



Ensuring vulnerable children have the best start in life

# **SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS**

## **Vulnerable Adults Policy**

*HealthProm's Safeguarding Policy is made up of:*

- *The Child Protection Policy;*
- *The Vulnerable Adults Policy;*
- *The Ethics Policy and Code of Conduct; and*
- *The Whistleblowing Policy.*

**Registered Charity 1100459**

## **SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS**

### **Our commitment to safeguard**

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights. It can take many forms. HealthProm is committed to practice, which promotes the welfare of vulnerable adults, and safeguards them from harm.

HealthProm accepts and recognises its responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues that cause vulnerable adults harm, and to work in conjunction with our partners to maintain a safe environment in our projects. Although the main focus of our work is to ensure that vulnerable children get the best start in life, we recognize that we work in a wider context with families and communities.

A vulnerable adult is any person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself or who is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Our projects connect us with adults who could be classed as particularly vulnerable including **poor displaced families, pregnant women, women in single headed households, people with disabilities, people who have low levels of literacy and people who have grown up in institutional care.**

We recognise that poverty puts vulnerable adults at greater risk of exploitation and abuse including being trafficked, falling into crime or the sex trade, or ending up in prison.

We will not tolerate any form of abuse wherever it occurs or whoever is responsible. We are committed to promoting an atmosphere of inclusion, transparency and openness. We will endeavour to safeguard vulnerable adults linked with our projects by:

- Ensuring that board members, staff, consultants and volunteers understand the rights of vulnerable adults to be safe from abuse and the need to respect and protect these rights
- Ensuring that our partners understand the rights of vulnerable adults to be safe from abuse and the need to respect and protect these rights
- Ensuring that any vulnerable adults we work with are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and what they should do should they feel unsafe
- Adhering to our safeguarding vulnerable adult policy and ensuring that it is supported by robust procedures;
- Carefully following the procedures laid down for the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- Conducting DBS checks on all staff and consultants;
- Providing effective management for board members, staff, consultants and volunteers through supervision, support and training;
- Implementing clear procedures for raising awareness of and responding to abuse within the organisation and for reporting concerns to statutory agencies that need to know, while involving carers and vulnerable adults appropriately;
- HealthProm recognises that the abuse of vulnerable adults is an abuse of power, and that power dynamics can impede reporting. HealthProm will work with partners to create a safe environment for reporting to take place. HealthProm will identify an independent and impartial advocate to support a vulnerable adult through safeguarding processes.

### **Vulnerable adult rights**

The rights of vulnerable adults to be protected by the Human Rights Act 1998 through incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights 1950. Specifically, a vulnerable adult's right to life is protected (under Article 2 of the ECHR); their right to be protected

from inhuman and degrading treatment (under Article 3); and their right to liberty and security (under Article 5). Types of abuse are listed in Appendix 1.

## **Who is bound by this policy?**

This policy is binding for all people who work for or with HealthProm in whatever capacity: board members, staff, consultants, interns and volunteers. All concerned are required to read and sign this policy as a declaration that they have understood and accept this policy.

HealthProm works with partners who have safeguarding guidelines in place, and some who are creating new policies with the support of HealthProm or other partners. When representatives of HealthProm visit partner organisations in other countries, in whatever capacity they are also subject to the safeguarding policies of the partner organisations and to the criminal justice systems of the countries in which our partners are located.

In the event that a safeguarding concern is raised about a HealthProm employee or consultant whilst abroad, the HealthProm Safeguarding Officer will investigate and take action under both the HealthProm procedures and the partner organisation's procedures, on the understanding that, if appropriate, the local police will be informed.

## **Who is covered by this policy?**

This policy covers all vulnerable adults with whom any person working for or with HealthProm interacts during the course of their work (mainly within projects).

However, all people working for or with HealthProm are also expected to observe this policy when interacting with vulnerable adults outside of their work.

## **Recruitment**

Risk management prompts HealthProm to think more broadly about the work that it does. It involves identifying the potential for an incident to occur, evaluating the likelihood and seriousness of the incident happening, and taking steps to reduce the possibility of it occurring. It strengthens and adds value to the activities that we offer.

In order to minimise the possibility that people will become part of HP who have a history of abusing vulnerable adults we will:

- Require two professional references (referees will be informed in the reference request that employees might have access to vulnerable adults. They will be asked to draw to HealthProm's attention any concern they may have. They are invited to telephone a reference should they wish).
- Conduct DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks (which are replacing CRB checks) on people who work for or with HealthProm who will have contact with vulnerable adults.
- Require external consultants to show recent DBS checks before they may work for HP's projects involving vulnerable adults.
- Require consultants whose DBS checks are 3 years old to renew
- Consultants living overseas in countries where CRB checks (or similar) are not feasible must provide HealthProm with details of two organisations that will provide professional and character references. Satisfactory references must be obtained before the consultancy can commence.
- Only allow interns and volunteers working with HP to have contact with vulnerable adults under supervision of an employee or external consultant who has been through the DBS checking process All new board members, staff, consultants, interns and volunteers will be given a copy of the vulnerable adults policy and professional code of conduct policy and asked to sign it, them confirming they have read and understood both documents and agree with their terms.

## **Management and training**

HealthProm believes that every employee and local partner should develop awareness of the issues that cause vulnerable adults harm. Newcomers to HealthProm shall, before they undertake any work for HealthProm, read this policy in the company of the HealthProm Safeguarding Officer (SO). They will discuss with the SO any matters about which they are unclear and then both the new worker and the SO shall sign that they have read the policy and had the opportunity to talk with the SO. The newcomer shall attend the first possible training workshop.

In the UK, HealthProm will run an annual safeguarding workshop to train all those new to HealthProm, and will run a refresher training course every three years. All those working for or with HealthProm must have attended an initial training event about adult protection, and a refresher training event once every three years.

Project Managers with the support of the Safeguarding Officer will ensure that HealthProm's local partners have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place. In the absence of these, HealthProm will assist its partners to developing them, as part of its capacity-building function.

## **Visitors to partner projects**

HealthProm mainly works through its partners overseas. Partners determine who may visit and when. HealthProm cannot and will not seek to influence our partners in this matter. With their agreement, we can put visitors such as volunteers and researchers in touch with our partners overseas. However, even this brief association with HealthProm will require visitors to sign up to HealthProm's Vulnerable Adults Policy. Failure to do so will be made known to our partner overseas.

## **Reporting processes**

All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints will be recorded and monitored by the Safeguarding Officer.

Should a person travelling as a representative of HealthProm refuse to accept, or to agree to be bound by HealthProm's safeguarding policies, the visit will be called off, and the partner informed.

Should a partner identify a case of abuse, or suspect the behaviour or intent of a HealthProm employee, or someone acting on behalf of HealthProm, this should be reported as a matter of urgency to HealthProm's Safeguarding Officer (using the form attached as Appendix 2), who will advise the DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS and the Board.

In the event of an allegation of abuse, HealthProm will request that, when still in country, the matter is reported immediately to the Project Manager and the relevant local authority adult safeguarding team, including the police. Visitors from HealthProm in foreign countries are, of course, subject to the laws of those countries.

When the allegation is made after the HealthProm staff member's departure from the country in which the alleged offence takes place, a formal enquiry will be initiated that could lead to disciplinary measures and police action being taken.

## **Record keeping and confidentiality**

Written records of any incidents, allegations of abuse or complaints as well as written records of action taken will be stored by the Safeguarding Officer in a locked filing cabinet and kept for as long as deemed necessary in line with Data Protection guidelines.

All personal information regarding a vulnerable adult will be kept confidential.

Should any information need to be shared with a third party, such as the police, the adult concerned will be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent will be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority.

### **Disciplinary procedures**

Should a complaint or allegation be made against anyone within HealthProm, he or she should be made aware of his or her rights under employment legislation and internal disciplinary procedures.

Depending on the severity of the complaint or allegation, he or she may be suspended, pending the outcome of an internal enquiry and/or police investigation.

Should an internal enquiry reveal there may have been neglect or abuse, the matter will automatically be referred to the police.

In criminal law the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt, and the alleged perpetrator/defendant is presumed innocent until proved guilty.

In proven cases of neglect or abuse the perpetrator will be given immediate notice.

## **Appendix 1: Types of Abuse**

### **Physical Neglect**

This involves actual or attempted injury to a vulnerable adult. Examples include:  
Physical assault e.g. pushing, punching, slapping, tying down, giving food or medication forcibly and denial of medication  
Use of medication other than as prescribed, deliberate poisoning or smothering  
Inappropriate restraint

### **Emotional/Psychological Abuse**

This results in mental distress for the victim. Examples include:  
Swearing, shouting, bullying, humiliation  
Manipulation or the prevention of the use of services which would aid or enhance life experience  
Isolation or sensory deprivation

### **Financial or Material Abuse**

This involves the exploitation of the resources and belongings of a vulnerable adult by formal or informal carers. Examples include:  
Theft or fraud  
Misuse of money, property or resources

### **Sexual Abuse**

This involves sexual activity where a vulnerable adult cannot or does not give their consent. Examples include:  
Incest  
Rape, acts of gross indecency  
Involvement in or exposure to pornography.

### **Neglect**

This involves severe exposure of a person to danger, or failure to fulfil their basic needs either on a single occasion or on a persistent basis. Examples include:  
Denial of food, sleep, clothing  
Failure to provide warmth, shelter, medical treatment  
Failure to provide for physiological well-being.

### **Racial Abuse**

This involves treating someone less favourably because of his or her ethnic origins. Examples include:  
Verbal racist abuse  
Offering services in an inferior manner  
Denial of access to available translating or interpreting functions  
Denigration of culture or religion

HealthProm team members should be aware that family, neighbours, friends, paid staff, volunteer helpers or peers might carry out abuse. We need to be sensitive to the power which exists in relationships where one person is dependent upon another for their care, where one person has more status or credibility than the other, or where one person controls access to resources or to contact with other people.

**Abuse or the suspicion of abuse must always be taken seriously and understood from the perspective of the victim.**

## APPENDIX 2: Sample Report Form for Suspected Abuse<sup>1</sup>

If you have knowledge that a vulnerable adult has been abused or is at risk of abuse, please complete this form to the best of your knowledge. Please note that safeguarding concerns must be reported directly to HealthProm's Safeguarding Officer immediately (preferably within the same working day). You may wish to complete this form *before* contacting the designated person in your organisation's reporting process *or* you may wish to complete the report *after* contacting the designated person. This report is to be used as a tool to develop the most un-biased information-based report possible. For confidentiality reasons, the report should be written and signed solely by you. It should be sent *only* to the designated contact person. It will be held in a safe and secure place and treated in the strictest confidence.

### 1. About You

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Workplace: \_\_\_\_\_

Your relationship to the Vulnerable Adult: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details (please include your mobile phone number):

\_\_\_\_\_

### 2. About the Vulnerable Adult

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardians: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. About your Concern

Was the abuse observed or suspected? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this concern based on first-hand information or information divulged to you by someone else? (If so who?) \_\_\_\_\_

Did the vulnerable adult disclose abuse to you? \_\_\_\_\_

Date of the alleged incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of the alleged incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of the alleged incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of alleged perpetrator: \_\_\_\_\_

Job title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup>



Nature of the allegation:

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Your personal observations (*visible injuries, emotional state, etc.*) [N.B. Make a clear distinction between what is fact and what is opinion or hearsay]

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*Exactly* what the vulnerable adult or other source said to you [if relevant] and how you responded to him or her: [Do not lead the adult. Record actual details]

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Any other information not previously covered:

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Were there any other people involved in the alleged incident?

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Action Taken, for example, to protect the adult from further harm or to report the matter to the police:

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Signature:

Date:

**Declaration by board member, employee, consultant, intern or volunteer**

I have read and understand this policy and by signing here, indicate my commitment to the policy. I sign in the presence of the HealthProm Safeguarding Officer and confirm that I have reviewed the policy and had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that by working with HP I am making a commitment that my work will do no harm to vulnerable adults and that I will be held to account for my actions that deliberately harm vulnerable adults.

I understand that the following groups are vulnerable adults, including **poor displaced families, pregnant women, women in single headed households, people with disabilities, people who have low levels of literacy and people who have grown up in institutional care.**

I am aware that I have a duty to report to HP, partners and the appropriate local authorities including the police, if I become aware of a vulnerable adult who has been abused or is at risk of harm.

I understand that if I am found to have acted in a way that deliberately harms a vulnerable adult (as described in your list above), I will be subject to an investigation by the lead adult protection officer in HP and a report will be made to the appropriate local authorities, including the police.

Signature:

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Name of Safeguarding Officer:

Date: