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**SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**Vulnerable Adults**

**Key Contacts**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Safeguarding Designated Officer | Alison Read | alison@compassionacts.uk |
| Safeguarding Team | Richard Owens | r.owens@compassionacts.uk |
| Safeguarding Team | Lee Henry | lee@compassionacts.uk |
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Safeguarding Policy

Compassion Acts is committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all workers, contractors, volunteers and visitors who attend our premises, or who participate in Compassion Acts activities elsewhere, as far as is reasonable and practicable.

This policy relates to the safeguarding of those that may be vulnerable, and to children.

Compassion Acts commits:

* To identify risks, and to control those risks wherever practicable
* To provide a safe and nurturing environment for all those considered vulnerable
* To provide adequate information, instruction and training in relation to safeguarding to employees and volunteers
* To provide adequate support and supervision to all employees and volunteers carrying out Compassion Acts business
* To review this policy and associated procedures on a regular basis (at least annually) and revise policy and procedures as the need arises

Definitions (for this document)

Vulnerable Adult:

A person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation[[1]](#footnote-1).

Vulnerable adults are entitled to: privacy; be treated with dignity; lead an independent life and be enabled to do so; be able to choose how they lead their lives; the protection of the law; have their rights upheld regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background.

Policy Statement

At Compassion Acts, we want to restore dignity and revive hope to people from all walks of life. We are concerned with individuals and their circumstances and actively encourage an inclusive environment throughout all our projects.

Compassion Acts recognises that ending hunger is about more than food. We support and encourage our projects to provide compassionate, practical support to people in crisis to tackle the root causes that lock people into poverty and build people’s resilience so they are less likely to need a food bank in the future.

We seek to ensure that all our team members are aware of what is required from them under the vulnerable adult and child protection policy and make sure that it is practised at all times.

It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults.

We commit ourselves to co-operate fully with the appropriate statutory services when they are conducting official investigation into physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults, children or young people (by an adult or young person).

This statement is to be brought to the attention of all staff and volunteers when they join, as part of their induction programme. Any amendments will be brought to the attention of all team members.

Implementation

Compassion Acts will plan its work so as to minimise situations where abuse might occur.

Although the number of people who actively seek to abuse vulnerable adults and children is very small, Compassion Acts can reduce opportunities for abuse in various ways. We will, for instance:

* Ensure that there is adequate supervision for all vulnerable adults
* Ensure that any vulnerable adult working with Compassion Acts is aware of who they can talk to if they have concerns
* Ensure that all staff and volunteers have access to a telephone in case of emergencies.
* Make sure the designated person has correct and up-to-date training
* Ensure staff and volunteers supervising vulnerable adults are suitably trained

Designated person and their role

Compassion Acts has a designated person who is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of vulnerable adults or children. THE DESIGNATED PERSON FOR COMPASSION ACTS IS THE ADVICE AND SUPPORT MANAGER, Alison Read.

Compassion Acts also has a secondary safeguarding officer who is responsible for dealing with any related concerns in the event that the designated person is ill, on holiday or an allegation of abuse is made about him/her. This person is Richard Owens (Chief Executive).

The designated person will be available for vulnerable adults to speak with should they feel the need to talk with someone about an incident which has happened whilst working for or receiving assistance from Compassion Acts.

Responding Appropriately to Disclosure:

Incidents of abuse or crimes may only come to light because the abused person themselves talks to someone else without considering that they are experiencing abuse when they tell what is happening to them. Disclosure may take place many years after the actual event or when the person has left the setting but even if there is a delay the information must be taken seriously. If someone makes an allegation or discloses abuse:

The Staff member or volunteer MUST follow the Safeguarding Flowchart (Appendix A) and follow Safeguarding Procedures, in 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 take action.
* Employees or volunteers should not have to cope alone.

DO:

* Stay Calm.
* Listen patiently.
* Reassure the person they are doing the right thing by telling you.
* Explain what you are going to do.
* Immediately write a factual account of what you have heard / seen. This information should be recorded on the ‘Reporting Safeguarding Form’ (Appendix B)

Discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

DO NOT:

* Appear shocked, horrified, disgusted or angry.
* 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.

Whistle-blowing

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to take action when suspicious that abuse is occurring at work – no matter what the setting, who the perpetrator is or who the victim is. Compassion Acts will respect and not penalise those who stand up for anyone who is suspected of being abused.

Staff have a responsibility to report any occurrences or suspicions of adult abuse. Staff who report abuse are protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

REMEMBER

It is important that everyone at Compassion Acts is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional vulnerable adult and child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about someone.

Additional points

Displaying Information

* Display the name of the designated person
* Make sure everyone at Compassion Acts know the name of the designated person and how they might be contacted.

Applying agreed procedures for protecting vulnerable adults and children to all paid staff and volunteers:

* Compassion Acts Safeguarding Policy and Procedures will be included within the induction process of all new staff members or volunteers.
* All staff and volunteers will be given the Safeguarding Handbook as a reference. The Handbook will also be available to access online.
* All staff and volunteers will need to complete Level 1 Safeguarding training (or equivalent) within 3 months of starting in their position.
* Staff and volunteers who have direct contact with members of the public will be required to complete additional Safeguarding Training/Awareness at level 2 or equivalent.
* All staff and volunteers will be required to attend Safeguarding refresher training every 12 months or as directed by the Charity

It is possible to be lulled into a false sense of security, believing that those who work alongside vulnerable adults and children in Compassion Acts will never be guilty of abuse because they are part of a Christian organisation. It is not safe to assume that all others are automatically safe to be with vulnerable adults or children.

For this reason, all procedures set in place to protect vulnerable adults should apply to all those in contact with them. This is not the same as treating each person who relates to vulnerable adults as being under suspicion, but a matter of taking sensible measures to protect vulnerable adults, which are then observed by everyone. This will involve thought and planning within each group to minimise the risk.

If any member of staff or supervising volunteer has concerns, please raise them with the designated person. If it is brought to the attention of the designated person and not adequately dealt with the next step is to talk to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, or contact Social Services/the Police as a private citizen to discuss your concerns.

Disclosure of Information

There is a difference between confidentiality and secrecy. All personal and delicate information disclosed to us is confidential, but may not always be secret.

Personal and delicate information about staff and volunteers will be:

* Confidential to the Compassion Acts project and can be shared with staff and volunteers on a ‘need to know basis’ *and*
* Can be shared with another agency when:
  + Permission is given by the person about whom the information is held
  + There is an overriding justification to share information without the person’s consent
  + The law requires it

**Give staff and volunteers clear roles**

Abuse of vulnerable adults is most easily concealed where there is confusion among adults about roles and responsibilities. Included in all job descriptions, both for employees and volunteers, will be a statement laying down the behaviour and values expected from all who work as part of this team.

Over and above the written word, expected behaviour towards vulnerable adults when working with Compassion Acts will be explained to new workers as part of their induction.

It is the Compassion Acts’ policy not to engage in regulated activities (close or personal tasks such as washing, dressing, or accompanying to the lavatory) with vulnerable adults: members of staff and volunteers are therefore ineligible for DBS checks.

**Supervision as a means of protection**

Regular staff/volunteer meetings should be held where team leaders/Centre Managers meet together to raise issues about their area of work and discuss them. When receiving feedback about the project, particular attention should be paid to any situation or suggestion that a vulnerable adult is being highly favoured or harshly treated, as these are signs of abuse.

Within Compassion Acts our main area of concern about protecting people lies with the welfare of any vulnerable adult supported volunteers. Where possible, line managers should take opportunities to observe those vulnerable adults for whom they are responsible.

In all recruitment decisions concerning volunteers:

1. a detailed application form should be completed
2. 2 references should be taken about the suitability of the applicant for the post being considered
3. an informal interview will provide an extended conversation to allow an opportunity to explore in more detail the applicant’s experience and motivation for volunteering

**Criminal convictions**

All volunteers must complete a volunteer application form before commencing work at the Compassion Acts project. Details of criminal convictions (except those ‘spent’ under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) must be provided so an adequate risk assessment can be undertaken.

Compassion Acts reserves the right to dismiss a volunteer and/or ban them from the property should they feel it is necessary.

**Training**

Training in the prevention of abuse and the action to take if abuse occurs should be included as part of the Training Programme for Compassion Acts and can normally be accessed free of charge.

Further guidelines concerning the safeguarding policies of your local council can also be obtained free of charge and a copy should be kept available as a reference.

It should be noted that it is insufficient to give workers guidelines without equipping them with the skills and knowledge to carry them out.

**General**

All workers driving any vehicle which transports vulnerable adults must hold a valid driver’s licence for the type/class of vehicle they are driving. All vehicles used in the transportation of vulnerable adults must have a valid road fund licence, be appropriately insured, have a valid MOT certificate and comply with all appropriate legislation and regulations. Seat sharing is not permitted and seat belts must be worn.

**Review**

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed at least annually and whenever there are any legislative changes or amendments to guidance issued by relevant statutory bodies.

Agreed by trustees:

Review Date: April 2023

1. 1 March 2000. ‘No secrets: guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse’, Department of Health. (The broad definition of a ‘vulnerable adult’ referred to in the 1997 Consultation Paper Who decides? issued by the Lord Chancellor’s Department. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)