



SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK

A Volunteers Guide

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

Thames Valley Air Ambulance is committed to safeguarding everyone who comes into contact with the service, staff, volunteers, and those who receive care (patients, relatives and the public). Thames Valley Air Ambulance also recognises that children and adults at risk from harm require particular safeguarding measures to be taken. Thames Valley Air Ambulance is committed to providing a culture of zero tolerance of any forms of abuse.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Volunteers have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Safeguarding adults applies to people who are aged 18 years or more.

The Care Act statutory guidance defines adult safeguarding as:

"Protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that



the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances."

The Care Act 2014, (section 42) states a local authority must act when it has 'reasonable cause' to suspect that an adult in its area:

- Has need for care and support (whether or not these are currently being met); and

- Is experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- As a result of those needs, are unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

TYPES OF ABUSE

- Physical
- Domestic
- Sexual
- Emotional/psychological
- Financial
- Modern slavery/human trafficking
- Discriminatory
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Self neglect.

EFFECTS OF ABUSE

- Anger issues
- Fear
- Low self esteem
- Physical illness
- Social isolation
- Shame
- Self harm.

Avoid jumping to conclusions about the reasons for someone exhibiting the signs as highlighted above.

Assumptions and judgements should not be made.

WHO COULD SUFFER ABUSE?

Anyone aged 18 or over who:

- Has needs for care and or support
- As a result of care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from abuse
- Is currently experiencing or is at risk of abuse.

Anyone can suffer abuse. People with additional care and support needs may be more vulnerable to abuse or neglect, for example those experiencing dementia, learning disabilities, mental ill health, or substance abuse.

WHAT IS ABUSE?

- Abuse is a form of maltreatment; it is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights, usually for gratification
- Abuse can be self-inflicted or inflicted by another person or persons and involves acts of omission or commission
- Abusers are usually known to their victims and are trusted or depended on by them. An abuser will make every effort to establish trust and will seek to maintain the respect of friends and colleagues
- Abuse may be a single act, multiple or repeated acts
- Abuse can take place wholly online or technology may be used to facilitate online abuse
- Abuse can take multiple forms e.g. emotional and physical
- Abuse can occur in personal or professional relationships
- Abuse can take place anywhere.

Abuse is NEVER acceptable.

FACTORS THAT MAY INCREASE THE RISK OF ABUSE

- Mental or physical illness and/or disability
- Language barriers
- Addiction problems
- Bereavement or recent trauma
- Age
- Re-adjustment, perhaps following a stay in hospital, service in the armed forces or release from prison.

Whether an adult is vulnerable or not is something that changes with their circumstances – it's not fixed.

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE SHARES A CONCERN

- Remain calm, approachable and receptive
- Listen carefully to the person telling you about the abuse without interrupting
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you. Don't make promises or guarantees
- Ensure the person at risk is safe
- Record carefully only what has been said, heard or seen, and what you have done. Date and sign your notes
- Tell the person what you will do next
- Refer concerns or suspicions as soon as possible
- If you have immediate concerns call 999



THAMES VALLEY AIR AMBULANCE REQUIRES ITS VOLUNTEERS TO:

- Uphold Thames Valley Air Ambulance's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of everyone who comes into contact with its service
- Follow Thames Valley Air Ambulance's rules and procedures, including health and safety, equal opportunities and confidentiality
- Protect, safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk
- Respect the skills and dignity of patients, other volunteers and staff members
- Take responsibility for their own behaviour, respecting the charity's values (Respectfulness, Accountability, Integrity, Support and Evolution)
- Undertake safeguarding training
- Risk assessments will be completed for Thames Valley Air Ambulance events and activities in relation to safeguarding of volunteers, the public and Thames Valley Air Ambulance staff.

VOLUNTEERS MUST NOT:

- Behave in a way that harms, or may harm, a child or adult
- Behave towards a child or adult in a manner that may indicate they are unsuitable to work in a position of trust. Any volunteer doing any of the above, either within their work or as a consequence of actions within their personal life, will be subject to an investigation.

TO RECAP

- It is not our job to investigate allegations, but it is our responsibility to be vigilant and to report any concerns we have.
- To get in touch with Thames Valley Air Ambulance regarding any concerns, please contact:
 - The manager responsible for the event/activity
- The charity recognises that involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be distressing and stressful for all concerned. Volunteers will be offered the opportunity to talk to someone and debrief on the issue they have encountered.
- We have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all the vulnerable adults who have contact with us. Our safeguarding policy will be applied to all adults without discrimination.



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