

Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures

Lightyear Foundation is committed to safeguarding the wholeness and wellbeing of every person of whatever age that uses its services and engages with its activities.

The aim of this policy and these procedures is to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults accessing the organisation's provision. When working with vulnerable adults Lightyear Foundation will ensure it:

- Promotes their health and welfare;
- Respects and promotes their rights;
- Works in a way which safeguards the wellbeing of the vulnerable person and protects them from harm and abuse;
- Enables staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific adult safeguarding issues;
- Takes appropriate steps if they became aware of any signs/incidents of harm and abuse;
- Ensures that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are carried out for all staff and volunteers in contact with vulnerable adults, in line with statutory requirements and good practice;
- Ensures 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.

For the purposes of this document, vulnerable adult uses "No Secrets" (*Department of Health, 2000*) definition of a person aged 18 years or over: "Who is or may be in need of community care services by means of mental or other disability, age or illness" and "Who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation."

2. What is abuse?

For the purpose of this policy, the term abuse is defined as a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons which may result in significant harm. Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetuated by anyone. It can include:

1. Physical: Non-accidental harm to the body caused by the use of force, which results in pain, injury or a change in the person's natural physical state. Some examples are: hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, inappropriate sanctions, rough handling, pinching, punching, shaking, burning and forced feeding.
2. Sexual: Sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent, sexual assault and rape. Other examples are indecent exposure, inappropriate touching and fondling.
3. Psychological: Behaviour that has a harmful effect on a vulnerable adult's emotional health and development. Some examples are: emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks, withholding affection, shouting, depriving the person of the right to choice, information and privacy.
4. Financial or material: This involves the use of a vulnerable adult's property, assets or income without their informed consent or making financial transactions that they do not understand to the advantage of another person. Some examples are: theft, fraud, exploitation, and pressure in connection with wills.
5. Neglect and acts of omission: Behaviour that results in the vulnerable adult's basic needs not being met. Some examples are: ignoring medical or physical care needs, person's physical condition/appearance is poor,

failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating, and undermining personal beliefs.

6. Professional: The misuse of power and abuse of trust by professionals, the failure of professionals to act on suspected abuse/crimes, poor care practice or neglect in services, resource shortfalls or service pressures that lead to service failure and culpability as a result of poor management systems/structures.
7. Institutional: This involves the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to vulnerable people.
8. Domestic: The use of physical and/or emotional abuse or violence, including undermining of self-confidence, sexual violence or the threat of violence, by a person who is or has been in a close relationship.

3. Rights and responsibilities

a. The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the welfare of vulnerable adults is given the highest priority by the organisation, its management, staff and volunteers;
- Appointing a designated person (and deputy);
- Ensuring staff and volunteers are aware of vulnerable adults' need for protection;
- Supporting and where possible securing the safety of individuals and ensuring that all referrals to the designated Local Authority Designated Officer provide full information in relation to identified risk and concern for the vulnerable adult's safety.

b. Staff and volunteers are responsible for:

- Being familiar with the policy and these procedures;
- Taking appropriate action in line with this document.

c. The vulnerable adult has the right to:

- Be made aware of this policy;
- Have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously;
- Receive fair and respectful treatment throughout;
- Be involved in any process as appropriate;
- Receive information about the outcome.

4. Reporting

It is not the role of Trustees, staff or volunteers to investigate an allegation of abuse.

Any member of staff, volunteer or Trustee who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to Lightyear Foundation's designated person for vulnerable adults: Dr Josie Rawes, josierawes@gmail.com, 07735 593977.

This reporting process must include completion of the Vulnerable Adults Incident Report Form (APPENDIX 1).

All those making an allegation or expressing concern, whether they are staff, volunteers, Trustees, service users, carers or members of the general public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously;
- 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.

Lightyear Foundation's designated person when notified of a concern or allegation should consider whether the concern is a safeguarding issue or not. This may involve some 'checking out' of information provided but being careful at all times not to stray into the realm of investigation.

If it is not considered a safeguarding issue and it is decided that there should be no referral made to the Local Authority Designated Officer, a written record, alongside the Vulnerable Adults Abuse Incident Report Form should be made of the response, including reasons for not referring the concern. This should be kept on file and monitored. The designated person should seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer if there is any doubt whatsoever about whether or not to refer the concern to them and record that this action was taken in a written note of their response to the concern.

Where the designated person decides to refer the concern or allegation formally to the Local Authority Designated Officer they should make a full written record to be kept on file. This should set out relevant details in full, including information as recorded in the Vulnerable Adults Incident Report Form, any advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer prior to referral, the rationale for referral and a clear timeline for the steps that have been taken so far.

The designated person should ensure that the safety of the vulnerable adult is paramount throughout this process and the person is in no immediate danger; in emergencies this might include accessing medical or police assistance.

Confidentiality must be maintained throughout this process and information relating to vulnerable adults shared with staff and volunteers on a strictly need-to-know basis.

5. Alleged abuse by staff, volunteers or Trustees

Lightyear Foundation is committed to maintaining the highest standards of honesty, openness and accountability and recognises that employees and volunteers have an important role to play in achieving this goal.

They may be the first to know when someone inside or connected with an organisation is doing something illegal or improper, but may feel apprehensive about voicing their concerns. This may be because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or the organisation itself. Or it may be because they do not think that their concerns will be taken seriously or they are afraid that they will be bullied or dismissed.

Lightyear Foundation does not believe that it is in anyone's interests for staff or volunteers with knowledge of wrongdoing to remain silent. It will take all malpractice very seriously, whether it is committed by staff, volunteers, Trustees, consultants or contractors.

An allegation or concern against a member of staff or volunteer, must be passed – using the Vulnerable Adults Abuse Incident Report Form – to Lightyear Foundation's designated person for vulnerable adults, or their deputy or, if the allegation concerns them both, direct to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

6. Record-keeping

All records relating to vulnerable adult concerns will be kept in a secure place and will remain confidential.

7. Review

The policy will be reviewed by the Board a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances: e.g. changes in legislation and/or government guidance, as a result of any other significant change or event.

Lightyear Foundation's designated person for adult protection should provide an annual report for the Board of Trustees on the vulnerable adult policy and procedures including:

- its implementation;
- any training undertaken by the designated person, other staff, volunteers and governors;
- any incidents/cases (without detail or name);
- and the place of vulnerable adult issues in the organisation's planning.

Last reviewed: 30/09/2023

APPENDIX 1

Vulnerable Adults Abuse Incident Report Form

For use by staff, volunteers and Trustees within Lightyear Foundation. Please complete those sections below that are relevant as fully as possible.

Name of vulnerable adult:

Age/Date of birth:

Gender:

Names of carer/s (if known):

Home address (if known):

1. Nature of your concern: *please complete the appropriate section.*

a. Disclosure to you by a vulnerable adult (please include the following)

When and where the disclosure was made (date/s and time/s)?

Who did the vulnerable adult make the disclosure to?

What did the vulnerable adult actually say?

b. Where concerns were expressed to you by another person about a vulnerable adult.

Please record the concerns that were passed to you (with date and times) and if possible ask the person who expressed the concerns to confirm that the details as written are correct.

c. Where you have concerns because of incident/s you have witnessed or indicators you have observed (please give any dates and times; NB Q3 below gives more space for information on indicators).

3. Where there are indicators of abuse

a. Please describe any signs or indicators of abuse (with times and dates).

b. Has the vulnerable adult alleged that any particular person is the abuser (if so, please record details and the relationship, if any, to the vulnerable adult below)?

4. Details of any immediate action taken, e.g. first aid, etc.

5. Has the vulnerable adult expressed any reservations about you talking to Lightyear Foundation's designated person about the matter?

6. Does the vulnerable adult have any particular needs, e.g. communication, etc?

Signatures

To be signed by the person recording the concern

Name:

Job title or role:

Signed:

Date:

To be signed by designated person

Name:

Signed:

Date received:

Action taken: