

Emerging Voices: Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy (vs. 3 Jan 2024)

1. Introduction

The Trustees of Emerging Voices recognise the need for and importance of protecting vulnerable adults. There may be occasions in which the adults with whom the charity works experience a relapse in their mental health condition. This document is meant to ensure that policies and procedures promote safe working practices. It will inform those working with vulnerable adults about good practice, to ensure we provide a safe working environment for everyone. All staff and volunteers of Emerging Voices are expected to understand their responsibilities in safeguarding adults and follow this policy. Over and above the details contained within this policy it is the responsibility of trustees, facilitators, volunteers and all connected to Emerging Voices to promote healthy, respectful attitudes and behaviours within the charity.

Emerging Voices is committed to:

- Relating effectively, listening to, and valuing vulnerable adults whilst ensuring their safety and protection within its activities
- Ensuring that those working with vulnerable adults are given training and support
- Having a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse including appointing a named Trustee to act as the Safeguarding Lead.

2. Definitions

The Care Act 2014 provides a definition and framework for Safeguarding Adults.

Safeguarding adults at risk means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. An adult is anyone of 18 years and over. Safeguarding involves protecting adults at risk from abuse or neglect and putting plans in place to prevent harm in future. It involves helping people to live as well as possible and to remain healthy and have their independence maintained. Safeguarding adults is everyone's business. We all have a duty of care to report concerns if we think someone is being abused or neglected.

We will enable all our staff, volunteers, Trustees, and those who work with us to make informed and confident decisions regarding safeguarding issues and take all suspicions and allegations of abuse seriously. We expect everyone connected to Emerging Voices to have read, understood, and adhere to our safeguarding policies and procedures. We will endeavour to safeguard adults at risk by:

- Valuing them, listening to, and respecting them
- Adopting this policy and adhering to our safeguarding procedures

- Ensuring we have a safer recruitment process for every person or volunteer recruited by Emerging Voices and ensuring all necessary checks are made where appropriate
- Providing effective management and support to staff and volunteers through supervision support and training
- Share information about safeguarding good practice with staff and volunteers and other relevant parties
- Ensure organisations we work with have robust safeguarding policies in place
- Reviewing this policy and procedures and updating as appropriate.

3. Working with vulnerable adults

Emerging Voices will adhere to the following six key principles of safeguarding.

- (i) **Empowerment**
People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions via informed consent.
- (ii) **Prevention**
It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- (iii) **Proportionality**
The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- (iv) **Protection**
Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- (v) **Partnership**
Local solutions through services working with their communities and service users.
- (vi) **Accountability**
Accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice.

In addition to the above principles when working with vulnerable adults in a creative way Emerging Voices will strive to establish and maintain trust and confidence by:

- Communicating in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way
- Being honest and trustworthy, reliable, and dependable
- Valuing and listening attentively to what individuals have to say
- Respecting confidential information. If there is a problem that needs to be discussed with a supporter or another agency, then permission should be sought from the individual first
- Thinking about what must be said to an individual and the best place to do it in public or in private
- Thinking about each situation and individual's need and whether the issue should be dealt with individually or as a group
- Ensuring that there are good channels of communication and understanding between all parties
- Working openly and co-operatively
- Taking complaints seriously and responding to them or passing them to the appropriate person

- Seeking to ensure that an individual's behaviour does not harm themselves or other people
- Recognising that people have the right to take risks and help individuals to identify and manage potential and actual risks to themselves and others.

4. Consent Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The designated Safeguarding Lead, Jack McNeill, will be responsible for making decisions about sharing information with external agencies including the police and local authority.

We will always respect someone's right to confidentiality and seek their consent to share information. Confidentiality may be overridden however if there is evidence that sharing information is necessary in exceptional circumstances. These are;

- If an adult lacks mental capacity to protect themselves
- If a crime has been committed (or is about to be)
- If there are concerns about abuse in an organization
- If there are concerns about a member of staff, freelancer or volunteer
- If abuse is occurring in a setting where services are delivered
- If other people are at risk
- In a life-threatening situation and in need of emergency services.

5. Safer Recruitment

Emerging Voices will endeavour to do everything possible to minimize the risk of involving unsuitable people in our work with adults who have experience of poor mental health. All staff and volunteers will have clear role or job descriptions relevant to their area of activity. DBS checks will be undertaken for individuals who are undertaking regulated activity. This will include volunteers, freelancers working on behalf of Emerging Voices and any paid staff.

Depending on their role, these individuals must either have their own safeguarding policies and procedures in place or receive annual training on the content of this policy. In addition, the charity will initially obtain two written references confirming that the referee knows of no reason why the individual should not work with vulnerable adults.

6. Record Keeping

Emerging Voices will ensure that accurate and factual records of all safeguarding concerns are kept and will be stored securely. Records must be factual, accurate and legible and include a date, time, and signature.

7. Training

All staff, trustees and volunteers will receive appropriate safeguarding training in line with their roles and responsibilities which will include basic awareness training as a minimum requirement. Freelancers doing work for Emerging Voices must also have had the relevant training.

8. Reporting a Concern

Any member of staff, freelancer, volunteer, or trustee who becomes aware of a safeguarding concern must raise the matter immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Emerging Voices Safeguarding Procedures (see appendix 1) will then be followed.

9. Whistleblowing

All staff, freelancers and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor safeguarding practice within Emerging Voices and any concerns will be taken seriously.

10. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Emerging Voices Trustees and amended, when necessary, should any relevant new legislation require this.

11. Upholding of Policy

If a trustee, facilitator, volunteer or similar is found to be not upholding this policy or its procedures, this will be investigated fully by the designated Safeguarding Lead and appropriate steps taken. Such steps depend on the nature and seriousness of the manner in which the policy is not being upheld. If not already covered by the procedures above, these might include:

- Conversation with the individual to resolve the matter
- Updated training
- Taking the matter to the board of trustees
- Asking the volunteer or trustee to step down
- Termination of a contract, in accordance with its terms.

APPENDIX 1: Safeguarding Procedures and Contacts

Emerging Voices is committed to ensuring that safeguarding is paramount when conducting or delivering any activity that involves working with vulnerable adults.

(a) Procedure for staff, freelancers and volunteers

It is the responsibility of Trustees to ensure that this safeguarding procedure is followed and support to staff, freelancers and/ or volunteers is provided to ensure good practice in safeguarding is upheld.

What to do upon suspicion or disclosure:

Please Note

- It is your duty to report a disclosure or abuse. It is not for you to decide whether a suspicion or allegation is true or not
- All suspicions and allegations must be taken seriously and dealt with according to this procedure
- If any concerns are raised it must be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Emerging Voices is not a statutory agency and has no right to undertake investigations into concerns regarding Adult or Child Protection. Referrals should be directed to the appropriate local Children or Adult Services Contact Centres
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Jack McNeill, email address safeguarding@emergingvoicescharity.co.uk , and all your concerns must be referred to this person.
- In an emergency please do not delay in informing the Police and /or Ambulance. All the information must be treated as confidential and reported to the Safeguarding Lead within one working day.
- If you are unable to contact the Safeguarding Lead, use the contact numbers listed at the end of this document.
- The reporting form should be completed at the time or immediately following the disclosure but after all necessary emergency actions have been taken, please complete the form as fully as possible.
- Remember staff/ freelancers/ volunteers must make clear to the adult at risk that they cannot guarantee confidentiality.

(b) Rights and confidentiality

If a complaint or allegation is made against a member of staff, freelancer, or volunteer or similar, he or she should be made aware of his or her legal rights. No matter how you feel about the accusation, both the alleged abuser and the person who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 2018. Remember also that any possible criminal investigation could be compromised through inappropriate information being released.

(c) Details of Safeguarding Contacts in York

In an event where the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, and you have a concern that an adult in York is being abused or mistreated speak to someone at one of the following numbers:

In an emergency call the police on 999

If a person is not in immediate danger call the police on 101.

For Adult Safeguarding Concerns:

To report a safeguarding concern:

Contact City of York (SAB) Safeguarding Adults Board, tel: 01904 555111

(office hours)

Hearing impaired customers can use the text facility 07534 437804.

APPENDIX 2: Signs of Abuse

Physical abuse – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Domestic violence – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so, called ‘honour’ based violence.

Sexual abuse – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological abuse – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Financial or material abuse – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

Modern slavery – slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. People are bought and sold for sexual exploitation, forced labour, street crime, cannabis cultivation, grooming and pimping, domestic servitude, forced marriage or even the sale of organs and human sacrifice.

Discriminatory abuse – including forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one’s own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice because of the structure, policies, processes, and practices within an organisation.

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

Self-neglect – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. It involves no other perpetrator.

APPENDIX 3: Further resources, training, and guidance

- <https://www.safeguardingadultsyork.org.uk/>
- <https://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/>
- Free e-learning training courses are available via the City of York Council. Training should be updated every three years if you continue to work or volunteer with vulnerable people.

<https://york.learningpool.com/login/index.php>

- NCVO – national guidance tools and tips for the third sector on safeguarding: [The National Council for Voluntary Organisations: Safeguarding](#)

Policy Date: January 2024