while they are recalling significant events
- Explain that you will need to share the information with relevant parties to keep them safe
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by sharing, that they have not done anything wrong and what will happen next
- Do not ask them to repeat their account of the event.

After the disclosure, you should:

- Write down a factual record of any information you have been given using the Emerging Voices Safeguarding Reporting Form
- Always write down:
 1. The timing
 2. The setting
 3. Who was there
 4. The person's presentation e.g. appearance, behaviour and emotional state
 5. What was said as close as possible to verbatim using the person's own words. Do not paraphrase.
 6. Do not throw this record away as it may be needed later in the decision-making process.

Procedure for staff /volunteers

It is the responsibility of Trustees to ensure that this safeguarding procedure is followed, and support to staff and or volunteers is provided to ensure good practice in safeguarding is upheld.

What to do upon suspicion or disclosure:

Please Note

- It is your duty to report a disclosure or abuse. It is not for you to decide whether a suspicion or allegation is true or not
- All suspicions and allegations must be taken seriously and dealt with according to this procedure.
- If any concerns are raised, it must be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Emerging Voices is not a statutory agency and has no right to undertake investigations into concerns regarding Adult or Child Protection. Referrals should be directed to the appropriate local Adult Services Contact Centres.

Safeguarding Procedures

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is John Ashton (safeguarding@emergingvoices.org.uk) and all your concerns must be referred to this person.

In an emergency please do not delay in informing the Police and/or Ambulance. All the information must be treated confidentially and reported to the Safeguarding Lead within one working day.

If you are unable to contact the Safeguarding Lead, use the contact numbers listed at the end of this document.

The reporting form should be completed at the time or immediately following the disclosure, but after all necessary emergency actions have been taken, please complete the form as fully as possible.

Remember staff/volunteers must make clear to the adult at risk that they cannot guarantee confidentiality.

In an event where the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, and you have a concern that an adult in York is being abused or mistreated speak to someone at one of the following numbers:

In an emergency call the police on 999

If a person is not in immediate danger call the police on 101.

For Adult Safeguarding Concerns:

- Contact City of York Safeguarding Adults Board, - 01904 555111 (office hours)
- Outside office hours, at weekends and on public holidays contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0300 1312131

- For Harrogate and Selby contact North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board 0300 131131.
- For Safeguarding Concerns in relation to children and young people under 18 in York contact 01904 551900.
- For Safeguarding concerns in relation to children and young people in Harrogate and Selby contact 0300 1312131

APPENDIX 2

Signs of Abuse

Physical abuse – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Domestic violence – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so, called ‘honour’ based violence.

Sexual abuse – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological abuse – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Financial or material abuse – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

Modern slavery – slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. People are bought and sold for sexual exploitation, forced labour, street crime, cannabis cultivation, grooming and pimping, domestic servitude, forced marriage or even the sale of organs and human sacrifice.

Discriminatory abuse – including forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one’s own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice because of the structure, policies, processes, and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and acts of omission – including ignoring medical, emotional, or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Self-neglect – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. It involves no other perpetrator.

Appendix 3 Further resources, training, and guidance

- <https://www.safeguardingadultsyork.org.uk/>
- Free e-learning training courses are available via the City of York Council. Training should be updated every three years if you continue to work or volunteer with vulnerable people. <https://york.learningpool.com/login/index.php>
- NCVO – national guidance tools and tips for the third sector on safeguarding:
- [The National Council for Voluntary Organisations: Safeguarding](#)

Rights and confidentiality

If a complaint or allegation is made against a member of staff, freelancer, or volunteer or similar, he or she should be made aware of his or her legal rights. No matter how you feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the person who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 2018. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.

Review and Upholding of the Policy

This policy and its procedures should be kept up to date and reviewed annually by the board of trustees, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If a trustee, facilitator, volunteer or similar is found to be not upholding this policy or its procedures, this will be investigated fully by the designated Safeguarding Lead and appropriate steps taken. Such steps depend on the nature and seriousness of the manner in which the policy is not being upheld. If not already covered by the procedures above, these might include:

- Conversation with the individual to resolve the matter.
- Updated training
- Taking the matter to the board of trustees
- Asking the volunteer or trustee to step down.
- Termination of a contract, in accordance with its terms.

Appendix 4 Traffic Light System

Recognise

Recognise any signs of abuse, the potential type of abuse and/or when a disclosure is made

Respond

In an emergency, you **must** call 999. If a vulnerable person discloses something to you, listen carefully without judgement. Do not ask any leading questions. Explain the next steps and do not promise confidentiality. If you notice signs of abuse, refer.

Refer

Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or next most appropriate contact as soon as possible.

Record

Complete the original form. Record facts and if a disclosure has been made, use language as close to what was originally said as possible. Record the facts and avoid using your own opinions or paraphrasing

Green

- Disclosure or concern is reported by staff member, freelancer or trustee.
- The disclosure is discussed among safeguarding trustees and it is decided that the disclosure is not a concern.
- The disclosure and decision-making process is documented and no further action is necessary.

Amber

- Disclosure or concern is reported by staff member, freelancer or trustee.
- The disclosure is discussed among safeguarding trustees ASAP after the report, and it is decided that there is no immediate risk in the short term, but there is the potential for risk.
- DSL reports the issue to a local authority.
- The disclosure and decision-making process is documented and no further action is necessary.

Red

- Disclosure or concern is report by staff member, freelancer or trustee
- The disclosure is discussed among safeguarding trustees ASAP after the report and it is decided that the disclosure is of urgent concern
- DSL reports the issue to the local authority ASAP.
- If somebody is an immediate risk to themselves or others, 999 should be called.
- The disclosure and decision making process is documented and no further action is necessary

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