

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy & Procedure

Oakfield (Easton Maudit) Ltd is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who access our care, support and accommodation are not abused and that working practices minimize the risk of such abuse. Staff, trustees, and volunteers of Oakfield Community have a duty to identify abuse and report it.

Definitions

Vulnerable adults are over 18 years of age and are receiving, or may need, services to live in the community. Vulnerable adults may be unable to take care of themselves and unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by other people.

Abuse can include physical, financial, material, sexual, psychological, discriminatory, emotional or neglect issues. Abuse can take place in any setting, such as in their own home, in someone else's home, in a residential setting, in a day centre or public building, at work, in a public place or in a hospital.

The person responsible for the abuse is often well known to the person being abused and can be a relative or friend, a paid or volunteer carer, another service user, or a service provider.

Safeguarding vulnerable adults means protecting them with care and support needs from abuse and neglect, ensuring they can live in safety and have their wellbeing promoted. It involves preventing and responding to situations where an adult is at risk of harm or exploitation, and ensuring their views, wishes, and feelings are considered in any actions taken.

Aim

Oakfield (Easton Maudit) Ltd aim to provide services to vulnerable adults in a non-discriminatory and safe environment by employing and training staff and volunteers who practice in such an environment using methods and programmes that enable the individual to feel safe and develop and progress towards achieving their full potential.

Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers working with vulnerable adults are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore will have had to undertake and obtain appropriate DBS (previously known as CRB) clearances, together with at least two references and have undertaken appropriate selection procedures and training. Staff are then required to complete a declaration form annually in line with our policies and procedures.

It is the responsibility of Oakfield to ensure that all staff, paid and volunteer, are aware of vulnerable adults' need for protection. They will be made aware of and understand company policies and procedures in relation to their work and will be given instruction on how to identify and report such incidents.

Appointed Safeguarding Officer

Our Appointed Safeguarding Officer is Nic McLaurie the Registered Manager who takes lead responsibility for coordinating all adult protection activities within the charity. She provides support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and will liaise closely with other services such as the local safeguarding teams, adult social care, health, police, etc. This person has lead responsibility and management oversight for safeguarding adults.

The Appointed Safeguarding Officer is supported by Melissa Schulz the Assistant Manager. She is

trained to the same level as the Appointed Safeguarding Officer. This training is renewed annually.

Adults supported by Oakfield.

All adults accessing Oakfield services will be made aware of what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. They will also be made aware of the procedures and processes that are available to them to report such incidents of inappropriate or abusive behaviour and the processes that may follow from such reports. All staff are made aware through our robust induction process, annual mandatory training, staff meetings, supervisions, and appraisals.

Procedures

Any staff member or volunteer who has observed or been made aware of potential or actual abuse should, in the first instance, immediately report to their line manager/named person. If they are not immediately available, then another appropriate senior of the organization should be informed.

Any adult wishing to report any concerns should, in the first instance talk to a responsible member of staff. There is a noticeboard at each site showing the named person. If this is impossible or impractical, they should talk to a trusted member of their family or other responsible adult.

When someone reports a safeguarding concern, relevant information, including times, dates, witnesses, person providing information, factual descriptions should be noted as soon as possible after the event and recorded on the appropriate paperwork by the named person. The person who received the disclosure will report this immediately to the lead safeguarding officer, who will take the appropriate actions by following local safeguarding procedures. If abuse is suspected, then a referral to Adult Social Services should be made and recorded.

Their help line number is 0300 126 1000 (Northamptonshire out of office hours 01604 626 938).

The lead safeguarding officer will discuss the concerns with relevant people in a sensitive and tactful manner unless the individual would be potentially at greater risk by doing this. In this case, further discussions should take place with social services or the police.

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they are staff, volunteers, service users, families, carers or members of the public should be reassured that they will be taken seriously, that their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared with the appropriate authorities if they or others are at significant risk of harm. What you should not do in any such situation is confront the suspected abuser, destroy any evidence, start to investigate the situation yourself, be judgmental, make promises you cannot keep or take the allegations lightly.

Confidentiality and Recording

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g., that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Details that should be recorded are as follows: -

- The vulnerable adult's name, date of birth, home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation including dates, times, any special factors, and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, what is opinion and what is hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries and any indirect signs or behavioral changes

- Details of witnesses to the incident(s).
- The vulnerable adult's account of what happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Who has been contacted and what was said to them. Who the disclosure was made to, including date and time.

What Happens Next

What happens next will depend upon the wishes of the person and the seriousness of the situation. If the individual is in physical danger, then ensuring their safety is paramount. In response to the referral, the safeguarding officer will carry out a careful and sensitive enquiry.

Information and advice will be offered so that the adult and their family can make an informed choice as to what they want to happen next.

Complaints against staff or volunteers can result in three types of investigations, a criminal investigation, an adult protection investigation or a disciplinary/misconduct investigation. Once the allegations are received by any other agency, then the resulting process will follow their own Safeguarding procedures.

These can be found on the following web site: -

https://northamptonshire-self.achieveservice.com/service/Make_a_request_report_a_concern_or_abuse_to_adult_social_care?Are_you_a_professional_or_a_customer=Professional

Below is an outline of the different steps that could be taken when a safeguarding concern/disclosure has been received.

1. Immediate priority is to ensure their safety and wellbeing.
2. Seeking consent is being considered, where possible, before reporting the concern. However, if there is a risk to the adult or others, or if the adult lacks capacity, it may be necessary to proceed without consent.
3. Inform the individual's family/carers.
4. The concern is being reported to the appropriate authorities, i.e. adult safeguarding team at local council and/or Northamptonshire police. After reporting, the authorities will investigate and decide on appropriate actions.
5. Provide ongoing support during the process.

Concerns under Prevent

We recognize that Oakfield services and activities are intended to be safe places in which the people we support, and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments. Oakfield acknowledges its duty to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

In compliance with this duty Oakfield where applicable will:

- carry out risk assessments to assess the risk of vulnerable adults being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology (including the risk of online radicalization).
- promote fundamental British values.
- ensure all staff undertake the online general awareness training module annually: "Preventing Radicalisation."
- ensure that there are suitable filters in place for all IT equipment and that those in our care are equipped with the knowledge to stay safe online. Every member of staff will be aware of the risks posed by the online activity of extremist and terrorist groups.

Useful Links:

North Northamptonshire Council:

<https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/>

West Northamptonshire Council:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/>

Signed: 

Print: Sara Morrison
Chair of Trustees.

Date: 18/07/2025

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