



WSRA POLICY No P12: Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Purpose and scope

WSRA recognises that some adults within our society are vulnerable due to a variety of reasons and/or circumstances and as a result may be the victims of abuse or exploitation by others. WSRA believes that all people are entitled to a life without abuse or exploitation.

WSRA will therefore support staff and volunteers in dealing with any such incidents of which they become aware, or allegations that are made to them.

Definitions

Vulnerable Adult - A vulnerable adult is someone who is over 18 years old and is getting or may need help and services to live in the community. Vulnerable adults may be unable to take care of themselves and unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by other people.

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

Staff – For the purposes of this policy WSRA makes no discrimination between paid staff and volunteers. All have a valuable contribution to make to the work of the charity.

Abuse can include:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Discrimination

Reporting Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse:

All staff who come into contact with vulnerable adults have a duty to identify and report abuse through responding to any suspicions they have, observations they make or allegations they hear. The wishes of the vulnerable adult should be respected, but in some cases concerns will need to be reported without their agreement.

Whatever the source of information, it should be taken seriously, recorded at the earliest opportunity and reported to the staff member's line manager, or if inappropriate the WSRA General Manager or Chair of Trustees. Following discussion with the worker, the manager will agree a course of action and a short time scale for review and may arrange for Social Services to be contacted.

When recording concerns, staff should note the time, date and location where the concerns arose and the name of the person(s) involved. If the victim or others have made allegations of abuse, the staff member must ensure that they do not lead or interpret what is said, but should record the language used as accurately as possible.

If the matter is urgent and the manager is not available or if reporting this to them is not appropriate a direct referral to Social Services (including the 'out of hours' Emergency Duty Team) should be made by the staff member.

Allegations or suspicions should be reported as soon as possible and certainly:

- Immediately - if it is felt the vulnerable person is at risk of serious physical harm, or a serious criminal act has taken place and evidence will need to be made safe.
- Within 24 hours - if it relates to a specific incident which is or may be still going on or may happen again.
- Within 7 days - if it is a more general concern which does not indicate immediate harm.

Supporting WSRA Staff

WSRA acknowledges that staff who are reporting concerns may need support in dealing with the emotional distress this can cause. They should seek this from their line manager, the WSRA General Manager or a designated Safeguarding Trustee, who may seek advice and support from other agencies.

WSRA staff may also be subject to allegations of abuse against vulnerable adults in relation to their work for WSRA. While support will be given to these staff, WSRA will ensure that the agency dealing with the allegation will be given all assistance in pursuing any investigation. The disciplinary procedure may be implemented, with appropriate action being taken while investigation is carried out.

The Association will ensure that all data relating to the personal information of volunteers is dealt with in accordance with the WSRA's Data Protection Policy and the law. Personal information held on volunteers will not be passed on or sold to third parties. Volunteers can request access to their personal information held by the WSRA at any time.

For more information please refer to our Safe Guarding Vulnerable Adults Policy P12 and refer any concerns, in the first instance to your supervisor, or to the WSRA Chairman, General Manager or a designated Safeguarding Trustee.

Policy Author	Kate Williams and Jacquie Green
Date confirmed by WSRA Board	13 th February 2023
Date Implemented	13 th February 2023
Review Interval	Initial 1 Year
Next Review Due	February 2024

Appendix 1 to WSRA Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy P12

Useful tools and Information

Template for Recording concerns:

Date	Time	Location	Name of Vulnerable Adult	Details of concern

More information about safeguarding vulnerable adults can be found at:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/protecting-adults/>

Useful contacts:

- Adult Social Care – 0300 123 2224
- Email - adults@somerset.gov.uk
- In an emergency always contact the police by dialing 999
- If it is not an emergency and you want to talk with the police call 101.

WSRA contacts:

- WSRA General Manager – manager@wsra.org.uk
- WSRA Chair – chair@wsra.org.uk
- Safeguarding Trustees – check the latest information on our website at <https://wsra.org.uk/about>