



Old Mill Foundation

HOLISTIC CANCER SUPPORT CENTRE

Registered charity No. 1125120 Tel: 01792 851553

Procedure for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

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1. Guidelines to Staff and Volunteers on When to Take Action & How

1.1 Once you suspect or know of any abuse of any vulnerable adult, you should immediately inform the Outreach Manager in person or by telephone. They will then escalate to Sarah Clark who is the VAPO (Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer). If both are unavailable and/or inappropriate, then the Chair of the Trustee Safeguarding sub-group should be alerted.

1.2 Ask the Outreach Manager for a form allowing you to make accurate notes or access via the staff portal on our website. The report should be factual and should not include opinions or personal interpretations of the facts presented.

1.3 The form should contain as much detail as possible, including any apparent physical signs of abuse or other circumstances which led to your suspicions, or the account given to you of abuse by the vulnerable adult concerned, as accurately as you are able to record it. The report should be signed, dated and a copy stored in a secure place. If you are unsure about what to write, you can get advice from the VAPO.

1.4 Even if you have a suspicion of abuse but do not have firm evidence, you should still contact the Outreach Manager or VAPO to discuss your concerns. You should also contact them if you know or suspect that an Old Mill Foundation member of staff, volunteer or service user has a previous history of abuse.

1.5 You must not try to investigate the matter on your own as usually staff and volunteers are not equipped or qualified to do so.

1.6 If following your initial contact with the Outreach Manager it is decided that the matter should be taken further, your form with written notes, should be sent via email or given to the VAPO within 24 hours of the suspicion arising.

1.7 The VAPO or Chair of the Trustee Safeguarding group will be responsible for recording essential information about each case and for collecting reports and notes as appropriate. Any detailed information about a case will be confined to the VAPO, and if not involved in the allegations, they will advise the Trustees' Chair and other relevant people e.g. Carers, staff and volunteers reporting the allegations will be kept informed of the progress as appropriate.

2. What Happens Next

2.1 Taking into account all the information available, the VAPO/Trustee will decide on the next steps, which may include taking no further action. Where the VAPO/Trustee decides that further action is necessary, this may be to:

- Seek further advice from Social Services
- Make a referral to Social Services
- Report the incident to a designated Social Worker
- Report the matter to the police if a crime is suspected

2.2 If a referral is made, this must be confirmed in writing to the appropriate agency within 24 hours. If a member of staff does not agree with the

decision of The Old Mill Foundation's VAPO that no further action is necessary, the member of staff should refer these concerns in the first instance to the Chair of Trustees. If the Chair does not recommend further action and the member of staff still has concerns, then the member of staff has the right and duty to refer the case directly to Social Services and should at the same time alert the Chair of the Trustee Safeguarding sub-group

- 2.3 The VAPO may consider that those involved may require counselling. Where it is felt there is a need for counselling (which could be for the vulnerable adults, other service users, staff, volunteers or carers involved) the VAPO will make the necessary arrangements. This could involve working with other external agencies.
- 2.4 The VAPO will keep the member(s) of staff/volunteers who raised the concern informed as the progress/ outcome of the case as appropriate.

3. Confidentiality

- 3.1 Confidentiality should be maintained as far as possible, but staff/volunteers must act on the basis that the safety of the vulnerable adult is the overriding concern. The degree of confidentiality will be governed by the need to protect the vulnerable adult. The vulnerable adult should be informed at the earliest possible stage of the disclosure that the information will be passed on. All conversations regarding a vulnerable adult must always be held in private.
- 3.2 The Old Mill Foundation complies with the requirements of the GDPR 2018 legislation, which allows for disclosure of personal data where this is necessary to protect the vital interests of a vulnerable adult.
- 3.3 You must not discuss the case with anyone other than those involved in the case. If you have any concerns about the progress of the case or have any other concerns these must be discussed with the Outreach Manager in the first instance.

4. Allegations Against Staff/Volunteers

- 4.1 The primary concern of The Old Mill Foundation is to ensure the safety of the vulnerable adult. It is essential in all cases of suspected abuse by a member staff that action is taken quickly and professionally whatever the validity.
- 4.2 Any instance of a vulnerable adult being abused by a member of staff is particularly serious. On the other hand, it is recognised, that for an

innocent person to be accused of such an act, is a serious ordeal which can result in long term damage to their health, reputation and career. Support from VAPO to designate someone?

4.3 In the event that any member of staff suspects any other member of staff or volunteer of abusing an Old Mill Foundation service user, it is their responsibility to bring these concerns to the VAPO except where the suspect is the VAPO then it should be reported to the Chair of the Trustee Safeguarding group.

4.4 The member of staff or volunteer will be advised to:

- contact their professional organisation
- keep records of all conversations, meetings attended, letters received and telephone calls relating to the allegation.

5. Code of Behaviour

The Old Mill Foundation recognises that it is not practical to provide definitive instructions that would apply to all situations at all times whereby staff and volunteers come into contact with vulnerable adults and to guarantee the protection of vulnerable adults and the Old Mill Foundation's own staff and volunteers.

However, below are the standards of behaviour required of staff and volunteers in order to fulfill their roles within The Old Mill Foundation. This code should assist in the protection of both vulnerable adults and members of staff and volunteers who work at The Old Mill Foundation's premises and outreach centres.

5.1 **All staff and volunteers must** follow and adhere to the Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures at all times.

5.2 **Staff must never:**

- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind
- do things of a personal nature for vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves
- physically restrain a vulnerable adult unless the restraint is to prevent physical injury of the vulnerable adult, other vulnerable adults, visitors, other staff or yourself. **In all circumstances physical restraint must be appropriate and reasonable, otherwise the action can be defined as assault**
- make sexually suggestive comments to or within earshot of a vulnerable adult.
- have vulnerable adults on their own in a vehicle. Where circumstances require the transportation of vulnerable adults in their vehicle, another member of staff or volunteer must travel in the vehicle. Also, it is

essential that there is adequate insurance for the vehicle to cover transporting vulnerable adults as part of the business of your work.

- ❑ take a vulnerable adult to the toilet unless another adult is present or has been made aware
- ❑ spend time alone with a vulnerable adult on their own, outside of the normal working relationship.
- ❑ engage in a personal relationship with a vulnerable adult service user, beyond that appropriate for your professional role/relationship.

6 Implications for staff and volunteers

6.1 Staff who breach any of the above may be subject to disciplinary procedures or for volunteers may be subject to the complaints procedure.

7. Procedure changes

Reason for change	Section changed	Date changed	New version number
Review – last procedure dated 8 January 2015	All	1 st April 2020	v2

8. Procedure dates

Trustee approval	10 th March 2020
Review date	Annually

Signed byDate.....

Name printed.....Position in organisation.....