

Vulnerable Adults Code of Practice

August 2013

Introduction

Cartwheel Arts has adopted the following Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy to provide guidelines to the Trustees, members of staff and those working on behalf of the company when the company works with vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all staff who, during the course of their employment have direct or indirect contact with vulnerable adults, or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults.

There is a duty on organisations to make appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults. Also government guidance makes it clear that it is a shared responsibility, and depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

POLICY STATEMENT

The company wishes to provide a safe environment for vulnerable adults participating in Cartwheel's projects. The company recognises that vulnerable adults are at risk from physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect and recognises its obligations to minimise these risks for participants. For the purposes of this policy, vulnerable adults are any individuals or groups who or are unable to be self-protecting e.g. may be in need of community care services because of age, illness or disability, or may lack strategies to care for themselves or to defend themselves against exploitation or harm.

- A vulnerable adult may be a person who has reached the age of 18 and:
 - Is elderly or frail, possibly with dementia
 - Has learning disabilities
 - Requires assistance in the conduct of their own affairs
 - Lives in residential accommodation or sheltered housing
 - Suffers from mental illness (e.g. depression, bi-polar disorder)
 - Has a physical disability
 - Is a substance misuser

- Is detained in lawful custody
- Is homeless
- Is in an abusive relationship

(It should be noted that disability or age alone does not signify that an adult is vulnerable.)

AIMS

Employment

To ensure that all those employed by, or involved with, the company fully adhere to this policy for the prevention of physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect of the vulnerable adults they come into contact with.

Projects

To assess and act on all issues of safety and well being for vulnerable adults participating in Cartwheel's projects and activities.

Objectives

1. All permanent staff who will be working with vulnerable adults in regulated activity to undertake a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check, renewed every three years.
2. All freelance or temporary staff who will be working with vulnerable adults unsupervised to provide a DBS check, or to undertake one with Cartwheel as appropriate under the new rules.
3. To conduct risk assessments that include vulnerable adults issues for all projects involving vulnerable adults.
4. To provide opportunities for training on the protection of vulnerable adults issues for those employed by or involved with the company.
5. To have procedures and guidelines in place for reporting suspected abuse.

Protection of Vulnerable Adults in Practice

Employment

1. When recruiting staff for posts potentially working with vulnerable adults:
 - All interviewees will be asked about previous work with vulnerable adults
 - Posts offered will be dependent on satisfactory references and a DBS check where required under the new rules.
2. All freelance and volunteer project workers should:
 - provide where available references from previous situations where they have worked with vulnerable adults

- provide a DBS check, or allow Cartwheel to obtain one Cartwheel as appropriate under the new rules.
3. When in employment:
 - All staff and core workers for Cartwheel Arts will be briefed on this policy and must agree to apply it in practice.
 - This policy is deemed to be incorporated in the contract of employment. It is a condition of service with the company that staff understand and operate this policy.
 4. This policy should be reviewed, and updated if necessary, every 12 months from the date of adoption by the Trustees.

Cartwheel Arts' Project Work

The company's work should be planned so as to minimise those situations where vulnerable adults could be harmed or abused.

1. All project workers including freelance artists and volunteers will be given:
 - guidelines for working with vulnerable adults (see appendix 1)
 - guidelines on identifying and reporting abuse (see appendices 2 & 3)
 - opportunities to attend training in relation to good practice when working with vulnerable adults and the protection of vulnerable adults.
2. Risk assessments that include the protection of vulnerable adults issues should be conducted for each project involving vulnerable adults. The assessment should, in addition to other health and safety issues, consider:
 - How open the project venue is to non project workers
 - How vulnerable adults get to and from the project venue
 - Supervision during workshops and or events
 - The clearance of project workers provided by Cartwheel Arts and any partner organisations
 - Where necessary, Cartwheel will ensure that a suitably qualified professional attends sessions
3. The project co-ordinator will put in practice safeguards to minimise the risks highlighted by the assessment.
4. When on trips/days out a full address list and contact telephone numbers for all the vulnerable adults within the group travelling will be maintained along with the inclusion of special instructions, dietary requirements and allergies. This will allow nominated group leader to take the necessary action in the event of an emergency. The level of staffing, male and female, must be adequate to cope with any problems in terms of behaviour, anxiety and illness.

Roles

Project Co-ordinators and Company Director

- To maintain awareness and openness with regard to the protection of vulnerable adults issues and provide awareness training when necessary to new project workers and volunteers
- To ensure all project workers and volunteers are made aware of this policy (and any subsequent changes) and its implications
- To initiate action when necessary, ensuring all appropriate persons have been contacted
- Make a full report of any allegations or suspicions to the local Social Services vulnerable adults protection team immediately and make a record of this
- Inform the Chair immediately and keep him/her up to date with any subsequent developments.

Project workers and volunteers

- To maintain awareness and openness with regard to the protection of vulnerable adults issues, to this policy and its implications
- To act responsibly, appropriately and professionally at all times when charged with the care of vulnerable adults
- To respond appropriately to any suspicions of abuse and report them to the appropriate person as detailed in appendix 4

‘Whistle blowing’ policy

The company encourages employees and volunteers to voice any concerns they may have about abusive or unethical conduct by colleagues. It takes courage to challenge inappropriate behaviour by colleagues. In order to enable this policy and ensure the process is unbiased:

- All concerns are to be reported to the Company Director or the Chair if the Company Director is the subject of the concern.
- All concerns will be treated confidentially
- All concerns will be investigated thoroughly and may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with Cartwheel Art’s disciplinary policy
- Feedback on the outcome of investigation will be given to all involved (while safeguarding confidentiality for the person raising the concern and the person about whom the concerns have been raised).
- An appeal process will be made available to those unhappy with the outcome of the investigation as detailed in the company’s disciplinary policy

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Appendix 1: Guidelines for staff, freelancers and volunteers working with vulnerable adults

To ensure that all forms of abuse are prevented and to help protect people who work with vulnerable adults the following guidelines should be followed:

- Always be publicly open when working with vulnerable adults. Avoid situations where you and an individual are completely unobserved.
- If physical contact is necessary (i.e. during the playing of a sport, or taking part in group team building activities etc.), it should be done publicly. Care is needed.
- Respect the rights and dignity and worth of all and treat everyone equally.
- Place the well being and safety of the vulnerable adult first.
- Ensure that the activities which they provide are appropriate to the age, maturity and ability of the person.
- Always promote the positive aspects of an activity and never condone cheating, rule violations or the use of foul and abusive language and/or behaviour towards a young person or another adult
- Consistently display high standards of personal behaviour.
- Never overtly criticise vulnerable adults or use sarcasm where it may cause the person to lose self-esteem or confidence.
- Discourage over enthusiastic kisses and embraces – even if the group has just won the dance battle, or whatever
- Manage expectations appropriately

Everyone should also be aware that as a general rule it does not make sense to:

- Spend amounts of time alone with vulnerable adults away from others
- Take vulnerable adults to your home if they will be alone with you
- If such situations are unavoidable they should only take place with the full knowledge of another worker.

If you accidentally hurt a vulnerable adult, or cause any distress, or the person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands, or misinterprets something you have done, report the incident as soon as possible. You should:

- **NEVER** Engage in rough or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- **NEVER** Share a room with a vulnerable adult
- **NEVER** Permit or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- **NEVER** Make sexually suggestive comments to a vulnerable adult, even in fun
- **NEVER** Allow allegations made by a vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- **NEVER** Do things of a personal nature that a vulnerable adult can do for themselves. However it may be necessary to do things of a personal nature for people particularly if they are disabled. There is also a need in these instances to be responsive to the vulnerable adult's reactions - if a person is fully dependant upon you, talk with them about what you are doing and give choices where possible.

Appendix 2: Guidelines for Identifying Abuse

We hope that you will never have to deal with an issue of abuse during your work with Cartwheel. But if you are concerned about a vulnerable adult you are working with you will want to know what to do.

DEFINITIONS

The term vulnerable adult abuse is used to describe ways in which vulnerable adults are harmed, usually by adults and often by those they know and trust. There are different types of vulnerable adult abuse, and a person may experience more than one kind at any one time in his/her life.

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take a number of forms:

- a) Physical abuse e.g. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, neglect or abandonment
- b) Sexual abuse e.g. involvement in any sexual activity against his/her will, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism
- c) Emotional/psychological abuse e.g. intimidation or humiliation
- d) Financial abuse e.g. theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money from pensions or savings etc.
- e) Neglect or acts of omission e.g. being left in wet or soiled clothing, or malnutrition
- f) Discriminatory abuse e.g. racial, sexual or religious harassment
- g) Personal exploitation – involves denying an individual his/her rights or forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will
- h) Violation of rights e.g. preventing an individual speaking his/her thoughts and opinions
- i) Institutional abuse e.g. failure to provide a choice of meals or failure to ensure privacy or dignity

Abuse of trust - where vulnerable adults are indoctrinated with attitudes to social, moral, political, ethical and religious views which are unacceptable to their family and community, or society at large.

Use of computers – in particular where there is Internet and e-mail access. Steps should be taken to ensure that inappropriate material is not viewed, shared, accessed, downloaded, copied, or printed and that vulnerable adults are properly supervised whilst using the computers. Care should be taken that vulnerable adults are not revealing personal details in chat rooms and forums.

Bullying – bullying can be verbal and physical, delivered by text message or through on-line messaging and via social networking sites, and is also a form of abuse and there is a requirement for all those associated with the company to ensure that vulnerable adults feel able to report instances of bullying.

IDENTIFYING ABUSE

In some cases a vulnerable adult's disturbed behaviour, or an injury may suggest that the person has been abused. In many situations however, the signs will not be clear cut and decisions about what action to take can be difficult.

Important note: It is not the responsibility of those working with a vulnerable adult to decide that abuse is occurring, but it is a responsibility to follow through on any concerns.

Signs will vary widely from person to person, and with the degree of independence which the person enjoys, but may include:

- Uncharacteristic changes in the vulnerable adult's behaviour, attitude and commitment e.g. becoming quiet and withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- Bruises and injuries not typical of, for example, taking part in a sporting event or injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- Signs of discomfort and pain
- The vulnerable adult becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt
- The vulnerable adult loses weight for no apparent reason
- Nervousness when approached or touched
- Fear of particular persons - especially those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- The vulnerable adult wishes not to speak with or be near a particular person without a reasonable explanation
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Vulnerable adults who are always alone and unaccompanied and/or are prevented from socializing with other people
- Vulnerable adults who are reluctant to go home

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, and the presence of one or more indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place.

Appendix 3: Guidelines for responding to complaints and alleged or suspected incidents.

Abuse may become apparent in a number of ways:

- A vulnerable adult may tell you
- A third party may report an incident, or may have a strong suspicion
- You may have a suspicion

Step 1: Listen and Reassure

- **DO** Stay calm - do not rush into inappropriate action
- **DO** Reassure the vulnerable adult that they are not to blame and confirm that you know how difficult it must be to confide
- **DO** Listen to what the vulnerable adult says and show that you take them seriously
- **DO** Keep questions to a minimum - in many cases it may be more appropriate to nod and acknowledge the vulnerable adult's account.
- **DO** Ensure that you clearly understand what the vulnerable adult has said - so that you can pass it on to the appropriate agencies
- **DO** Inform the Project Co-ordinator or Director - ensuring that you communicate all the information accurately
- **DO** Maintain confidentiality
- **DO NOT** Make promises you cannot keep
- **DO NOT** Make the vulnerable adult repeat the story unnecessarily
- **DO NOT** Delay
- **DO NOT** Take sole responsibility for further action

Step 2: Involve the appropriate people

You must ensure that the Project Co-ordinator or the Company Director is informed so a decision can be made as to the most appropriate action. In all cases - do not delay. If you cannot contact the persons above immediately, you must contact the authorities (police and/or social services).

In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from:-

<p>Adult Care Service Team on 0844 264 0867 Emergency Social Work Team (Out of Hours) 0845 121 2975 Greater Manchester Police 0161 872 5050</p>
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Step 3: Record

Record what the vulnerable adult has said and/or your concerns legibly and accurately. Details should include:

- The vulnerable adult's name, address and date of birth
- Date and time of the incidents and/or nature of allegations
- Your observations e.g. describe the behaviour and emotional state of the vulnerable adult and/or bruising or other injuries
- The vulnerable adult's account - if it can be given - of what has happened
- Any action that you took as a result of your concerns e.g. comments made to the vulnerable adult, whether the next of kin/carers have been contacted (where appropriate)
- Record whether you are expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of someone else
- Sign and date the report
- Keep a copy of the report

Please note that when a disclosure is made, it is the person to whom the disclosure is made that the authorities (police and/or social services) will come to for an account of what was said. This first hand account is of primary importance.

Appendix 4: Reporting procedures to safeguard and protect vulnerable adults participating in Cartwheel Art’s project work

Project Worker/ Volunteer	Project Manager/ Company Director	Project Worker/ Volunteer
Potential risk/concern re possible harm/abuse		IMMEDIATE DANGER
<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Listen/reassure</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Contact the Adult Care Service Team on 0303 303 8886 Out of hours – 0303 303 8875 or get medical help (if necessary ring 999)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">DO NOT ‘grill’ or put words into a vulnerable adult’s mouth</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">DO NOT ‘grill’ or put words into a vulnerable adult’s mouth</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">satisfy yourself that the situation is safe</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">As far as possible make situation safe for vulnerable adult</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Tell/share concerns with project co- ordinator or Director of Cartwheel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>Ensure all appropriate persons have been contacted</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Report immediately to Project Co-ordinator or Director of Cartwheel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Compile written report</p>	<p>Forward reports to Social Services</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Compile written report</p>