

Safeguarding & Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy

Introduction

PMRGCAUK is committed to ensuring that vulnerable adults are safe in all respects when involved in our activities and services. It is important to have a policy and procedures in place to enable all staff, Trustees, volunteers, service users and carers to work together to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults who contact us and /or participate in charity meetings and events.

Aims of this Policy

The aims of this policy are:

- to inform Trustees, employees and all voluntary staff working with PMRGCAuk of the protocol to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults that come into contact with the charity
- to contribute to the safety of vulnerable adults through raising awareness and promoting good practice to work in a way that prevents harm, abuse and/or coercion from occurring
- to provide a clear framework for action when abuse is suspected
- to ensure any allegations of abuse are dealt with appropriately and any relevant support is given
- PMRGCAuk acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse
- The policy applies to all staff, Trustees, paid staff, Support Group Organisers, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of PMRGCAuk
- Adherence to our policy and procedures will protect our employees and volunteers as well as vulnerable adults.

Definitions

For the purposes of PMRGCAuk a vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

This may include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental illness including dementia Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness

“Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons” (No Secrets: Department of Health, 2000)

Abuse may include:

- physical abuse: including hitting, slapping, punching, burning, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint
- sexual abuse: including rape, indecent assault, inappropriate touching, exposure to pornographic material
- psychological or emotional abuse: including belittling, name calling, threats of harm, intimidation, isolation
- financial or material abuse: including stealing, selling assets, fraud, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
- neglect and acts of omission: including withholding the necessities of life such as medication, food or warmth, ignoring medical or physical care needs
- discriminatory abuse: including racist, sexist, that based on a person’s disability and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment
- institutional or organisational: including regimented routines and cultures, unsafe practices, lack of person-centred care or treatment

**Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly.
Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts.**

Responsibilities:

- All members of staff have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions that they might have concerning adult abuse. [The term Staff includes paid employees and volunteers.]
- The person within the organisation with overall responsibility for Adult Protection and who will normally deal with any allegations or suspicions of abuse is the Director of the charity.
- A nominated Board/Trustee member will champion the policy.

The scope of this Safeguarding & Vulnerable Adults policy is broad ranging and in practice will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures in the organisation. Links with other policies and procedures include: Confidentiality, Recruitment, Volunteers.

Policy Implementation

The scope of this Safeguarding & Vulnerable Adults policy is broad ranging and in practice will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures in the organisation. Links with other policies and procedures include:

Recruitment:

During recruitment, recruits will be informed that people with PMR/GCA may be physically and psychologically vulnerable owing to their age, medical problems and drug treatment. Therefore, sensitivity to people with such problems is a requirement of the job.

Awareness of this policy by everyone involved with the Charity is a critical success factor. All workers within PMRGCAuk will be supported in their understanding & awareness of vulnerable adult protection issues. Relevant education includes:

- the circulation of this policy; awareness of the effects of the conditions and potential effects of medication
- an understanding of the importance of receiving the right diagnosis and treatment
- recognition that approximately 50% of sufferers have another medical condition requiring medication
- knowledge of the need for immediate medical attention in the acute stages of GCA.
- knowledge of the potential effects of high doses of steroids on mental health.

Code of Conduct

The Trustees are responsible for the safeguarding protection of vulnerable adults within PMRGCAuk. This will include ensuring the implementation of the policy by:

- Circulating the Safeguarding & Vulnerable Adults policy to all those working with PMRGCAuk
- Implementing a clear system of reporting concerns as soon as abuse is identified or suspected in accordance with our reporting procedure
- Responding to abuse rapidly and carrying out investigations confidentially
- Preventing harm and abuse with a rigorous recruitment and interview process and induction including a specific interview question on vulnerable adults
- Everybody should be treated with kindness and respect irrespective of whether they are a Trustee, staff member, volunteer or a member of the public
- Vulnerable Adults policy should be reviewed annually and any changes disseminated to all

Trustees, staff and volunteers are not expected to suddenly become experts on the protection of vulnerable adults. They are, however, expected to be sensible, alert and to comply with these procedures.

Reporting Procedure

All allegations or suspicions are to be treated seriously.

No abuse is acceptable.

Some abuse is a criminal offence and must be reported to the Police as soon as possible.

In the event of a vulnerable person reporting abuse happening (at home or elsewhere), or where an incident is observed, a verbal report will be given to the Director, or if s/he is not available to the nominated trustee. S/he will keep a record of all such reports and refer up the complaint to the board of trustees if in doubt as to how to proceed. If there is an apparent immediate risk of harm to an individual who is vulnerable, she may refer the matter either to Social Services or the Police.

Consideration will be given to:

- The scale of the abuse
- The risk of harm to others
- The capacity of the victim to understand the issues of abuse and consent to report

Record Keeping

This confidential information will be kept in a locked drawer or password protected document by the Director, and will be:

- kept secure against unauthorised or unlawful access or loss
- relevant and not excessive for purpose
- only kept as long as necessary.

Contacts

The report should be made to the Social Services or Police office covering the area where the potential victim lives.

Legislation

The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- Mental Health Act 1983
- The Police Act – CRB 1997
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Care Standards Act 2000Safeguarding
- Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

This policy was adopted by the board of trustees on: 7th April 2021

Due for review: April 2022