



SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULT POLICY

1.0 Definitions

- 1.1. A Vulnerable Adult is one who is or may be in need of community care services by reason disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation". This definition of an Adult covers all people over 18 years of age.

2.0 Policy Statement

- 2.1 TalkFIRST is committed to protecting the welfare of all adults as they participate in TalkFIRST services and/or activities. TalkFIRST understands its responsibility to comply with legislation, particularly to ensure that the welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount and will constantly monitor developments in this field. However, TalkFIRST recognises that the best protection for those participating in our programmes is the vigilance and forethought of staff, trustees and volunteers in preventing circumstances where abuse of trust could occur. To that end, TalkFIRST will strive to create a safe and secure environment where service users, volunteers and staff can work together confidently in mutual respect.

TalkFIRST also recognises its responsibility to take appropriate action when a vulnerable person discloses that they are experiencing abuse or neglect, or if staff / volunteers have a concern about the welfare of a client, and to ensure staff / volunteers have an understanding of what might indicate this and what action to take.

- 2.2 These procedures reflect and are compliant with the Mental Health Act 2014 and the Care Act 2004. Everyone has the right to live their lives free of violence and abuse, this is underpinned by the Human Rights Act 1998. Also, in accordance with the European Convention for Human Rights, we take seriously our responsibility to ensure adults at risk of abuse or neglect have the right to seek advice, support and intervention in order to minimize or stop it.
- 2.3 TalkFIRST staff, trustees and volunteers are required to abide by the Family Mediation Council Code of Practice and Staff Member/Trustee/Volunteer Code of Conduct. As part of that Code of Conduct, are required to notify TalkFIRST of any police record or other factor which may make that person unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults.
- 2.4 TalkFIRST will ensure that the Code of Conduct and the organisation's safeguarding vulnerable adults procedures are continually monitored, developed and maintained and are appropriately communicated throughout the staff and volunteer network. Volunteers and staff throughout the organisation are responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with the Codes, Guidelines and procedures of the organisation, and that new staff, trustees and volunteers are appropriately inducted.

- 2.5 TalkFIRST have appointed a Designated Safeguarding Person who will be responsible for the above, and will also be the person to whom any safeguarding concerns will, in the first instance, be reported to and who will then discuss and agree the appropriate action to take.

**TalkFIRST Designated Safeguarding Person is:
Tracy Sheppard, Project Manager**

- 2.5 TalkFIRST will maintain several policies and procedures geared towards abuse prevention that include, but are not limited to the following:
- Disclosure and Barring Scheme checks
 - Careful selection, training and supervision of staff and volunteers
 - The Disciplinary Process
 - Continuing education for staff
 - Procedure for reporting suspected abuse
 - Family Mediation Council, Code of Practice
- 2.6 All staff and volunteers will receive induction training, which will give an overview of the organisation and ensure they know its purpose, values, services and structure. Relevant training and support will be provided on an ongoing basis, and will cover information about their role, and opportunities for practising skills needed for the work.
- 2.7 Training on specific areas such as safeguarding adults, identifying and reporting abuse, and confidentiality of personal information will be given as a priority to new staff and volunteers, and will be regularly reviewed.

3 What is Abuse?

- 3.1 *“Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons”*

Abuse may consist of:

- A single or repeated act
- It may be physical, psychological or emotional
- An act of neglect or omission to act
- Occur when a person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not, or cannot, consent
- Abuse may be deliberate or unintentional or result from a lack of knowledge.

3.2 Who might abuse?

Anyone can be a perpetrator of abuse. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may involve an individual, a group or an organisation. This includes a wide range of people such as family members, professional staff, paid care workers, volunteers, other service users, neighbours, friends and associates, people who deliberately exploit vulnerable people and strangers.

An abusive relationship often includes the misuse of power by one person over another and is most likely to take place in situations where one person has power over another. An example may be where one person is dependent on another for their physical care or due to a power relationship such as between a professional worker and service user.

3.3 Where might abuse occur?

Abuse can take place anywhere, including:

- In the person's own home or the home of their family or friends
- In public places/the community
- Place or work or educational establishments
- In a care setting, hospital, community health setting or care home.
- Criminal justice system

Abuse may result from a deliberate intention to cause harm, but may also occur where a provider of care lacks the necessary knowledge or skill to respond to the individual's needs.

4.0 Staff Member/Trustee/Volunteer Code of Conduct

In addition to the Family Mediation Council Code of Practice you are also required to abide by the following Code of Conduct. It is important that both service users and staff members/volunteers can participate in TalkFIRST activities in a safe and secure environment.

These rules have been developed for the protection of both service users and staff members/trustees/volunteers. To this end, TalkFIRST expects all its staff members/trustees/volunteers to abide by them.

4.1 Each Staff member/Trustee/Volunteer:-

- 4.1.1 Will abide by the Guiding Principles and Programme rules of TalkFIRST and the Family Mediation Council Code of Practice in all activities as a TalkFIRST staff member/trustee/volunteer.
- 4.1.2 Will inform TalkFIRST of any relevant police record or other factor, or any change in his/her circumstances, which may make him/her unsuitable either as a TalkFIRST volunteer or for any particular TalkFIRST activity.
- 4.1.3 Recognises that the role of a TalkFIRST staff member/trustee/volunteer places him/her in a position of trust with regard to all people who are service users participating in TalkFIRST programmes, the TalkFIRST organisation, and to colleagues in the staff member/trustee/volunteer and staff network, and undertakes to uphold that trust at all times.
- 4.1.4 Undertakes to maintain, within the organisation's procedures, the confidentiality of any information relating to other staff member/trustee/volunteers, supporters, students or staff members made available to him/her in the course of the role as a TalkFIRST staff member/trustee/volunteer.

- 4.1.5 Will ensure that any TalkFIRST activities outside the normal activities are agreed and approved by her/his line manager in advance.
- 4.1.6 Will not behave in any way, physically or verbally, that could be offensive.
- 4.1.7 Remembers at all times that interactions between him/herself and service users must be such that no reasonable person observing that interaction could construe its nature as abusive.

If you follow these simple guidelines, TalkFIRST staff, volunteers and service users will work confidently together in mutual respect.

5.0 Action to be taken if a service user discloses to you abuse by someone else.

- 5.1 If a service user approaches you about an issue of abuse of trust, you must proceed with caution.
- 5.2 The Staff/Trustee/Volunteer's Code of Conduct specifies that a Staff member/trustee/volunteer should not place him/herself in a situation where he/she is alone with a service user who is a vulnerable adult. However, it is possible that a service user will be unwilling to make disclosures of this nature in anything but a one-to-one situation. *The Service user's needs must take priority in this situation.* Ask if the service user would like someone else to be present – another adult or a friend - but if he/she declines; proceed with the interview, taking extra care with your behaviour and body language.
- 5.3 Without stopping the vulnerable adult from disclosing, but if possible before they go into detail, explain the consequences of you knowing and the action you will take. Assure them that you will offer support but must pass any information to another professional who may take appropriate action. Explain that this may be the Designated Safeguarding Person, as identified in section 6, and Social Care.
- 5.4 Keep calm and listen to the vulnerable adult - do not have physical contact at any time. Allow them to speak without interruption, accepting what is said.
- 5.5 Do not make judgements or offer opinion, and as soon as is practically possible make an accurate written record of what the person has said, being careful to use their own words as accurately as possible
- 5.6 Explain again what will happen next. Find out when the vulnerable adult is next due to see the individual who is the subject of the complaint. (You will then be able to make a judgment as to the appropriate timing of your follow-up actions to ensure that the vulnerable adult remains safe.)
- 5.7 If the complaint concerns a situation not related to TalkFIRST (e.g. at home or at work), refer the complaint directly to the Designated Safeguarding Person. Pass on all information disclosed to you by the vulnerable adult.
- 5.8 If the complaint concerns a TalkFIRST staff member/trustee/volunteer, staff member or adult where the contact between that individual is a direct result of TalkFIRST activity, immediately inform the Named Designated Person as identified in section 6 who will then initiate the procedure.
- 5.9 Concerns about the welfare of a vulnerable adult, including the possibility of abuse or neglect, may also be raised by behaviour or others indicators noticed by a member of

staff/trustee/volunteer, but not disclosed by the vulnerable adult. In these instances, it is equally important to take action, and these concerns should be raised and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Person.

6.0 TalkFIRST procedures for dealing with suspected abuse of trust by staff members/trustees/volunteers:

- 6.1 When dealing with issues concerning abuse of trust, Trustees/Committee Members must remember that the welfare of the service users participating in TalkFIRST is paramount, but that we also have a responsibility to ensure that our staff & volunteers are treated fairly and with respect. This procedure is designed to meet both those objectives. The management committee or Board of Trustees should ensure that every member is fully aware of these procedures.

Wigan Safeguarding Adult's Policy 2014 outlines a clear procedure for managing concerns in relation to the abuse of vulnerable adults.(1.1.2 of the Safeguarding procedure) TalkFIRST will adopt these procedures in the event of an appropriate concern.

The first requirement of these procedures is for each organisation to identify a Named Designated Person to whom such concerns should be, in the first instance, reported. (Wherever possible, this should be a different person to the Designated Safeguarding Person)

TalkFIRST's Named Designated Person is Tracy Sheppard, Project Manager

If this person is unavailable or is the subject of the allegation, then the alternative person to contact is:

Dean Owens-Cooper, Chair of Trustees

On receipt of a concern The Named Designated Person will contact the Wigan Central Duty Team who will consider, with the Named Designated Person, the most appropriate way forward.

If the concern involves other inappropriate behaviour by the staff member/trustee/volunteer then this will be dealt with through the TalkFIRST Disciplinary Procedure.

- 6.2 It is also important to ensure that both the harmed person and the alleged perpetrator receive appropriate support through this procedure. For the harmed person this should in the first instance be provided by their chosen person or carer. The staff member/trustee/volunteer should be encouraged to get support from a union representative, friend, or another identified member of staff / volunteer.

7.0 Action to be taken if you receive an allegation about yourself.

- 7.1 Keep calm. Do not get involved in an argument which is likely to make the situation worse.
- 7.2 Immediately inform your line manager and the Named Designated Person. The quicker that action is taken to investigate the allegations, the sooner the situation will be resolved.

- 7.3 Record the facts as you understand them.
- 7.4 Ensure that no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise. Do not contact another agency involved with the child or young person concerned.

8.0 Action to be taken if you suspect an abuse of trust has occurred

- 8.1 After making an accurate written record of your concerns and your reasons for them, your first action should be to contact the Named Designated Person for allegations as indicated in Section 6 above.
- 8.2 The allegations management procedure will then be followed as outlined in Section 5 above.
- 8.3 **Whatever the nature of the complaint, it must be kept confidential. You must not discuss the disclosure with any individual or party other than those identified in the above procedure.**

Name: Tracy Sheppard
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