

The Oasis Centre – Cornwall

Policy on Safeguarding

The care of disadvantaged and vulnerable persons lies at the heart of the Charity's remit and the Trustees have accordingly adopted this policy to guide Trustees, staff and volunteers on the key considerations. All those representing the Charity in any way are required to be familiar with this policy.

Fundamental Principle

The Trustees' primary concern is the well-being and safety of all vulnerable people who have dealings with the Charity. The vast majority of those people will be adults over the age of 18 but this policy is equally applicable when children and young people under that age are encountered during the course of the Charity's activities. All must be protected from any form of abuse.

The Immediate Problem

Abuse that can be suffered by a vulnerable person or a child can take many forms. Abuse can cause physical pain and/or mental distress, perhaps even fear and terror. It may not be immediately evident because the victim is afraid or embarrassed to discuss it or feels that they are to blame in some way. The victim may not know who to trust and, being vulnerable, the distress this causes can be magnified. It is equally possible that, because of the vulnerability, the abuse is not recognised as such by the victim or regarded as 'normal'. This aspect is something that everyone representing the Charity must be aware of.

Vulnerable People

A child is of course potentially vulnerable but there is no stereotype for a vulnerable adult. That person may be frail and elderly or apparently young and fit but suffering from physical or mental illness or some form of learning disability. They may be profoundly deaf or blind or they may appear to be the author of their own misfortune through substance abuse. They may be alone in the world and/or homeless.

Abusers

The individual who abuses a vulnerable person can be a parent, brother, sister, child, grandchild or another relative. There may be no blood relationship and the abuser may be a neighbour or even a total stranger. The abuse may be carried out by more than one person, possibly by a crowd of people. The abuse may be carried out in a private home, a public place, a hospital, care home or other institution and by a person in a position of responsibility such as a nurse, carer, doctor or even a member of the police, a lawyer or a member of the clergy.

Abuse

Some abuse is obvious. Personal violence in any form is a clear example, regardless of whether there is any physical injury. Unreasonable restraint, even if it falls short of actual imprisonment, can amount to abuse as can any form of enforced labour or slavery. Any form of sexual activity involving or directed at a vulnerable person is likely to be categorised as abuse without very strong evidence to the contrary.

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Some abuse is subtle and takes the form of emotional or psychological abuse of which obvious examples are humiliation and intimidation and acts designed to induce a vulnerable person to do or agree something that is not in their best interests. Other abuse can be negative in form. Examples of this are neglect in the provision of care and sustenance and of course abandonment. Finally, the financial motive can lead to abuse in the form of the exploitation of a vulnerable person when money is stolen from them or they are put under pressure to give away valuable assets.

Action to Take

All those representing the Charity in any way have a responsibility to be alert to the needs of those who are vulnerable and to the possibility of abuse. Any doubt or suspicion should be reported immediately to Miss Pat Walton, who is the Charity's Safeguarding Co-ordinator. If she is unavailable, the report should be made to Rev Helen Baber or another Trustee who has been in receipt of safeguarding training.

Training

It is the policy of the Trustees to encourage all those representing the Charity in any way to seek training in safeguarding in view of the nature of the Charity's remit and activities.

First adopted by the Trustees on 20th April 2016 and to be reviewed annually in January.