

Vulnerable adults protection policy

The National Association for Children of Alcoholics has a duty through our members, trustees, staff and volunteers to protect from abuse, vulnerable adults who they come into contact with.

Vulnerable adults may be defined as people over 18 who are or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability (including sensory impairment, physical impairment, learning difficulties, etc.) and who are or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons and may be the result of action or inaction by a carer or any other person.

1. Six categories of abuse have been identified as follows:

Physical abuse

Sexual abuse

Emotional/psychological abuse

Neglect

Financial/material abuse

Discriminatory abuse

Physical Abuse – acts of commission

Actual or likely physical injury or failure to prevent physical injury, including hitting, slapping, burning, restraining, inappropriate use of medication, inappropriate manual handling.

Neglect – acts of omission

Persistent or severe neglect, or the failure to protect a vulnerable adult from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in the significant impairment of health or development. Including non organic failure to thrive, neglect of personal hygiene, malnutrition, dehydration, ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication.

Sexual Abuse

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a vulnerable adult who may be dependent or developmentally immature, including the involvement of a person in sexual activities which they do not want or truly comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent.

Emotional Abuse

Severe or persistent emotional ill-treatment or rejection likely to cause adverse effects on the emotional and behavioural development of a vulnerable adult resulting from acts of omission or commission on the part of others and producing mental anguish in the victim (e.g. denial of basic rights, deprivation of normal social contacts, episodes of bullying, threats of harm or abandonment,



humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawing from services or supportive networks).

Financial or material abuse

Including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions or the misuse or misappropriation of property.

Discriminatory abuse

Including racist, sexist or any abuse that is based on a person's disability, including other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

More than one type of abuse may be happening at any time. The above definitions of types of abuse are not exclusive.

2. Historical Abuse

There may be occasions when an adult will disclose abuse (either sexual or physical) which occurred in the past. This information needs to be treated in exactly the same way as a disclosure or suspicion of current abuse. The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to vulnerable adults now.

3. Awareness

As a member, trustee, paid staff or a volunteer etc., you are not responsible for diagnosing abuse. However, you 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, there may well be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind and consider what you know about the vulnerable adult and his or her circumstances.

Nacoo's "multi agency procedures for working with children in need (including those in need of protection), vulnerable adults and their families" are the guidelines Social Services, the Police, Education, Health and other agencies work to.

4. What to do

As someone in a caring role as well as a citizen, when abuse is disclosed or observed you should take the following action:

See Confidentiality Policy

- 4.1.** Inform the vulnerable adult that the information cannot be kept confidential and will have to be passed on to the appropriate agencies.

Be respectful of the wishes of the vulnerable adult and ensure his or her involvement as fully as possible with policy guidelines, including exploring whether they have an existing worker or agency responsible for their care. This would be the first point of contact in the referral procedure.



4.2. Inform supervisor about the disclosure immediately. She will treat as top priority and seek advice urgently. You should complete referral form as an accurate and contemporary record for future reference. You may also speak to chief executive.

4.3. A decision will then be made as to the most appropriate first contact to make, e.g. social worker, mental health worker, or social services adult duty team at local Social Services and Health Office on 0117-903 6684.

Direct calls to the police are reserved for incidents of assault and violence where an element of urgency applies.

4.4. The vulnerable adult to be kept informed about what will happen next, so they can be reassured about what to expect and encouraged to maintain contact with Nacoa.

5. Support to Staff and Volunteers

As a result of reporting concerns, you may find the person who disclosed the information is upset or angry. The supervisor and/or chief executive will support you. If Social Services need further information or involvement from you, the supervisor will talk with them and you about how this will happen

Staff may also be subject to allegations of abuse. While support will be offered, Nacoa will ensure that Social Services are given all assistance in pursuing any investigation. Suspension and/or the disciplinary procedure may be implemented.

6. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is crucial to all our relationships – but the welfare of the vulnerable adult is paramount. The law does not allow anyone to keep concerns relating to abuse to themselves.

Confidentiality may not be maintained if the withholding of the information will prejudice the welfare of the vulnerable adult.

7. Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers/Appointment of Trustees, etc.

Nacoa will ensure that criminal records statements are obtained and acted upon, prior to their engagement, from paid/unpaid trustees/staff/volunteers new to the organisation; and with these statements, make “disclosure applications” to the Criminal Records Bureau (the Government’s “Disclosure Service”).

Those people for whom we will make such applications are those in any position with contact or access to children and vulnerable adults, including those in “positions of trust” and supervisors as well as people in frontline roles. (See the Home Office’s guide to definitions of “regulated positions” when working with children and vulnerable adults).

Two references will be sought for new staff and volunteers and followed up as necessary. A medical reference may also be required.



A rigorous and probing approach to the application process (e.g. using application forms designed to elicit the full, relevant history of applicants), interviews and selection for positions with Nacoo will be adhered to. Proof of identity may be sought.

8. Other Measures

The work of Nacoo is planned in ways to minimise risks to vulnerable adults. Concerns about the welfare of vulnerable adults will always be taken seriously.

Cases of misconduct towards vulnerable adults involving staff, volunteers, trustees, etc. are reportable to the Department of Health for possible inclusion on the list of unsuitable people to work with vulnerable adults.

"The safety of children and vulnerable adults and their well being is a core value of this organisation."

