

## Vulnerable Adult & Child Protection Policy

### *Definitions – for this document*

#### **Vulnerable adult:**

Is a person who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason 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 <sup>1</sup>.

Vulnerable adults are entitled to: privacy; be treated with dignity; lead an independent life and to be enabled to do so; be able to choose how they lead their lives; the protection of the law; have their rights upheld regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background.

#### **Child:**

Describes a child aged 0-17 years old inclusive.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Portland Foodbank wants to restore dignity and revive hope to people from all walks of life. We are concerned with individuals and their circumstances and actively encourage an inclusive environment throughout all our projects.

We seek to ensure that all our team members are aware of what is required from them under the vulnerable adult and child protection policy and make sure that it is practised at all times.

It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and children.

We commit ourselves to co-operate fully with the appropriate statutory services when they are conducting official investigation into physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults, children or young people (by an adult or young person).

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<sup>1</sup> March 2000. 'No secrets: guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse', Department of Health. (The broad definition of a 'vulnerable adult' referred to in the 1997 Consultation Paper *Who decides?* issued by the Lord Chancellor's Department.

This statement is to be brought to the attention of all volunteers when they join, as part of their induction programme. Any amendments will be brought to the attention of all team members.

## **Implementation**

The Portland Foodbank shall:

Plan its work so as to minimise situations where the abuse of vulnerable adults and children might occur.

Although the number of people who actively seek to abuse vulnerable adults and children is very small, The Foodbank can reduce opportunities for abuse in various ways. We will, for instance:

- Ensure that there is adequate supervision for all vulnerable adults and children.
- Ensure that any vulnerable adult or child working with the Portland Foodbank is aware of who they can talk to if they have concerns.
- Ensure that all volunteers know where the dedicated foodbank mobile phone is in case of emergencies and that phone is clearly labelled.
- Arrange that, as far as possible, an adult is not left alone with a child where there is little or no opportunity of the activity being observed by others. This good practice can be of as much benefit to the adult as to the child.
- Ensure volunteers supervising vulnerable adults or children are suitably trained.

## **Designated person and their role**

The Portland Foodbank has a designated Safeguarding Officer who is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of vulnerable adults or children. The designated Safeguarding Officer name and their contact details will be displayed in a prominent position at the Foodbank.

The designated person will be available for vulnerable adults and children to speak with should they feel the need to talk with someone about an incident which has happened whilst volunteering at or receiving assistance from the Foodbank team, particularly if they feel they have been physically, sexually or emotionally abused or neglected by an adult or another young person.

## **RECORDING**

The designated person will make notes and keep confidential records of any disclosure or concerns they or another volunteer has and seek advice from the Social Services Department or the Police.

Volunteers must ensure that their recording of facts, incidents, assessments, referrals, case discussions are all sufficient, accurate, concise, up-to-date, legible, dated, timed and factual. Opinions should be kept to a minimum and backed up by factual evidence. **Any supporting evidence should be preserved and clearly labelled.** These records must be stored in an individual file and stored securely in a manner that safeguards the individual's right to privacy and security. These records are available to individuals on request (not third party information) and may be used as evidence in disciplinary proceedings or in civil or criminal prosecutions.

## WHISTLE-BLOWING

Volunteers are encouraged to take action when suspicious that abuse is occurring at work – no matter what the setting, who the perpetrator is or who the victim is. The Foodbank management will respect and not penalise those who stand up for anyone who is suspected of being abused.

*Volunteers have a responsibility to report any occurrences or suspicions of adult abuse. Volunteers who report abuse are protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.*

## REMEMBER

It is important that everyone in the Foodbank team is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional vulnerable adult and child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern.

### Additional points

#### Displaying Information

Portland Foodbank will display the name of the Safeguarding Officer.

Make sure all volunteers in the Foodbank team know the name of the Safeguarding Officer and how they might be contacted.

#### Applying agreed procedures for protecting vulnerable adults and children to all volunteers

It is possible to be lulled into a false sense of security, believing that those who work alongside vulnerable adults and children in the Foodbank will never be guilty of abuse because they are part of a Christian organisation. It is not safe to assume that all others are automatically safe to be with vulnerable adults or children.

For this reason all procedures set in place to protect vulnerable adults and children should apply to all those in contact with them. This is not the same as treating each person who relates to vulnerable adults and children as being under suspicion, but a matter of taking sensible measures to protect vulnerable adults and children, which are then observed by everyone. This will involve thought and planning within each group to minimise the risk.

If any volunteer has concerns please raise them with the designated person. If it is brought to the attention of the designated person and not adequately dealt with the next step is to talk to the Foodbank Manager for advice or contact Social Services/the Police as a private citizen to discuss your concerns.

#### Disclosure of Information concerning volunteers - CONFIDENTIALITY

There is a difference between confidentiality and secrecy. All personal and delicate information disclosed to us is confidential but may not always be secret.

Personal and delicate information about volunteers will be:

- Confidential to the Foodbank and can be shared with volunteers with the permission of the volunteer *and*

- Can be shared with another agency when:
  - Permission is given by the person about whom the information is held.
  - There is an overriding justification to share information without the person's consent.
  - The law requires it.

### **Give volunteers clear roles - SAFEGUARDING**

Abuse of vulnerable adults and children is most easily concealed where there is confusion among adults about roles and responsibilities. Included therefore in all volunteer job descriptions, will be a statement laying down the behaviour and values expected from all who work as part of this team. (See Ethos and Statement of Faith Policy)

Over and above the written word, expected behaviour towards vulnerable adults and children when working with the Foodbank will be explained to new volunteers as part of their induction.

It is the Foodbank's policy to apply for a DBS check on all 'meet and greet' volunteers, and in particular anyone whose role includes the supervision or pastoral care of vulnerable adults or children.

Within the Foodbank our main area of concern about protecting people, lies with the welfare of any vulnerable adult volunteers.

### **Criminal convictions**

Becoming a volunteer at the Portland Foodbank is conditional upon the provision of a satisfactory DBS Certificate of a level appropriate to the post. All volunteers will be required to consent to initial and subsequent DBS checks from time to time during their work with the Portland Foodbank as deemed appropriate by the Trustees. In the event that such certificate(s) are not supplied, the supervisory role with the Foodbank will be terminated.

Whilst in post, volunteers are required to immediately declare to the organisation any convictions or offences with which they are charged.

### **Training**

Training in the prevention of abuse and the action to take if abuse occurs should be included as part of the Training Programme for the Portland Foodbank and can normally be accessed free of charge via the local authority. Further guidelines concerning the safeguarding policies of your local council can also be obtained free of charge and a copy should be kept available as a reference.

It is not sufficient to give volunteers guidelines without equipping them with the skills and knowledge to carry them out.

### **General**

All volunteers driving any vehicle which transports vulnerable adults and/or children must hold a valid driver's licence for the type/class of vehicle they are driving.

All vehicles used in the transportation of vulnerable adults and/or children must have a valid road fund licence, be appropriately insured, have a valid MOT certificate and comply with all appropriate legislation and regulations. Seat sharing is not permitted and seat belts must be worn.

**Review**

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed at least annually and whenever there are any legislative changes or amendments to guidance issued by relevant statutory bodies.

**I have read this policy and I understand the content**

**Signature** .....

**Date** .....

**Name printed** .....