

## 5. Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Vine Centre is a CIO (foundation) registered with the Charity Commission – registration number 1193666. It is governed by a Board of Trustees (“The Board”) subject to a Constitution. The Vine Centre works with vulnerable adults, families, the elderly and those aged over 16 who need support with their mental health, anger management, addiction, budgeting, skills and employment, benefits, housing and general support. We also offer social activities to help reduce isolation.
- 1.2. The characteristics of adult abuse can take a number of forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress extending far beyond the occasion of the actual incident or incidents. Victims may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach with their worries.
- 1.3. There may be circumstances in which victims are unaware that they are being abused or may have difficulty in communicating this information to others.

### 2. Policy Objective

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all staff members are clear about their responsibilities and know how to report any concerns.

### 3. Principles of Best Practice

- 3.1 We shall promote the general welfare, health, well-being and development of vulnerable adults and take every reasonable precaution to minimise risk whilst providing opportunities for their development.
- 3.2 We shall ensure that all members of staff and volunteers are aware of and act in accordance with their personal responsibilities.
- 3.3 We shall provide members of staff and volunteers with clear roles and responsibilities and ensure that they are suitable for that role.
- 3.4 We shall provide appropriate support, training, and protection for all members of staff, volunteers, and our clients.
- 3.5 We shall protect, maintain, and uphold the human rights of our clients.
- 3.6 We shall eliminate prejudicial discrimination in The Vine Centre including sectarian, racial, sexual, or any other discrimination based on, for example, physical or mental disabilities.

- 3.7 We shall take steps to avoid bullying or exploitation whenever, or wherever it may be found.
- 3.8 We shall ensure that all members of staff and volunteers are familiar with and have access to a current version of this policy. This will include giving them each a copy of this policy.
- 3.9 We shall seek to ensure our clients, members of staff, and volunteers know how to voice their concerns and obtain help if they are unhappy or worried about anything.
- 3.10 We shall ensure that our clients, members of staff, and volunteers are encouraged to report any alleged malpractice, illegal acts or omissions (“whistle blowing”). The policy for dealing with any such whistle blowing is contained in a distinct and separate policy. That policy shall include an effective procedure for responding to such complaints, concerns and allegations.
- 3.11 We shall ensure that our clients, and members of staff are aware of their responsibilities and how to record and report their concerns.
- 3.12 We will provide guidance to any client who feels that they have been treated in an inappropriate manner contrary to this policy and ensure that they are encouraged to see that their concerns are documented and dealt with expeditiously.
- 3.13 We shall ensure that there is appropriate documentation for completion when recording any incident in contravention of this policy.
- 3.14 We shall ensure that appropriate and proportionate recruitment procedures are in place when taking on new members of staff and volunteers, that DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks are taken up for every member of staff or level 1 volunteer before they are allowed to work, without supervision, with our clients.
- 3.15 We shall monitor this policy and take:
  - 3.15.1 Any measures necessary to ensure compliance with new legislative requirements; and
  - 3.15.2 Any measures that it is apparent is necessary to strengthen and improve existing practice.

#### **4. Definitions**

- 4.1 A statutory definition of a vulnerable adult is found in the Care Act of 2014. A **Vulnerable Adult** is construed as a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may include, but is not limited to, a person who:
  - 4.1.1 Is elderly and frail;
  - 4.1.2 Has a mental illness including dementia;
  - 4.1.3 Has a physical or sensory disability;
  - 4.1.4 Has a learning disability;
  - 4.1.5 Has a severe physical illness;
  - 4.1.6 Is a substance misuser;
  - 4.1.7 Is homeless. This category shall not be limited to those who are ‘rough sleepers’, other who qualify under this category would include so-called ‘sofa-surfers’, or indeed any person who may be classified as having no fixed abode);
  - 4.1.8 Is living in sheltered housing;
  - 4.1.9 Is receiving domiciliary care in their own home;

- 4.1.10 Is under the supervision of the probation services;
  - 4.1.11 Is receiving a welfare service defined as the provision of support, assistance, or advice by any person, the purpose of which is to develop an individual's capacity to live independently in accommodation or support their capacity to do so;
  - 4.1.12 Is an expectant or nursing mother or any other form of single parent living in residential care; or
  - 4.1.13 Is receiving direct payments from a local authority or health and social care trust in lieu of social care services.
- 4.2 **Abuse** is a violation of the individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse therefore includes behaviour prejudicial to the victim's status or autonomy. Such abuse may take a number of forms; amongst those are included, but not limited to:
- 4.2.1. Physical abuse, for example - hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, neglect or abandonment;
  - 4.2.2. Sexual abuse, for example - involvement in any sexual activity against their will, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism;
  - 4.2.3. Emotional or psychological abuse, for example - intimidation or humiliation;
  - 4.2.4. Financial or material abuse, for example - theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money or other rights in property from pensions, savings, or other valuable assets;
  - 4.2.5. Neglect or acts of omission, for example - being left in wet or soiled clothing, or malnutrition.
  - 4.2.6. Discriminatory abuse for example - racial, sexual or religious harassment;
  - 4.2.7. Modern Slavery this involves denying an individual's rights or forcing them to perform tasks that are against their will;
  - 4.2.8. Violation of rights, for example - preventing an individual freely expressing their thoughts and opinions which can include domestic abuse;
  - 4.2.9. Institutional abuse, for example - a failure to ensure the individual's privacy or dignity; or
  - 4.2.10. Self-neglect
  - 4.2.11. A combination of any of the above.
- 4.3 There are specific types of forms of behaviour that are abusive and may result in harm. These include, but are not limited to:
- 4.3.1 Bullying;
  - 4.3.2 Domestic Violence;
  - 4.3.3 Drugs alcohol and substance abuse;
  - 4.3.4 Self-harm; and
  - 4.3.5** Misuse of information technology.

## **5. Responsibilities of Volunteers and Staff**

- 5.1 They must understand and apply this policy.
- 5.2 They must, at all times, act appropriately and challenge inappropriate behaviour in others – including staff, volunteers, and clients.
- 5.3 Be able to recognise harm.
- 5.4 Know how to report any concerns.

## **6. Reporting Procedures**

- 6.1 If the allegation or suspicion of abuse is discovered by a member of staff, or a volunteer then they should inform a senior member of staff. If the member of staff or volunteer considers that his concerns are not being addressed appropriately then they should report their original concern to the CEO (who is the nominated safeguarding person for the Charity). It is the direct personal responsibility of the CEO to ensure that any such allegation drawn to their attention is properly, expeditiously, and appropriately investigated and to inform the complainant of the outcome of any such investigation.
- 6.2 The member of staff or volunteer should make a written record of the allegation or suspicion of abuse and discuss the situation with a senior member of staff or the CEO. A risk assessment should be carried out, in any instance in which there is a suspicion of an Institutional Failure then the CEO or Board of Trustees should contact the Hampshire Adult Services Team on 0300 555 1386 (Open Monday – Thursday 8.30am – 5.00pm & Friday 8.30 – 4.30) for assistance in dealing with the matter.
- 6.3 If a staff member or volunteer has been told about the allegation of abuse in confidence, they should attempt to gain the consent of the client to make a referral to another agency. However, the gaining of the consent is not essential in order for information to be passed on although the decision to breach confidentiality must be taken by the CEO.
- 6.4 When an allegation is being raised these following matters should be taken into consideration:
  - 6.4.1 The scale of the abuse;
  - 6.4.2 The risk of harm to others; and
  - 6.4.3 The capacity of the individual to understand the issues of abuse and consent.
- 6.5 In general, disclosure without consent cannot be made. However, there are circumstances where information can be disclosed. These are described in detail in the Confidentiality Policy and fall under the headings of:
  - 6.5.1 Acting in the best interest of the client; or
  - 6.5.2 Cooperating with the police or other law enforcement agencies.
- 6.6 In emergency situations (e.g. where there is the risk or occurrence or severe physical injury), where immediate action is needed to safeguard the health or safety of the individual or anyone else who may be at risk, the emergency services must be contacted.

## **7. Outcome**

- 7.1 If, after investigation, the concern is proven to have been well founded then the necessary steps will be taken to prevent any further recurrence.
- 7.2 Where there is no case to answer but the individual who made the report acted in good faith, the investigator shall take steps to ensure that the individual suffers no adverse consequences of their action.
- 7.3 Where allegations are proven false and to have been made maliciously; it may be necessary to take action against the individual who made the report.
- 7.4 In all instances the investigator will arrange a meeting with the individual who made the report to give appropriate feedback on the outcome of the investigation. This will be appropriately recorded.

## **8. Responsibilities**

- 8.1 All members of staff, workers and volunteers have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions that they might have concerning adult abuse.
- 8.2 All members of The Board, CEO and Operations Manager have the responsibility to ensure that any allegation falling within the scope of this policy is properly investigated.

## **9. DBS Checks**

- 9.1 All members of staff will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.
- 9.2 Any volunteer working in an unsupervised position with clients will be subject to the appropriate DBS check.
- 9.3 All DBS checks will be reviewed by a senior member of staff. Where a concern is raised by such a disclosure appropriate action will be taken. Such action will normally be a termination of the connection between The Vine and the person concerned.

## **10. Legislation**

- 10.1 The Vine Centre is a CIO Foundation. It does not discharge duties of a public nature. Its decisions are not therefore susceptible to judicial review or remedy at public law. However, in respect of the rights of the individual we shall act mindful of those rights protected by the following International Statutes:
  - 10.1.1 The Human Rights Act of 1998, article 2 The right to life; article 3 The right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way; article 5 the right to liberty and article 8 the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

## **11. Policy Validity and Review**

- 11.1 This policy must be reviewed annually and no later than March 2025.