



Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Pandora Project, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

Principle

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is embedded in our charity ethos.

This Policy must be read in conjunction with our Code of Conduct and Data Protection Policy.

Pandora Project works to protect vulnerable adults and has a duty to ensure that the welfare of the adult is paramount and given priority over all other interests.

Employees and volunteers must always be aware of the potential dangers to adults referred to Pandora Project from direct abuse from the perpetrator, as well as other adults.

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1. Aim of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to outline the practice and procedures for paid and voluntary staff of Pandora Project to contribute to the prevention of abuse of vulnerable adults through raising awareness and providing a clear framework for action when abuse is suspected.

It is aimed at protecting the vulnerable adult and the worker, recognising the risks involved in lone working.

The policy covers all staff and volunteers and should be used when a volunteer or staff member suspects that abuse of a survivor of domestic abuse (DA), who has already been identified as a vulnerable adult, is being perpetrated by wider family members, neighbours etc.

It should also be used if there are questions concerning the possibility that a client referred to Pandora Project has issues that might potentially bring them within the classification of a vulnerable adult, and these have not been recognised previously.

2. Definitions

2a. Definition of Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is defined as an individual aged 18 years or older who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to one or more of the following conditions:

1. Mental Health Conditions: Adults who suffer from mental health issues that impair their decision-making capacity and ability to care for themselves.
2. Learning Disabilities: Individuals with learning disabilities that significantly affect their ability to understand information, communicate effectively, and engage in daily activities independently.
3. Physical Disabilities: Adults with physical disabilities that limit their mobility or ability to perform essential tasks without assistance.
4. Elderly Adults: Older adults who may be frail, dependent, or suffer from age-related conditions that make them vulnerable to abuse or neglect.
5. Cognitive Impairment: Adults with cognitive impairments, such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease, that affect their memory, judgment, and ability to comprehend risks.
6. Sensory Impairments: Adults with sensory impairments, such as blindness or deafness, that can impact their ability to navigate their environment and access information.
7. Chronic Illness: Individuals with chronic illnesses or conditions that require ongoing medical care and support.
8. Substance Dependence: Vulnerable adults struggling with substance abuse or dependence issues that can leave them susceptible to exploitation or harm.

The term "vulnerable adult" is essential in the context of safeguarding and protecting adults at risk of harm or abuse. There are various laws and regulations, such as the Care Act 2014 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which aim to ensure the safety and

well-being of vulnerable adults and provide mechanisms for reporting concerns or suspected abuse.

2b. Definition of Abuse

Abuse is the harming of another individual usually by someone who is in a position of power, trust or authority over that individual. The harm may be physical, psychological, emotional or it may be directed at exploiting the vulnerability of the victim in more subtle ways (*for example, through denying access to people who can come to the aid of the victim, or through misuse or misappropriation of his or her financial resources*). The threat or use of punishment is also a form of abuse and in many cases, it is a criminal offence.

Types of Abuse

Physical abuse

- Bodily assaults resulting in injuries e.g. hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions
- Bodily impairment e.g. malnutrition, dehydration, failure to thrive
- Medical/healthcare maltreatment

Sexual abuse

- Rape, incest, acts of indecency, sexual assault
- Sexual harassment or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressured into consenting
- Sexual abuse might also include exposure to pornographic materials, being made to witness sexual acts and encompasses sexual harassment and non-contact abuse

Psychological/emotional abuse

- Threats of harm, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, enforced isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks
- Humiliation
- Bullying, shouting, swearing
- Misuse of pronouns, threatening to 'out' someone from the LGBT+ community

Neglect

- 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.

Financial or material

- Including theft and fraud
- Exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

Discriminatory

- Including racism, sexism, or abuse based on a person's disability or gender, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Multiple forms of abuse may occur in an on-going relationship, making it important to look beyond single incidents or breaches in standards, to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence or ignorance.

No abuse is acceptable, and some abuse is a criminal offence and must be reported to the police as soon as possible.

So-called Honour Based Abuse

- Forced Marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Child Marriage
- Virginity testing
- Enforced abortion

3. Rights and Responsibilities

3a. Responsibilities of Pandora Project

- To ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the Adult Safeguarding Policy and are adequately trained
- To notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Line Manager and/or appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected
- To support and where possible secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability
- To DBS check volunteers and employees, where appropriate, who have access to or work with vulnerable adults

3b. Responsibilities of Pandora Project employees and volunteers

- To be familiar with the Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- To take appropriate action in line with the policies of Pandora Project
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions. Failure to do so will be regarded as gross misconduct, possible resulting in dismissal

3c. Support for those who report abuse

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they be staff, clients, carers or members of the general public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
- If service users, they will be given protection from the risk of reprisals or intimidation if possible
- If staff, they will be given support and afforded protection if necessary in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

3d. The Vulnerable Adult has the right:

- To be made aware of this policy

- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
- To be involved in any process as appropriate
- To receive information about the outcome

4. Good Practice

Pandora Project will not tolerate the abuse of vulnerable adults in any form. The organisation is committed to:

- Managing its services in a way which minimises the risk of abuse occurring
- Supporting vulnerable adults who are experiencing or have experienced abuse
- Working with vulnerable adults and other agencies to end any abuse that is taking place

4a. Recruitment of staff and Volunteers

Pandora Project will follow recruitment procedures and policies, including:

- Risk assessment of role to assess need for DBS disclosures
- Completion of a Pandora Project application form
- Photo ID will be required
- Check references thoroughly, including appropriate disclosure
- All staff and volunteers to have a duty to declare any existing or subsequent convictions. Failure to do so will be regarded as gross misconduct, possibly resulting in dismissal

4b. Management and Supervision

It is the Line Manager's responsibility to clarify with the worker or volunteer their roles and responsibilities regarding their relationships with vulnerable adults with whom they may be in contact. Regular supervision for staff and volunteers will monitor the work and offer the opportunity to raise any issues.

4c. Training

The Organisation is committed to ensuring that all staff and volunteers undertake training to gain a basic awareness of signs and symptoms of abuse and will ensure that the named person, trustees / members / management leads / staff and volunteers have access to training around Safeguarding Adults

Awareness of this safeguarding policy/procedure is covered within the induction programme of all new employees or volunteers and their understanding checked within supervision meetings.

All staff will receive training on safeguarding adults at a level commensurate with their roles.

Further training, dependent on nature of role, e.g.

- Risk assessment & management
- Types of abuse and recognising signs of abuse
- Confidentiality
- Safeguarding adults and children

4d. Record Keeping

There should be a written record of any concerns. This confidential information will be stored on the Safeguarding Register on the Secure Management System by the appropriate person and will be kept for as long as deemed necessary.

All incidents should be discussed in supervision with line manager.

4e. Planning

One-to-one contact should ideally take place in an environment where other staff or volunteers are present or within sight.

4f. Access to an independent person

All clients should be given information on the Pandora Project Complaints Procedure. This should form part of the normal referral process. Where relevant a copy of Pandora Project Complaints Procedure should also be given to the referral agency and/or any other support staff involved with the vulnerable adult.

4g. Abuse perpetrated by employees or volunteers

If a member of staff is accused of abusing another member of staff or a client, they will be immediately suspended pending further investigation. The Disciplinary Policy will be followed, and other agencies may be contacted ie the Police. If found guilty of abuse, the Disclosure and Barring Service will be notified as a matter of urgency.

If a staff member has been suspended due to an allegation, and they hand in their notice, the investigation will continue.

5. Identification of Abuse

Physical abuse signs

- A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries
- Bruising in well protected areas, or clustered from repeated striking
- Finger marks
- Burns of unusual location or type
- Injuries found at different states of healing
- Injury shape similar to an object
- Injuries to head/face/scalp
- History of GP or agency hopping, or reluctance to seek help
- Accounts which vary with time or are inconsistent with physical evidence.
- Weight loss due to malnutrition, or rapid weight gain

Sexual abuse signs

- Disclosure or partial disclosure (use of phrases such as 'It's a secret')
- Medical problems, e.g. Genital infections, pregnancy, difficulty walking or sitting
- Disturbed behaviour e.g. depression, sudden withdrawal from activities, loss of previous skills, sleeplessness or nightmares, self-injury, showing fear or aggression to one particular person, repeated or excessive masturbation, inappropriately seductive behaviour, loss of appetite.
- Behaviour of others towards the vulnerable adult

Psychological/emotional signs:

- Isolation
- Over meticulous
- Withdrawn, agitated, anxious
- Change in appetite
- Insomnia, or need for excessive sleep
- Tearfulness
- Depression
- Unexplained paranoia, or excessive fears
- Low self esteem
- Confusion

Neglect signs

- Physical condition poor
- Clothing in poor condition
- Inadequate diet
- Untreated injuries or medical problems
- Failure to be given prescribed medication
- Poor personal hygiene

Financial or material signs

- Unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills
- Weight loss, due to not eating
- Unexplained or sudden withdrawal of money from accounts
- Services being disconnected
- Disparity between assets and satisfactory living conditions

Discriminatory signs

- Lack of respect shown to an individual
- Exclusion from rights afforded to others, such as health, education, criminal justice

Other signs of abuse

- Denial of visitors or phone calls
- Not being allowed to see family and friends

6. Responding to an allegation/concern

The organisation recognises that it has a duty to act on reports, or suspicions of abuse or neglect. Anyone who has contact with adults at risk and hears disclosures or allegations or has concerns about potential abuse or neglect has a duty to pass them on appropriately.

If any member of trustee/members/management lead/staff or volunteer has reason to believe that abuse is or may be taking place you have a responsibility to act on this information. It does not matter what your role is, doing nothing is not an option.

No abuse is acceptable, and some abuse is a criminal offence and must be reported to the police as soon as possible. It is not the job of a Pandora Project staff member or volunteer to investigate any concerns they may have regarding abuse of a vulnerable adult. If they have such concerns, they must first discuss these with their Line Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead who will then seek advice from Adult Social Services and/or the Police.

See Procedures in Section 10

7. Whistleblowing

It is important that people within Pandora Project have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they are unhappy with anything. Whistle blowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrong- doing within their organisation. This includes concerns about another employee or volunteer. There is also a requirement by Pandora Project to protect whistle-blowers. refer to Pandora Project Whistleblowing policy.

8. Designated Safeguarding Lead

All concerns about the safety of an adult must be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ascertain the need for a safeguarding referral and next steps.

Pandora Project Designated Safeguarding Lead is;

Shelly – Senior Support Worker or Tracy – CEO

Email: safeguarding@pandoraproject.org.uk

If deemed as a safeguarding concern, the DSL or the staff member/ volunteer will contact Norfolk County Council's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0344 800 8020 for advice and to make a referral.

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/business/supplying-ncc/care-providers/care-quality-library/mash-leaflet-march-2014.pdf>

9. Summary

- The employee or volunteer's primary responsibility is to protect the vulnerable adult if they are at risk
- Each employee or volunteer has a duty to report their concerns to their Line Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Employees or volunteers will be supported to deal with the situation

10. Procedures

Actions and Considerations

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of the vulnerable adult. To this end it is the responsibility of all staff to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person or agency.

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- In situations of immediate danger, take urgent action by calling the relevant emergency services (e.g. Police, ambulance, GP). Make sure you notify your Line Manager/Safeguarding Lead of the action you have taken at the first possible opportunity.
- Remember to have regard for your own safety. Leave the situation if it is not safe for you.
- Listen to the vulnerable adult, offer necessary support and reassurance.
- A vulnerable adult must have Pandora Project's confidentiality rules explained to them at the outset of the working relationship. This includes the absolute requirement to discuss possible concerns about the safety with managers or other professionals.
- Where a vulnerable adult expresses a wish for concerns not to be pursued then this should be respected wherever possible. However, employees or volunteers must make it clear that they cannot make decisions about this and that they will have to consult with their Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead.

When considering the decision as to whether to refer elsewhere (e.g. to Police, Social Services) the following should be taken into account:

- The wishes of the vulnerable adult, & their right to self-determination
- The mental capacity of the vulnerable adult
- Known indicators of abuse
- Level of risk to this individual
- The seriousness of the abuse
- The effect of the abuse on the individual
- Level of risk to others
- The effect of the abuse on others
- Whether a criminal offence has been committed
- Whether other statutory obligations have been breached
- The need for others to know
- The ability of others (e.g. Police, Social Services) to make a positive contribution to the situation

Issues of Mental Capacity and Consent

The consent of the vulnerable adult must be obtained except where

- The vulnerable adult lacks the mental capacity to make a decision, and a risk assessment indicates that referral would be in their best interests
- Others may be at risk
- A crime has been committed

Information, if known, which will be required when you make a referral or report your concerns

- Details of alleged victim – name, address, age, gender, ethnic background including principal language spoken, details of any disability
- Whether the individual is aware of and has consented to the referral/report.
- The mental capacity of the individual (any concerns/doubts about this?)

If appropriate, advise agency on preferred/advised method or environment when approaching the alleged victim or perpetrator.

Also, any relevant information, for example:

- Reasons for concerns and therefore this referral
- Details of how these concerns came to light
- Specific information relating to these concerns
- Details of any arrangements which have already been made for the protection of the vulnerable adult or any immediate action taken
- Details of anyone else to whom this referral has also been made
- Details of the alleged perpetrator and if they are a vulnerable adult
- Details of alleged abuse and information about suspicions
- Details of any other background information
- An impression of how serious the situation might be
- Details of any other professionals involved
- Details of any significant family members, neighbours, friends

Information passed on must be relevant, necessary and up to date.

Do's and Don'ts

Staff members or volunteers should

- Stay calm
- Listen patiently
- Reassure the person they are doing the right thing by telling you
- Explain what you are going to do
- Report to Line Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately
- Write a factual account of what you have heard/seen

Staff members or volunteers should not

- Appear shocked, horrified, disgusted or angry
- Ask leading questions
- Press the individual for details (unless requested to do so)
- Make comments or judgements other than to show concern
- Promise to keep secrets
- Confront the abuser
- Risk contaminating evidence

Discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will

- Ascertain whether the situation might fall within the definitions of abuse outlined in this policy
- Consider the vulnerable adult's capacity to make decisions

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- Ascertain whether an advocate or appropriate adult might be necessary
- Ascertain any immediate action required
- Where abuse is suspected conclude that a referral be made to the appropriate agency

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