

HEA Vulnerable Beneficiaries Policy

This Vulnerable Beneficiaries policy has been developed and approved by trustees at the 14th June 2024 trustees meeting.

INTRODUCTION

- The Charity Commission views the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children as a key Trustee responsibility.
- One Trustee has been appointed to lead the safeguarding team [Jeffrey Lassaline appointed 24th January 2024] who will regularly review this policy, its implementation, its compliance and any reported breaches or potential breaches.
- As one of the key policies adopted by the Association, it should be reviewed by all Trustees annually at each AGM at a minimum and after any reported incident.

DEFINITIONS

- I. Children are defined as being someone under the age of 18.
- II. Vulnerable adults are defined by the Department of Health as someone 'who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm'.
- III. Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. Abuse is defined by the impact on the individual and not the intention of the abuser.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

- To protect vulnerable people from harm.
- Outline a process for assessing and managing risk.
- Create a template such that any beneficiaries, stakeholders and the wider public are aware of the principles and approach taken by the Association and its Trustees.
- Ensure that anyone can raise safeguarding concerns in a safe way.
- That the Association can handle allegations and incidents.
- That the Association can respond including reporting to the relevant authorities where necessary.

TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Trustees should operate in a good governance environment:

1. Creating a culture of respect in which everyone can feel safe and able to speak out.
2. Ensuring that the Association has an adequate safeguarding policy and code of conduct for staff and Trustees.
3. Carrying out risk assessments to identify possible risks to beneficiaries including any potential future risks.

4. Planning programmes and activities that take into account potential safeguarding risks and ensuring that they are properly mitigated.
5. Constantly considering how to improve the culture of the Association.
6. Ensuring that all Association team members know how to recognise, respond to, report and record any concerns.
7. Creating a clear communication route so that beneficiaries are aware of how to raise a concern.
8. Regularly evaluate any safeguarding training to ensure it is current and relevant.
9. Ensuring that personal data is stored and managed in a safe way which is compliant with data protection regulations, including valid consent to use any imagery or video footage.
10. Reviewing which posts within the Association require a DBS check from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
11. Creating a risk assessment process to highlight any instances where a job role would not require a DBS check but who would come into contact with young people and vulnerable adults.
12. Periodically reviewing policies and procedures, learning from any serious incident or issue.
13. Ensuring that any issues are properly investigated and dealt with quickly, fairly and sensitively and that any serious incidents are reported to the police and/or the Charity Commission.
14. Ensuring that all Trustees, staff and volunteers are aware of the Institute of Fundraising guidance on keep fundraising safe and NCVO Guidance on vulnerable people and fundraising.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

We believe that:

1. Nobody who is involved in the Associations' work, both internally and externally which is primarily via training courses and external events, should ever experience abuse, harm, neglect or exploitation.
2. We all have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all of our beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, to keep them safe and to work in a way that protects them.
3. We all have a collective responsibility for creating a culture in which our people not only feel safe, but also able to speak up, if they have any concerns.

TYPES OF ABUSE

We believe that the only touch-points for vulnerable adults and young people with the Association would be on a training course or at an event. As a matter of course, all Trustees have to complete a DBS check before being co-opted.

Abuse can take many forms, such as physical, psychological or emotional, financial, sexual or institutional abuse, including neglect and exploitation.

Online abuse is becoming more prevalent and, with the advent of AI, could pose significant risks as outlined in the Social Media Policy.

POLICY APPLICABILITY

This Vulnerable Beneficiaries policy applies to anyone working within the Association or on its' behalf as well as external parties, partners and members of the public. It is expected that any partner organisations be required to have their own safeguarding and vulnerable beneficiaries' procedures that must, as a minimum, meet the standards of this policy.

Within the Association, this policy should be appropriately reflected in other relevant internal policies and procedures.

REPORTING CONCERNS

- If a crime is in progress, or an individual in immediate danger, call the police, as you would in any other circumstances.
- If you are a beneficiary, or member of the public, you should make your concerns known to a Trustee or staff member of the Association.
- For members of the Association, you should make your concerns known to the Vice Chairman of Trustees who is also the nominated representative for Safeguarding.
- Trustees should be mindful of their reporting obligations to the Charity Commission in respect of Serious Incident Reporting and have made themselves aware of the Government guidance on handling safeguarding allegations.