

## **Back on the Map - Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy**

**Purpose** - This policy outlines the practice and procedures to all trustees/directors and staff members of Back on the Map in preventing abuse of children and vulnerable adults, raising awareness and providing a clear framework for action when abuse is suspected. The policy covers all personnel whose roles involve contact with service users who may be considered to be children or vulnerable adults.

### **Definitions**

**Children** - For the avoidance of doubt, a child is viewed by Back on the Map as being “*any human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier*”, as per the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.

**Vulnerable adults** - are defined (under the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Regulations 2002) as people aged 18 or over who are receiving any one the following:

- Accommodation, nursing or personal care
- Medical care provided by the NHS or other independent agencies
- Social services support
- Services provided for people with learning difficulties or a physical disability, physical or mental illness (temporary or chronic), including drug or alcohol addiction or reduced physical or mental capacity and who are dependent on others or need assistance to perform basic physical functions; who are severely impaired in their ability to communicate, or unable to protect themselves from assault, abuse or neglect.

**Abuse** - is the harming of an individual, usually by someone who is in a position of power, trust or authority over that individual. The harm may be physical, psychological or emotional or it may be directed at exploiting the vulnerability of the victim in more subtle ways (for example, through denying access to people who can come to their aid, or through misuse or misappropriation of his or her financial resources). The threat or use of punishment is also a form of abuse. .... In many cases, it is a criminal offence. (See appendix 2)

### **Responsibilities of Back on the Map Senior Managers and Trustees/Directors**

- To ensure employees/volunteers are aware of and are adequately trained to implement the Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy and procedures
- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected
- To support and, where possible, secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information regarding identified risk and vulnerability
- To undertake status checks, as appropriate, on staff members (see Appendices 3 and 4)
- To work with partners in line with this policy

### **Responsibilities of employees/volunteers**

- To be familiar with the Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy and procedures
- To take appropriate action in line with Back on the Map policies regarding notification
- To renew DBS check as and when required, where appropriate (see Appendices 3 and 4)
- To undertake training as and when required

**Children and vulnerable adults’ rights** - In dealing with incidents of abuse/potential abuse, children and vulnerable adults’ rights must be respected. Children and vulnerable adults have a right to;

- Live without fear of abuse from their families, carers, professionals, volunteers or service users
- Be safe and receive adequate care and protection. This includes protection from all forms of violence including physical punishment, intimidation, belittling, lack of respect, harassment, and sexual assault
- Be involved in decision-making that affects them and to be supported in making their own decisions about how they wish to proceed in the event of abuse, and in whom they wish to confide. Their wishes should only be overridden if considered necessary in the interests of their own safety or that of others
- Report abuse and to be taken seriously, including the right to involve the police if a crime has been committed
- Be free from discrimination because of their ethnic origin, culture or religion, gender or sexuality, age, disability or mental health
- Bring a formal complaint under Back on the Map’s complaints procedure if they are not satisfied with the initial investigation regarding abuse
- Be kept informed at all stages of the process, should Back on the Map take action as a result of an allegation of abuse.

**Employees/volunteers’ rights** - In dealing with incidents of abuse or potential abuse, employees/volunteers have the following rights, which should be respected:

- To raise a concern with their appointed line manager if they feel vulnerable to allegations of abuse of a child or vulnerable adult
- To be informed about any allegation of abuse made against them and be kept informed at all stages of the process should Back on the Map take action
- To report any incident or situation which they feel could result in an allegation of abuse against them or a colleague
- To have support from an appointed mentor and/or colleagues if an allegation of abuse involving a child or vulnerable adult is brought against them
- To request alternative duties/volunteering arrangements if the behaviour of a vulnerable child or adult causes concern, or during an investigation of alleged abuse
- To be accompanied by an independent advocate during interviews and meetings related to an allegation of abuse of a child or vulnerable adult

Back on the Map will ensure that anyone who makes a complaint, or expresses a concern regarding abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, whether they are Back on the Map paid staff member, volunteer, service user or a member of the general public:

- Will be taken seriously
- Will have their comments treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
- Staff members and volunteers will be given support and if necessary, afforded protection in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

**Implementing the policy** - Back on the Map will take steps to implement and review this policy to ensure it reflects legal requirements and good practice developments. In particular, we will ensure that in terms of:

- **Recruitment of employees & volunteers** - Potential employees/volunteers will be required to disclose any allegations or criminal action of abuse against a child or vulnerable adult. Failure to disclose information will be regarded as gross misconduct and will result in dismissal. All requests for references will mention the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy.

Back on the Map does not carry out any activities that are categorised as regulated under the new definitions of regulated activity. If that position changes, Back on the Map will seek evidence from the prospective employee/volunteer from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS checks) where possible/at the appropriate level for employees/volunteers whose role includes any activity that comes under the new definition of regulated activity (The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 - See Appendix 3 for more information). In those circumstances, employees/volunteers will also be obliged to register with the update service within 14 days of receiving a new DBS certificate, where applicable. For those already in possession of a DBS certificate the unique reference number must be supplied prior to voluntary/paid position being taken up.

- **Training** - All trustees/directors and staff members will be made aware of this policy.
- **Management and Supervision** - It is the Community Services Manager's responsibility to clarify with the volunteer their roles and responsibilities regarding their relationships with any children/vulnerable adults with whom they may be in contact and any additional support or training needs they may have. Regular supervision for volunteers will monitor the work and offer the opportunity to raise any issues.
- **Access to an independent person** - Back on the Map has nominated the Community Support Officer as a person with whom concerns and/or allegations may be discussed informally before raising issues with the Community Services Manager.
- **Record keeping** - Concerns raised about suspected abuse of a child or vulnerable adult will be recorded on the Concern Notification & Follow Up Form and stored in accordance with confidentiality, Data Protection guidelines and similar good practice guidance, by the Nominated Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults person, which is the Office & Housing Manager. Records will include: the name of the person making the notification, who they are notifying, dates/times, nature of the concern, any specific action taken, referral made and follow up. Where incidents or allegations involve investigative actions, the nominated Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults person will store detailed records and make these available to the Trust Director and Community Services Manager.
- **Planning** - On no account should staff work one to one with children and/or vulnerable adults.
- **Allegations and investigations** - All complaints, allegations or concerns should be made through the agreed Back on the Map Complaints Procedure. Where, on investigation, a complaint or allegation is upheld against a trustee/director or staff member, Back on the Map disciplinary procedures will apply. If a criminal act against a vulnerable person is suspected, it may be necessary to involve the police in taking further actions. At this stage, both the child or vulnerable adult and the other party will be informed and made fully aware of their rights and any support available to them.

## **APPENDIX 1 - Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults - Code of Practice For Staff**

### **Actions and considerations**

- a. In situations where you suspect immediate danger, take urgent action by calling the relevant emergency services, e.g. Police, ambulance, GP. Remember to have regard to your own safety. Leave the situation immediately if you feel it is not safe for you and contact the Nominated Safeguarding Person (the Office & Housing Manager), your line manager, Trust Director or the Chairperson
- b. Listen to the child or vulnerable adult, offer necessary support and reassurance. Issues of confidentiality must be clarified early on. For example, volunteers must make it clear that they will have to discuss the concerns with the nominated safeguarding person
- c. Where a child or vulnerable adult or their carer/representative expresses a wish for concerns not to be pursued, then this should be respected wherever possible
- d. Decisions about whether to respect the service user's wishes must include the level of risk to the individual and others, and their capacity to understand the decision in question.
- e. In some circumstances the child or vulnerable adult's wishes may be overridden in favour of considerations of safety
- f. Decisions to override a child or vulnerable adult's wish not to take the matter further should always be the result of discussion with you and the Nominated Safeguarding Person.
- g. Make a written note of any concerns, any information you are given or you witness on the Safeguarding - Concern Notification & Follow Up Form (Appendix 5) and give a copy to the Nominated Safeguarding Person
- h. Report any concerns you have about your personal safety to the Nominated Safeguarding Person
- i. Understand the need not to contaminate, or to preserve evidence if a crime may have been committed
- j. It is not necessary or advisable for you to seek evidence. By supporting the child or vulnerable adult and carefully logging any information given to you at this stage, you will lay the foundations for an effective formal investigation

***The first priority is to ensure the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults. It is the responsibility of all employees/volunteers to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect and to pass on their concerns to the nominated Safeguarding Person, line manager or agency.***

### **Discussion and decision-making**

Information/concerns should be shared with the Nominated Safeguarding Person, who must approve any actions to be taken and any documents or correspondence being sent out. Employees/volunteers with concerns should discuss these with the Nominated Safeguarding Person as soon as possible after the abuse or suspicions of abuse are observed and complete the *Safeguarding - Concern Notification & Follow-Up Form (Appendix 5)*. If unavailable, then concerns should be discussed with your manager/supervisor. Concerns about colleagues should be addressed initially with the Nominated Safeguarding Person, but if this is not possible or the concern is about the Nominated Safeguarding Person, then any concerns should be discussed with the Trust Director.

### **To refer or not to refer**

The decision to refer or not to other services should be made by the Nominated Safeguarding Person and the Trust Director or Chair should be informed in all cases. When considering whether to refer (e.g. to Police, Social Services) the following should be taken into account:

- The wishes of the child or vulnerable adult and their right to self-determination
- The mental capacity of the child or vulnerable adult
- Known indicators of abuse and definitions of abuse
- Level of risk to this individual
- The seriousness of the abuse
- The effect of the abuse on the individual
- Level of risk to others
- The effect of the abuse on others
- Whether a criminal offence has been committed
- Whether other statutory obligations have been breached
- The ability of others (e.g. Police, Social Services) to make a positive intervention in the situation

### **Issues of mental capacity and consent**

The consent of the child or vulnerable adult, or their carer/nominated representative, must be obtained except where:

- The child or vulnerable adult lacks the mental capacity to make a decision, and a risk assessment indicates that referral would be in their best interests
- Others may be at risk
- A crime may have been committed

### **Who the Nominates Safeguarding person may refer or report concerns to**

- The Trust Director or Chairperson
- Sunderland City Council Social Services team
- Relevant Hospital Social Services team if child or vulnerable adult is in hospital
- Community Mental Health Team where the child or vulnerable adult has an ongoing mental health need
- National Care Standards Commission where there are issues relating to standards and regulations in care homes and domiciliary care agencies.
- Hospital Trusts/Primary Care Trusts where there is a complaint of abuse.
- The Police, if there is an emergency where delay may result in serious harm to the child or vulnerable adult or if the abuse may constitute a crime

### **Summary**

#### **Employees/volunteers should, firstly:**

- Stay calm
- Listen patiently
- Reassure the person they are doing the right thing by telling you
- Explain what you are going to do
- Report to the relevant person (Nominated Safeguarding Person, line manager, Trust Director or Chairperson)
- Make a written factual account of what you have seen immediately, complete the *Safeguarding - Concern Notification & Follow Up Form* as soon as possible and give to one of the above

#### **Employees/volunteers should then discuss with the Nominated Safeguarding Person who will:**

- Ascertain whether the situation might fall within the definitions of abuse outlined in this policy
- Consider the child or vulnerable adult's capacity to make decisions
- Ascertain whether an advocate or appropriate adult might be necessary
- Ascertain any immediate action required
- Ascertain whether an investigation is necessary in accordance with internal Back on the Map's policies and procedures
- Where abuse is suspected conclude that a referral be made to the appropriate agency

#### **Employees/volunteers should not:**

- Appear shocked, horrified, disgusted or angry
- Press the individual for unnecessary details (unless requested to do so)
- Make comments or judgments other than to show concern
- Promise to keep secrets
- Confront the abuser
- Risk contaminating evidence

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Recognising signs and types of possible abuse**

#### **Signs of physical abuse**

- A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries
- Bruising in well protected areas, or clustered from repeated striking
- Finger marks
- Burns of unusual location or type
- Injuries found at different states of healing
- Injury shape similar to an object
- Injuries to head/face/scalp
- History of GP or agency hopping, or reluctance to seek help
- Accounts which vary with time or are inconsistent with physical evidence
- Weight loss due to malnutrition, or rapid weight gain
- Ulcers, bed sores and being left in wet clothing
- Drowsiness due to too much medication, or lack of medication causing recurring crises/hospital admissions

#### **Signs of psychological/emotional abuse**

- Isolation
- Unkempt, unwashed, smell
- Over meticulous
- Inappropriately dressed
- Withdrawn, agitated, anxious not wanting to be touched
- Change in appetite
- Insomnia, or need for excessive sleep
- Tearfulness
- Unexplained paranoia, or excessive fears
- Low self esteem
- Confusion

#### **Signs of sexual abuse**

- Disclosure or partial disclosure (use of phrases such as 'It's a secret')
- Medical problems, e.g. Genital infections, pregnancy, difficulty walking or sitting
- Disturbed behaviour e.g. depression, sudden withdrawal from activities, loss of previous skills, sleeplessness or nightmares, self-injury, showing fear or aggression to one particular person, repeated or excessive masturbation, inappropriately seductive behaviour, loss of appetite or difficulty in keeping food down.

#### **Signs of neglect**

- Physical condition poor
- Clothing in poor condition
- Inadequate diet
- Untreated injuries or medical problems
- Poor personal hygiene

#### **Signs of financial or material abuse**

- Unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills
- Unexplained or sudden withdrawal of money from accounts
- Disparity between assets and satisfactory living conditions
- Extraordinary interest by family members and other people in the vulnerable person's assets

#### **Signs of discrimination**

- Lack of respect shown to an individual
- Signs of substandard service offered to an individual
- Exclusion from rights afforded to others, such as health, education

### APPENDIX 3 - New definition of 'Regulated Activity'

**Children** - The following work is regulated activity only if undertaken regularly with children;

- Teaching, training, instruction, care of, supervision, the provision of advice/guidance to children
- Driving a vehicle only for children
- Working in places such as schools, children's hospitals, children's homes, children's centres (but not including work done by volunteers under supervision)

The following is regulated activity regardless of how regularly it is undertaken with children

- Physical assistance in connection with washing/bathing, toileting or dressing
- Health care provided by or supervised by a professional
- Registered child minding, foster carers

**Adults** - Regulated Activity concerning adults now identifies activities which could lead to an adult being vulnerable at a particular time. There is no longer a requirement that activities must be duplicated a certain number of times in order to become a regulated activity. There are 6 categories falling within the scope of adult regulated activity, which are as follows:

- a. The provision to an adult of healthcare by, or under the direction or supervision of, a health care professional
- b. The provision to an adult of relevant personal care, for example assisting a vulnerable adult to the toilet
- c. The provision by a social care worker of relevant social work to an adult who is a client or potential client
- d. The provision of assistance in relation to general household matters to an adult who is in need of it by reason of age, illness or disability
- e. Any relevant assistance in the conduct of an adults own affairs, for example, dealing with any legal or financial issues
- f. The conveying by persons of a prescribed description in such circumstances as may be prescribed of groups who need to be conveyed by reason of age, illness or disability, for example, transporting vulnerable adults from one location to another

### APPENDIX 4

The formal guidelines for frequency of employee/volunteers status checks area s follows;

Status	Checking frequency	Does this apply to Back on the Map?
<b>Category A</b> - Regulated activity involving regular 1-2-1 unsupervised contact with a child/vulnerable person	Bi-monthly	No
<b>Category B</b> - Regulated activity involving infrequent 1-2-1 unsupervised contact with a child/vulnerable person	Quarterly	No
<b>Category C</b> - Regulated activity that could result in unsupervised contact with a child/vulnerable person	6 monthly	No
<b>Category D</b> - Regulated activity unlikely to result in unsupervised contact with a child/vulnerable person	Annually	No

## Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults – Concern Notification & Follow-Up Form

The person making the notification should complete parts 1 to 8 below (in the space provided in the right-hand column) and issue to the Nominated Safeguarding Person without delay.

1	<b>Name of person notifying concern</b> <i>(your name)</i>	
2	<b>Name of person being notified</b>	
3	<b>Role of person being notified</b>	
4	<b>Date of event/disclosure causing concern</b>	
5	<b>Location of event/disclosure causing concern</b>	
6	<b>Date &amp; time of notification</b>	
7	<b>Authorisation to notify the Nominated Safeguarding Person given by the child or vulnerable adult?</b>	
8	<b>Nature of the concern</b>	

The person who has been notified of the concern must complete parts 9 to 20 below.

9	<b>Name of person being notified of concern</b> <i>(your name)</i>	
10	<b>Date notification was received</b>	
11	<b>Date of discussion with person notifying you of the concern</b>	
12	<b>Any follow-up discussions with child or vulnerable adult</b> <i>(inc. date, time, persons present)</i>	
13	<b>Level of risk to the child, vulnerable adult or other party</b>	
14	<b>Specific action taken</b>	
15	<b>Referral made?</b> <i>(yes/no)</i>	
16	<b>To which agency (agency name)</b>	
17	<b>Name and contact details of agency officer referred to</b>	
18	<b>Referral made by</b> <i>(person's name and role)</i>	
19	<b>Follow up information/outcome of notification</b>	
20	<b>Conclusions and/or outcomes</b>	