

# The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults (SoVA) Policy for small groups who may have irregular or limited contact with Vulnerable Adults

## Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults accessing **insert group name**.

**insert group name** when working vulnerable adults will ensure that they will:

- Promote their health and welfare.
- Respect and promote their rights.
- Work in a way which safeguards the wellbeing of the vulnerable person and protect them from harm and abuse.
- Take appropriate steps if they became aware of any signs / incidents of harm and abuse
- **insert group name** will ensure group members and volunteers are not expected to be alone or left unsupervised with vulnerable adults or to attend to their personal care needs.

## Policy Aims

- To promote good practice and ensure that volunteers are able to work in a environment where there is irregular and low intensity contact with vulnerable adults with confidence
- To provide vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the company of participating volunteers
- To allow volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific Adult Safeguarding issues
- Monitor the level of contact with vulnerable adults to ensure that the contact is infrequent and of low intensity and below the threshold of DBS check requirements
- To ensure that vulnerable adults and their carers (if appropriate) are aware of what to do if they have a concern and that they would feel confident to pass their concern on.

## Terms used

- A **Vulnerable Adult** is defined in No Secrets<sup>1</sup> 'as a person aged 18 years or over "Who is or maybe in need of community care services by means of mental or other disability, age or illness' and 'Who is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation
- **Regulated Activity** are the activities that the Disclosure and Barring Service can bar people from doing. It is a criminal offence for a barred person to seek to work, or work in, activities from which they are barred. It is also a criminal offence for employers or voluntary organisations to knowingly employ a barred person in regulated activity.
- **Infrequent Contact** is classed in Cambridgeshire's 'The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults (SoVA) Introductory notes for voluntary & community groups' as occasional, irregular or short term contact over a period of time. It is also unlikely that the organisation core aims are to provide activities to children, young people or vulnerable adults.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Health (2000) No Secrets: Guidance on implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse.

- **Low intensity** 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 person. It is also highly likely that parents or guardians are present.

**The named person responsible for this policy is** insert name

**They 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

**Signature of chair:**

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**Date of signature/ratification of policy (or what date was this policy adopted by the committee)**

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Date that next review is due:

Date policy reviewed:

Date that next review is due:

Date policy reviewed:

Date that next review is due:

Date policy reviewed:

## Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults (SOVA) – practice guide

### Top Tips: Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults (SOVA) – good practice procedure

<p><b>What is SoVA?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abuse of vulnerable adults is common, hidden (by both the victim and the alleged perpetrator). The most likely perpetrator is a care-giver or someone else close to the victim.</li> <li>• Everyone working as a volunteer or a paid member of staff has an important role to play in protecting vulnerable adults. This includes <b>recognising, recording, reporting and referring</b> concerns about abuse.</li> <li>• Concerns may be recognised by anyone working with or knowing the vulnerable adult. This includes all health professions, care staff (care home or community), volunteers, members of the public, friends and family or by the adult themselves.</li> <li>• It is vital to listen and to take concerns seriously.</li> </ul> <p><b>Vulnerable adult:</b> A vulnerable adult may be anyone over the age of 18, who has a physical or sensory impairment, learning disability or a mental health problem and who may be unable to protect themselves from harm or abuse. Many frail or confused older people are especially vulnerable. Risk increases if socially isolated, history of family violence, communication problems, drugs or alcohol involved, relationships under stress, poor staffing levels and poor staff training. Most occurrences are in own home or care facility but can be in hospital or any other setting.</p> <p><b>Abuse</b> – may be single or repeated. It may be: physical: sexual: psychological: financial or material: neglect or acts of omission: discriminatory (race, ageism etc): institutional: domestic abuse and violence.</p> <p><b>The Four Principles</b></p> <p>For an incident or allegation to be considered as a safeguarding referral, these ‘Four Principles’ need to be met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The person is a vulnerable adult as defined as someone aged 18 years or over, who meets the criteria for a community care service</li> <li>2. There is an alleged perpetrator – a third party/person/agency/unknown</li> <li>3. There is abusive behaviour by the alleged perpetrator</li> <li>4. There is harm, or a risk of harm to the vulnerable adult</li> </ol>
<p><b>Why do we need to do this?</b></p>	<p>The NHS has reported 96,000 cases of alleged abuse against vulnerable adults were reported in England last year. Most incidences of abuse are not reported – there were 944 in Cambridgeshire in 2012. The numbers increase year on year, this is mostly due to increased recognition and referral but is still only the tip of the iceberg.</p>
<p><b>How do we need to respond?</b></p>	<p><b>Recognise:</b> Know what to look for; get trained to recognise the signs and symptoms and listen to concerns of those working with vulnerable adults.</p> <p><b>Record:</b> Record concerns clearly.</p> <p><b>Report:</b> Know where to get help and who to talk to – develop an in-house protocol, nominate a Safeguarding Adults Champion, preferably someone with additional knowledge and training.</p> <p><b>Refer:</b> Know where to refer and what to do to get more help; keep a note of contact details of Cambridgeshire Direct.</p> <p><b>Remember:</b> this is a common problem, but is hidden by both the victim (fear of reprisals) and the perpetrator (and the most likely perpetrator is someone caring for the patient).</p>

## Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults (SOVA) – practice procedure

