

## The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults (SoVA) **Introductory notes for voluntary & community groups**

Many small organisations and groups that do not have the care or support of vulnerable adults as part of their core aim, still often have contact with individuals who would fit into this category and so have a responsibility to ensure their safety and wellbeing. They also have a responsibility to the volunteers who may have contact with them. Ensuring they may do so, without being put at risk from being placed in potentially compromising situations or subject to allegations.

### **A vulnerable adult is defined in 'No Secrets' as:**

'a person aged 18 years or over, who is in receipt of 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'.

This guidance document and its associated policy guidance forms, are designed for all community and volunteer groups. It will provide information you need to ensure you are meeting your duty of care. **It is essential that all services do work to localised procedures and processes.**

### **Engagement Levels**

We have defined the 4 examples of Volunteer or Community Groups and their engagement levels with Vulnerable Adults (below). Where you sit in the 4 engagement levels will determine the relevant documentation you will need to have and suggestions on the training you should attend. (See: Practice Guidance Chart)

### **The 4 Engagement Levels**

**Paid Staff and Regular Contact** – This applies to organisations that have regular contact with Vulnerable Adults (on a daily basis) and also have paid staff in their organisation. For example, a befriending scheme for Vulnerable Adults or a Day Service.

**Regular Contact** - This applies to organisations that have regular contact with Vulnerable Adults (on a daily basis), but don't have any paid staff. For example, a self-help group designed for people with previous Mental Health issues or a drop-in service specifically for Vulnerable Adult groups.

**Irregular Contact** - Is classed as occasional, irregular or short term contact over a period of time (once a month). It is also unlikely that your organisation core aims are to provide support for Vulnerable Adult Groups. For example, social activity groups.

**Limited Contact** - Is contact within a group context, in a public space – taking part in an activity with minimal physical contact, not providing intimate care or being left alone with the vulnerable person. For example, putting up the village Christmas lights.

**Note:** It is likely that both, ‘Paid Staff and Regular Contact’ and ‘Regular Contact’ volunteer groups or organisations maybe engaging in Regulated Activities. For further information on this and the effect it will have on enacting DBS checks go to <http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/08/barring-services-regulated-activity/>

## SoVA Practice Guidance, Procedures & Training Recommendations Chart

Organisation Size	Policy Recommendations and Guidance	Training Recommendations
<b>Paid Staff and Regular Contact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Sign up to Cambridgeshire County Council’s Adult Safeguarding Policy Guidance and Procedures</li> <li>❖ A full SoVA guidance and procedures for your service</li> <li>❖ A named responsible person (SoVA Champion)</li> <li>❖ SoVA Leaflets/posters</li> </ul>	Manager/SoVA Champion - 2 days SoVA Management Responsibilities Course. Paid Staff - SoVA Raising Awareness. Volunteers – CCC SoVA Volunteer Awareness Session.
<b>Regular Contact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ A full SoVA guidance and procedures for your service</li> <li>❖ A named responsible person (SoVA Champion)</li> <li>❖ SoVA Leaflets/posters</li> </ul>	Manager/SoVA Champion - 2 days Management Responsibilities Course. Volunteers – CCC SoVA Volunteer Awareness Session.
<b>Irregular Contact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Top Tips: SoVA – Good Practice Guide (additional small policy optional)</li> <li>❖ A named responsible person (SoVA Champion)</li> <li>❖ SoVA Leaflets/posters</li> </ul>	30 min Introduction to Safeguarding & Volunteers – CCC SoVA Volunteer Awareness Session <b>(Optional)</b> .
<b>Limited Contact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Top Tips: SoVA – Good Practice Guide (additional small policy optional)</li> <li>❖ A named responsible person (SoVA Champion)</li> <li>❖ SoVA Leaflets/posters <b>(Optional)</b></li> </ul>	30 min Introduction to Safeguarding <b>(Optional)</b> & Volunteers – CCC SoVA Volunteer Awareness Session <b>(Optional)</b> .

### What is a SoVA Champion?

Unpaid Staff and volunteers working in the voluntary and community sector have a vital role to play in delivering services and activities to a range of people in many varied settings. It is highly likely that many of these people will be, in some way, vulnerable. Appointment of a SoVA Champion, someone who will ensure the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable adults, is therefore essential.

This person will be responsible for ensuring that policy and best practice is enacted, monitored, and where appropriate (to your service) reporting also to the management committee or to appropriate bodies.

The SoVA Champion will have a good working knowledge of safeguarding issues and will be the person volunteers approach regarding their concerns for an individual. They will take responsibility to ensure that appropriate bodies are informed, should this be required. Depending on the size of your organisation, you may wish to have more than one person in this role. For smaller organisations or groups, we would recommend giving this role to the individual who takes the lead on ensuring other policies and procedures are in place.

The SoVA Champion will monitor and record contact to ensure that unpaid staff receive training and supervision (where appropriate) which is consistent with the frequency and level of contact they have with Vulnerable Adults. Also, where appropriate, the management committee or Trustees will be advised so that appropriate steps are followed to ensure safeguarding legislation is adhered to.

### **The person responsible for the SoVA Guidance and Procedure will:**

- Ensure that the welfare of vulnerable adults is given the highest priority by the organisation, its management and volunteers
- To promote good practice and ensure that volunteers are able to work with vulnerable adults with confidence
- Ensure that this Practice Guidance and Procedures is enacted and monitored including the briefing, training and gathering feedback from volunteers
- Monitor contact with vulnerable adults to ensure that the frequency and intensity of contact is consistent with the DBS threshold levels.
- Act as the main contact for disclosing information around adult safeguarding concerns
- Ensure that the concerns of vulnerable adults are heard and acted upon
- Be responsible for reporting incidents or concerns to appropriate authorities
- Attend appropriate training relevant to the level of engagement with vulnerable adults to ensure all staff/volunteers remain up to date with current practice and legislation
- Ensure volunteers have access to further appropriate information
- Where appropriate, sign up to Cambridgeshire County Council's Adult Safeguarding Policy Guidance and Procedures

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/social/adultprot/Adult+Safeguarding+Policy+Guidance+and+Procedures.htm>

## **Additional Guidance**

### **The Disclosure and Barring Service**

**The primary role of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is to help employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups including children.**

The DBS was established under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and merges the functions previously carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

For more info go to: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/dbs/>

### **No Secrets**

**Department of Health No Secrets** (*Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse*) – Gives guidance to local agencies who have a responsibility to investigate and take action when a vulnerable adult is believed to be suffering abuse. It offers a structure and content for the development of local **inter-agency policies, procedures and joint protocols** which will draw on good practice nationally and locally. **Coherent strategies** should be developed, in all areas of the country, by all the statutory, voluntary and private agencies that work with vulnerable adults.

Cambridgeshire County Council have developed their full Practice Guidance and Procedures on Adult Safeguarding that all agencies who work with Vulnerable Adults in Cambridgeshire should follow. For further guidance go to: <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/social/adultprot/Adult+Safeguarding+Policy+Guidance+and+Procedures.htm>

**You will find a template volunteer Practice Guidance and Procedures, a Volunteer SoVA Good Practice Guide, information regarding training and Cambridgeshire County Councils Adult Safeguarding Posters and Leaflets at:**

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/social/adultprot/>

You will also find that by visiting our website or contacting the Cambridgeshire Adult Safeguarding Team that we offer **free in-house training** for unpaid staff and volunteers. To enquire immediately about this training offer, contact the Adult Safeguarding Training Administrators on [adultsafeguardingtraining@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:adultsafeguardingtraining@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Telephone 01223 699307/ 703538

For further information around Cambridgeshire County Council's Training Charging Policy for Paid Staff go to:

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/social/adultprot/training/Training+Charging+Policy.htm>

**If more information or clarification on your Adult Safeguarding responsibilities is required, help is available from:**

<b>Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service (CCVS)</b>	e-mail: <a href="mailto:enquires@cambridgecvs.org.uk">enquires@cambridgecvs.org.uk</a> website: <a href="http://www.cambridgecvs.org.uk">http://www.cambridgecvs.org.uk</a>	01223 464696
<b>Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations</b>	e-mail: <a href="mailto:info@huntsforum.org.uk">info@huntsforum.org.uk</a> website: <a href="http://www.huntsforum.org.uk/">http://www.huntsforum.org.uk/</a>	01480 420601
<b>Voluntary Community Action East Cambridgeshire (VCAEC)</b>	e-mail: <a href="mailto:info@vcaec.org.uk">info@vcaec.org.uk</a> website: <a href="http://www.vcaec.org.uk/">http://www.vcaec.org.uk/</a>	
<b>Young Lives</b>	e-mail: <a href="mailto:admin@young-lives.org.uk">admin@young-lives.org.uk</a> website: <a href="http://www.young-lives.org.uk/">http://www.young-lives.org.uk/</a>	01480 494333
<b>Cambridgeshire County Council Adult Safeguarding Team</b>	e-mail: <a href="mailto:adultsafeguardingtraining@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">adultsafeguardingtraining@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a>	01223 703538 or 01223 699307
<b>National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)</b>	website: <a href="http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/">http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/</a>	020 77136161