

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy (AG01)

Policy

Autism Guernsey is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of all who use its services. It recognises that it has a responsibility, through its support for individuals and families, to protect the welfare of adults who may be in vulnerable situations and to ensure that such adults are protected from harm and abuse.

Autism Guernsey is committed to high standards of practice in safeguarding the welfare of adults. It has no statutory remit or role to investigate abuse of adults but acknowledges a responsibility to pass on to the appropriate statutory agency concerns in relation to the safety or welfare of an adult so that these concerns can be assessed.

It is noted that currently the Island has no vulnerable adults guidance produced by the statutory organisations. For reference purposes the guidance on Child Protection can be found on the link below

<http://www.online-procedures.co.uk/guernsey/>

OBJECTIVES

To explain the responsibilities the organisation and its Directors, staff and volunteers have in respect of vulnerable adult protection.

To provide all Directors, staff and volunteers with a clear definition of what constitutes a vulnerable adult.

To provide all Directors, staff and volunteers with an overview of vulnerable adult protection

To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where vulnerable adult protection issues arise.

Definition

Who is an adult in a vulnerable situation?

An adult in a vulnerable situation is a person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be in need of community care services and is, or may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from significant harm or serious exploitation. This may include a person who:

- Has a developmental disability such as autism spectrum condition
- Has a mental illness including dementia;
- Is elderly or frail;
- Has a physical or sensory disability;
- Has a learning disability;
- Has a severe physical illness;
- Is a substance abuser;
- Is homeless.
- Is a victim of domestic violence / hate crime

It is important to include people whose condition and subsequent vulnerability fluctuates.

In this context community care services includes all care services provided in any setting by any agency whether statutory, voluntary or community and therefore includes the services provided by Autism Guernsey

Principles

The policy and these procedures are based on the following principles.

All adults supported by Autism Guernsey, irrespective of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, political opinion, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to:

- Have their money, goods and possessions treated with respect and to receive equal protection for themselves and their property.
- Guidance and help in seeking assistance as a consequence of abuse.

- Be supported in making their own decisions about how they wish to proceed in the event of abuse and to know their wishes will only be over-ruled if it is considered necessary for their own safety or the safety of others.
- Be supported in bringing a complaint under any existing complaint procedure.
- Be supported in reporting the circumstances of any abuse to independent bodies.
- Have alleged, suspected or confirmed cases of abuse that come to light to Autism Guernsey Directors, staff or volunteers dealt with as a priority.
- Receive appropriate support following abuse.

The Board will ensure that all Designated Persons within Autism Guernsey are familiar with the current local reporting procedures.

All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

It is the responsibility of all within Autism Guernsey to report any concerns about abuse to a Designated Person within Autism Guernsey or directly to the police.

All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law 2001.

Social Media & Mobile Phones

Aim: To protect all individuals involved with our organisation and who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the internet) while in our care.

As part of using the internet and social media, our organisation will:

- When using social media platforms (including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines.
- Regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated, including:

- Making sure concerns of abuse or disclosures that take place online are written into our reporting procedures including cyber bullying.
- Provide training for the person responsible for managing our organisation's online presence.
- All social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least two members of staff will have access to each account and password.
- Staff should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it.
- Staff should seek the advice of the designated safeguarding lead if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.
- Staff should not 'friend' or 'follow' vulnerable adults from personal accounts on social media.
- Staff should make sure any content posted is accurate and appropriate, as vulnerable adults may 'follow' them on social media.
- Staff should not communicate with vulnerable adults via personal accounts or private messages.
- Staff should choose a more formal means of communication, such as face-to-face, in an email or in writing, or use an organisational account, profile or website.
- Emails should be signed off in a professional manner, avoiding the use of emojis or symbols such as 'kisses' ('Xs').
- Any disclosures of abuse reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to our reporting procedures.
- Smartphone users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy.

- Staff and adults must not engage in 'sexting' or send pictures to anyone that are obscene, indecent or menacing.
- When using mobile phones (or other devices) to communicate by voice, video or text (including texting, email and instant messaging) staff should take the following precautions to ensure vulnerable adults' safety:
- Staff should have a separate phone from their personal one for any contact with vulnerable adults.

Procedure

Where there are concerns about the safety or welfare of an adult or in the event of a disclosure this policy and these procedures will be followed and information will be shared with the relevant agencies.

Autism Guernsey will take all possible steps to ensure that adults with whom it works are kept safe through:

- A clear procedure for the raising of concerns about an adult in a vulnerable situation.
- Safe recruitment processes for all Directors, staff and volunteers including the obtaining of references and DBS checks at a level relevant to the role (eg. All with regular unsupervised contact with service users must have an enhanced check). Further information regarding safe recruitment processes can be found in Appendix 3 page 13.
- Effective induction, training and support for Directors, staff and volunteers to ensure they are aware of and understand the importance of implementing this policy and the related procedures.
- Identifying a Strategic Lead for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults within Autism Guernsey.
- Clear expectations of all Directors, staff and volunteers for sharing information about adults in vulnerable situations.

Disclosure of Information

- Autism Guernsey recognises the importance of sharing information to protect an adult and normally any disclosure of confidential information to any other person may only be undertaken with the expressed permission of the person. Autism Guernsey also acknowledges however there may be circumstances whereby it needs to make a disclosure without the consent of the vulnerable adult.
- Where it is considered necessary for the welfare and protection of an adult, the person will be kept informed, unless to do so would put his or her welfare and safety at risk or harm.
- Promises of confidentiality must not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.
- In reference to mental capacity the UK Capacity Act states a person is assumed to have capacity to make decisions unless proven otherwise.
- If an assessment of capacity is required at any one given time Autism Guernsey will refer to the relevant agency.
- In recognition of its commitment to pass on concerns, Autism Guernsey will maintain effective working partnerships with organisations working with adults within the community and will maintain current information on, and work within, the requirements of the local procedures followed by statutory and voluntary agencies.

Procedure when there are concerns

- If anyone within Autism Guernsey has concerns about the welfare of an adult they must raise those concerns and inform the Designated Person or their deputy (referred to henceforth as 'a Designated Person') without delay.
- If an adult discloses that they are being, or have been abused this information must be taken seriously and the information must be passed to a Designated Person immediately without delay or if not practicable and in any event within 48 hours of the information coming to light.

- If an adult is at risk of immediate harm a Designated Person should inform the Police or Social Services without delay.
- The information regarding the concerns and the action taken will be recorded and passed to the relevant agencies, using appropriate procedures. Written information will be passed to the respective agencies within 7 working days.
- A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information using the Referral Pro Forma (see Appendix 1 page 9).
- Failure to report concerns may lead to suspension pending investigation and, for staff, disciplinary action.
- If a Director, member of staff or volunteer is alleged to have put the welfare or safety of an adult at risk, a Designated Person will inform the appropriate agency and co-operate fully with the authority in the manner in which the matter is dealt with. This may include suspension without prejudice pending an investigation.

RESPONDING APPROPRIATELY TO AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

Do

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence (if necessary)
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to your manager or Designated Safeguarding Personnel
- Seek support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

Don't

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred.

The Police

The Police play a vital role in Safeguarding Adults. With cases involving alleged criminal acts it becomes the responsibility of the police to investigate allegations of crime by preserving and gathering evidence. Where a crime is identified, the police will be the lead agency and they will direct investigations in line with legal and other procedural protocols.

Allegations against Directors, staff or volunteers

It is important that any concerns for the welfare of an adult arising from abuse or harassment by a Director, member of staff or a volunteer should be reported immediately to a Designated Person or, if they are implicated in the concerns, their Deputy or the Chair and an incident form completed. The same approach applies to concerns about poor practice.

Where there are allegations of abuse or concerns about poor practice of Directors, staff or volunteers there may be three strands of investigation as follows:

1. Criminal investigation (externally led by the Police Authority)
2. Adult protection investigation (externally led)
3. A disciplinary investigation (internally led)

It may be that the employee will be suspended with pay during an investigation or a volunteer asked to cease volunteering pending the outcome of the investigation.

Autism Guernsey values difference and will ensure that adults who act in the capacity of Director, employee or volunteer will be supported in their role and appropriate measures will be taken to protect them from harm.

Retention of Records

A factual, dated record of concern and action (ROCA) about an adult supported by Autism Guernsey will be kept.

Records kept by employees about adults should include contacts made and referral of safeguarding concern including date, time, reason and referral agency.

This policy will be reviewed every two years and more regularly if appropriate

Designated Safeguarding Personnel

The Strategic Lead for Safeguarding/Lead Designated Person is:

Julia Watts currently Autism Services Manager
julia.watts@autismguernsey.org.gg or 07781 403772

Local Specialist Safeguarding Adviser to the Directors and staff

Autism Guernsey has identified a local Specialist Safeguarding adviser to support and advise the scheme with regard to local issues and procedures for safeguarding children.

The local Specialist Safeguarding adviser is available to the Directors, strategic lead and designated people as appropriate and may:

- (a) provide a confidential sounding board if required for the strategic lead to consider the most appropriate course of action to take where there is a safeguarding concern in a family
- (b) support the strategic lead to use local procedures appropriately (e.g. for referral, for escalation or dispute resolution)
- (c) update Directors and the strategic lead about local safeguarding developments and changes to procedures, policies and agencies
- (d) contribute to Board discussions about scheme capacity in working with more complex individuals/families, including those where there are safeguarding concerns
- (e) support the Board and strategic lead to monitor and review systems, policy and procedures to ensure good safeguarding practice

The Specialist Safeguarding Advisers are:

Adrian Datta
adriandatta@icloud.com or 07781 177177

Andrew Warren currently Strategy/HR Director
Andrew.warren@cwgsy.net or 07781 107416

Date policy & appendices adopted: _____

Signature of Chair:

Date policy to be reviewed

Appendix 1 - Referral Pro Forma

Details of Vulnerable Adult

Name: _____
Address: _____

E mail: _____
Telephone: _____
Date of birth: _____
Gender: _____

Details of alleged abuser (please tick a box)

Staff Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Friend	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police	<input type="checkbox"/>	Care Provider	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Doctor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthcare Professional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Another service user	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>

Location of alleged abuse (please tick a box)

Office	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public place	<input type="checkbox"/>
Club	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hospital	<input type="checkbox"/>	Doctors Surgery	<input type="checkbox"/>
Own home	<input type="checkbox"/>	Another home	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day centre/service	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Type of abuse (please tick a box)

Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Psychological	<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial or materials	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neglect and acts of omission	<input type="checkbox"/>	Institutional	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discriminatory	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Date and time of incident: _____

Full description of the incident including persons present:

Describe your concern and action taken

Description and location of any visible marks, bruising etc

Details of the Referrer

Name: _____

Address: _____

E mail: _____

Telephone: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

To be completed by a Designated Person only

This information has been passed on to _____

Name of Designated Person:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 2 – Definition of abuse

Definition of abuse

“The physical, psychological, emotional, financial or sexual maltreatment, or neglect of a vulnerable adult by another person. The abuse may be a single act or repeated over time. It may take one form or multiple forms. The lack of appropriate action can also be a form of abuse. Abuse can occur in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust and can be perpetuated by a person or persons, in breach of that trust, who have influence over the life of a dependent, whether they be formal or informal carers, staff or family members or others. It can also occur outside such a relationship”

Forms of abuse can be categorised as follows:

- Physical abuse (including inappropriate restraint or use of medication)
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Financial or materials abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Institutional abuse
- Discriminatory abuse

Incidents of abuse may be multiple, either to one person in a continuing relationship or service context, or to more than one person at a time.

Any or all types of abuse may be perpetuated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence or ignorance.

Appendix 3 – Safe recruitment of Directors, staff and volunteers

Selection

- Before commencing employment/voluntary work, staff/volunteers will be asked to attend an interview with the project leaders. The level and formality of the interview will depend on the role and work involved.
- Employee/volunteer recruitment procedures will include a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, at the appropriate level, for all personnel with access to vulnerable people and should always include self-declaration and the use of references (two wherever possible). This process equally applies to all Directors. All prospective employees/volunteers should be 'interviewed', for volunteers this need not be a formal interview.

Any Disclosure that causes concern will be assessed by a panel (comprising Chair, Services Manager and one board member) to establish the level of risk the subject poses to service users, colleagues, the general public and/or our organisation. The Disclosure Risk Assessment Form will be used to assess the level of risk.

All new employees/volunteers will go through a probation and induction process, including relevant training. Ongoing training and supervision will ensure all employees/volunteers are adequately supported.

Any concerns about an employee/volunteer should be passed on to a Designated Person or, if they are implicated in the concerns, the Chair.