

Durham University Student Community Action **Policy on Protecting Adults at Risk**

Statement

“We in Student Community Action (SCA) are committed to practices that protect adults at risk from harm. Staff and volunteers in this organisation recognise and accept our responsibilities to develop the awareness of the issues of working with adults at risk”

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the broad definition of an adult at risk, as defined by Safeguarding Adults 2005, is a person

‘Who is eighteen years of age or over, and who is or may be eligible for community care services and whose independence and wellbeing are at risk due to abuse or neglect’.

Such adults include those who have:

- i. a substantial learning or physical disability;
- ii. a physical or mental illness or mental disorder, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or
- iii. a significant reduction in physical or mental capacity.

Abuse is a violation of an individuals’ human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse may be single act or repeated acts.

SCA will endeavour to safeguard adults at risk by:-

- Adopting a working with adults at risk policy and guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information and concerns over the welfare of adults at risk in a confidential manner, involving outside agencies such as Social Services where appropriate.
- Ensuring that the Disclosure and Barring Service, in accordance with their guidelines, checks all staff and volunteers with responsibility for adults at risk or working with them.
- Making all new staff and volunteers aware of our adults at risk procedures and policies.
- Ensuring that our disciplinary procedure is complied with if any member of staff or volunteer is suspected or accused of abusing an adult at risk.
- Ensuring that there are two members of staff who can effectively deal with issues relating to the care of adults at risk in accordance with our policies.
- Reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals.

Working with adults at risk guidelines

The guidelines for volunteers give advice on training, DBS Checks, general advice on working with adults at risk and dealing with concerns about an adult at risk and procedures to projects that are entirely SCA managed.

Sharing Information

- If volunteers have concerns about an adult at risk which they feel may be an indicator of abuse, or they are told anything significant by an adult at risk these concerns **MUST** be discussed with a member of SCA staff.
- If the volunteer feels the situation is an emergency, dial 999 and speak to the appropriate emergency service.
- This person will note any concerns and liaise with any appropriate relevant authorities.
- Volunteers or staff **DO NOT** carry out investigations or decide whether abuse has occurred.
- An accurate written record of any incident, disclosure or allegation **MUST** be made by the volunteer using the SCA Incident Report form and handed to SCA staff. If detailing what a person has said, this should be written down word for word as much as possible.
- Dealing with incidents of harm is difficult for any individual so employees and volunteers ***should not***.

Act alone;

Start to investigate; or

Make any assumptions of guilt or innocence.

Any concerns should be written down accurately and reported to a member of SCA staff as a matter of urgency.

Suitable volunteers

- Volunteers wishing to work with adults at risk will be required to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS if deemed necessary.
- Enhanced Disclosures will be deemed to be 'valid' for a period of 3 years.
- Community contacts may seek references for volunteers themselves but they must seek independent authorisation from the volunteer.

Training

- Volunteers can access this policy online at the policy section of the SCA website (www.scadurham.org.uk). This includes *Guidelines for working with Adults at Risk*.

Monitoring of the Policy

- This policy will be reviewed annually. Approval will be sought from both SCA management and the Executive Committee.
- Accurate records of incidents should be kept together with their outcomes.

Although detailed, this policy is not intended to be comprehensive and as such does not attempt to deal with all the issues of working with adults at risk. Instead they are intended as a practical guide for staff and volunteers involved with them.

Should an SCA volunteer be volunteering in an organisation that has its own procedures, the volunteer should follow that organisations procedures over this policy.

Guidelines for Working With Adults at Risk

Training

You are strongly advised to attend Child Protection Training events as these will cover many of the signs of abuse that will also be relevant to working with adults at risk.

Criminal Records Check

All of SCA's projects that involve working with adults at risk require you to obtain Enhanced Disclosure (police check) carried out through the Disclosure and Barring Service. Although you may be able to start volunteering whilst your form is being processed you must make sure there is an adult with you with enhanced disclosure at all times.

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It should be recognised that people with special needs are able to cope in many situations, so sensitivity and common sense should be exercised.

Abuse is a violation of an individuals' human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse may be single act or repeated acts.

The main different forms of abuse can be classified as follows:

Physical abuse, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication;

Sexual abuse, including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult at risk has not consented, or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting;

Psychological abuse, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks;

Financial or material abuse, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits;

Neglect and acts of omission, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating; and

Discriminatory abuse, including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Dealing with Concerns

SCA has three paid members of staff, the SCA Durham Officer, the SCA Queen's Campus Officer and the SCA Administrator. If you have any concerns about an adult at risk (no matter how slight you might think they are) you can chat to them at any time. Call into the office or phone them.

If an adult at risk wants to talk about harm to you, you should do the following:

- Write down accurately what the person has said (i.e. word for word)
- Notify a member of staff (at the community placement or if an SCA run project, a member of SCA staff)
- In the absence of a line manager and where an adult at risk is in imminent danger, volunteers or staff should contact the relevant authorities themselves (i.e. Social Services or Police)

Dealing with incidents of harm is difficult for any individual so employees and volunteers should not:

- Act alone;
- Start to investigate; or
- Make any assumptions of guilt or innocence.

Modified: Lorna Taylor, 21/07/09

Modified: Georgiana Menzies 07/04/11

Modified: Claire Turner 15/06/2012

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