



Befriending Policies and Procedures for Volunteers

Contents

1. [Safe Guarding Policy Statement](#)
2. [Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy](#)
3. [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
4. [Matching and ending Procedure](#)
5. [Rehabilitation of Offenders Policy](#)
6. [Confidentiality Policy](#)
7. [Alcohol and Drugs Policy](#)
8. [Handling Money and Prescription Medication Policy](#)
9. [Volunteer Support and Supervision Policy](#)
10. [Data Protection Policy](#)
11. [Lone Working Policy](#)



Safeguarding policy statement

Trust Befriending and Supportive Communities acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice.

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children, young people and vulnerable adults are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all children, young people and vulnerable adults:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience of befriending at (organisation) in a safe environment
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in the befriending relationship or outside of the activity.

Trust Befriending and Supportive Communities acknowledges that some children, young people and vulnerable adults, including disabled children, young people and adults or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our safeguarding policy Trust Befriending and Supportive Communities will:

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable adults.
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to vulnerable adults
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in both Trust Befriending and Supportive Communities. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by the Local Safeguarding Board or
- as a result of any other significant change or event.

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

The following definitions apply to terms in this policy:

- 1.1 "Organisation" means the joint projects of Trust Befriending and Supportive Communities.
- 1.2 "Worker" means staff member, volunteer, Befriender, student or anyone else working with us.
- 1.3 "Client" means someone who is a present user of any of the services.
- 1.4 "Vulnerable adult" means a person aged 18 or over 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. Thus a vulnerable adult may be a person who is elderly, has a mental disorder (including dementia or a personality disorder), has a physical or sensory disability, has a learning disability, has a severe physical illness and/or is a substance misuser. The presence of a disability or age alone does not signify that an adult is necessarily vulnerable (unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves from abuse or exploitation).
- 1.5 "Abuse" may consist of a single act or repeated acts, be physical, verbal, institutional, psychological or emotional, be an act of neglect or a failure to act, or occur when a vulnerable adult is persuaded to enter into a financial arrangement or sexual relationship to which they have not, or could not, have consented. Any or all of these categories of abuse may be perpetrated as a result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.
Appendix 1 contains further information about categories of abuse and indicators that may help workers to recognise when abuse is occurring.

2 Policy Statement

This policy has been developed in recognition of the fact that both projects could work with vulnerable adults who may be at risk of mistreatment and abuse and that the organisation is committed to preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to the abuse of vulnerable adults.

We are committed to:

- maintaining a dialogue at both a strategic and operational level to ensure effective action to prevent abuse
- developing a common definition and understanding of abuse
- ensuring workers are willing and able to co-operate with the terms of this policy
- monitoring and evaluating the operation of this policy
- ensuring that resources are available, within acknowledged constraints, to meet the above commitments

Issues of capacity and consent are central to the work of adult protection. The ability of vulnerable adults to choose their lifestyle and the risks they wish to take, to understand the implications of their situation, to take action to prevent abuse and to participate actively in decision making constantly give rise to dilemmas for workers whose responsibility it is to respond. Protecting a vulnerable adult from abuse or exploitation may involve some invasion of

a person's autonomy and leave workers open to allegations of undue influence if they intervene. Conversely, not intervening may result in workers neglecting their duty and harm occurring. The law applicable to mental incapacity is fragmented and incoherent and there is a consequent reliance on medical opinion to decide on questions of capacity. However, this is not always possible with clients whose mental capacity fluctuates (as with mental illness or substance misuse).

The following good practice should be observed:

- Information should always be presented in a way that will offer the vulnerable adult the maximum opportunity to understand it
- Special consideration should be given with regards to communicating with people for whom English is not their first language, people with visual or sensory impairment or people with a learning disability
- Any concerns about the mental capacity of a vulnerable adult at risk or an alleged abuser should be shared with the local Mental Health Team and a joint decision arrived at.

3 Statement of Rights

Our policy on protecting vulnerable adults from abuse is intended to ensure that our clients' rights are recognised and respected. Obviously, these rights should be enjoyed by all clients of the Organisation but their inclusion in this policy relate to a recognition that vulnerable adults may be more at risk of exploitation and less able to defend their rights themselves. Our workers should ensure that their work with vulnerable adults involves recognition of the following:

1. Clients have the right to be respected by those professionals and volunteers providing services for them.
2. Clients have the right to say what they want, think and feel so long as doing so does not break the law or affect other people's rights.
3. Clients have the right to be involved in making decisions that affect them.
4. Clients have the right to be safe and receive adequate care and protection. This includes protection from all forms of violence including physical punishment, intimidation, verbal abuse, harassment and sexual assault.
5. Clients have the right to report violence and have their report taken seriously, including the right to have the Police called, if a crime has been committed.
6. Clients have the right to access money and property that is legally theirs.
7. Clients are entitled to leisure time and have the right to spend that time as they choose, including taking part in activities that include an element of risk.
8. Clients have the right to personal privacy, including not having personal letters opened or phone calls listened to unless the law allows this.
9. Clients have the right to a wide range of information, especially information that would make life better for them.

4 Prevention

We will take all necessary steps to protect the vulnerable adults with whom we work from abuse. This includes:

- 4.1 Ensuring that the organisation regularly reviews its practice and services to ensure that they support the Statement of Rights shown above. This will be the responsibility of the Chief Executive.
- 4.2 Ensuring that all workers providing services to vulnerable adults have either undergone an Enhanced Disclosure check via the Criminal Records Bureau or that such a check has been initiated and that employment references are routinely sought and carefully checked.
- 4.3 Ensuring that workers receive instruction and/or training in the issues involved in protecting vulnerable adults from abuse and the need to be vigilant around the signs and potential for abuse.

- 4.4 Ensuring that all workers receive instruction and/or training during their induction on relevant organisational procedures and practices
- 4.5 Developing procedures that set out how the needs and preferences of vulnerable adults in receipt of our services will be met and their dignity, privacy and safety will be safeguarded.
- 4.6 With the consent of the vulnerable adult, encouraging good communication between workers and managers and between clients, carers/relatives and other professionals to foster an “open culture” within our projects.
- 4.7 Ensuring that, in the event of discussions occurring, that may have a serious or detrimental impact on a vulnerable adult (for example, potential loss of accommodation, decision to take out an Appointeeship), all our volunteers and staff know about our policies and know how to disclose/advocate for client.
- 4.8 Ensuring that all workers receive instruction and/or training on manual handling, working with challenging behaviour and any other situation that may involve making a physical intervention.
- 4.9 Ensuring that a summary of the policy is communicated to clients.
- 4.10 The Project Co-ordinators of each project are designated as responsible for implementing this policy.
- 4.11 The policy will be reviewed and updated every 3 years, or when policy changes.

5 Alerting

Alerting refers to the responsibility of any worker to be aware of the possibility that adult abuse may have taken place - or is likely to take place - and to take action. This section therefore includes:

- The responsibility of the worker to whom a disclosure is made, or who is concerned that a vulnerable adult is being, or is at risk of being, abused
- Who they should tell and what information they should give
- What they should say to the vulnerable adult
- What they should say or do if they know, or suspect, who the perpetrator is
- Record keeping
- Responsibilities of management
- Deciding whether a case is serious enough to warrant a formal investigation
- What should happen if the vulnerable adult does not want any action taken
- What should happen if the alleged perpetrator is a vulnerable adult
- What should happen if the alleged perpetrator is a worker

A concern that a vulnerable adult is, or could be, being abused may have arisen either from:

- A direct disclosure by the vulnerable adult
- A complaint or expression of concern by a worker, client, member of the public or carer
- An observation of the behaviour of the vulnerable adult by a worker

In this context, any worker who raises concerns about another worker or about abuse within the service will receive the necessary support and protection under the auspices of the organisation’s Whistle Blowing Procedure. The Designated Person is the Operations Manager on 01475 553356.

5.1 Action to be taken by worker:

If a worker suspects or receives a report of actual or potential abuse, it is expected that they will:

5.1.1 Deal with immediate needs

- Take reasonable steps to ensure that the adult is in no immediate danger
- Inform the Project Co-Ordinator
- Seek medical intervention as appropriate
- Contact the Police if it is believed that a crime has been committed that is serious enough to warrant an immediate response (e.g. assault)

5.1.2 Listen

- Assure the person making the allegation that they will be taken seriously
- Not be judgmental, express disgust or jump to conclusions
- Explain the duty to report to the designated person (or that person's manager if they are implicated in the abuse) and that the concerns raised will have to be shared
- Not give any promises of complete confidentiality
- Listen carefully to what is being said, stay calm, clarify the facts of the abuse but avoid a detailed investigation and lots of questions. Explain that steps will be taken to protect them from further abuse
- Not discuss the allegation of abuse with the alleged perpetrator
- Not disturb or destroy articles that could be used in evidence

5.1.3 Inform

- Tell their manager of the concerns/complaint immediately
- Tell a trustee if the Chief Executive is implicated in the abuse

5.1.4 Record

An accurate record should be made at the time of the disclosure or discovery giving details of the incident and/or the grounds for suspecting abuse. This should include:

- The date and time of the incident
- What the vulnerable adult said about the abuse and how it occurred or what has been reported to the worker
- The appearance and behaviour of the victim, including any injuries

5.2 Action to be taken by the Co-Ordinators:

It is the duty of the Co-Ordinators receiving the report from the worker to:

5.2.1 Deal with any immediate needs

- Ensure that the victim of the alleged abuse is safe
- Ensure that emergency medical treatment has been arranged as appropriate
- Ensure that no evidence is lost by securing the scene
- If the alleged perpetrator is also a vulnerable adult, ensure that a worker is allocated to attend to their needs
- Ensure that other clients are not put at risk

5.2.2 Clarify

- The facts stated by the worker making the report WITHOUT discussing the allegation of abuse with the alleged perpetrator or, if possible, the alleged victim
- Issues of consent and confidentiality
- Whether the alleged victim of abuse has the mental capacity to be able to decide who should be informed
- Whether any outside body should be informed (for example, the Community Mental Health Team or Social Services care management team)
- Whether a proper record of the allegation has been made

5.2.3 Investigate

- Decide if the alleged abuse is serious enough to warrant a formal investigation. See section 6.

5.3 If the alleged perpetrator is also a vulnerable person

The steps set out above in sections 5.1 and 5.2 should be followed as a matter of course but, additionally, the Co-Ordinator receiving reports of this type should:

- Decide if the alleged perpetrator is to be represented during internal investigations (e.g. by a relative, social worker or solicitor) to avoid a potential conflict of interest
- Decide if the matter is likely to come to the attention of the Police
- Decide if there is an on-going risk of further abuse or of pressure being brought to bear on the person making the allegation. If it is felt that this is possible, arrangements should be made for the alleged perpetrator to be safely placed elsewhere while the investigation takes place. In the event of a refusal to agree to this, extra staffing cover should be considered to manage the risk.

5.4 If the alleged perpetrator is a worker,

The steps set out above in sections 5.1 and 5.2 should be followed as a matter of course but, additionally, the Operations Manager receiving incident reports of this type should immediately discuss the matter with a trustee as part of an initial screening process to decide if there appears to be any substance to the allegations. If so, they should:

- Ensure that any investigation and action taken is additionally compatible with the organisation's policies
- Decide if there is an on-going risk of further abuse or of pressure being brought to bear on the person making the allegation. If it is felt that this is possible, the worker should either be suspended or reassigned to other duties while an investigation takes place
- Ensure that the worker and/or their representative are kept fully up to date on the progress of any investigations and associated actions
- Agree a sensitive message for other workers, stakeholders and clients regarding the absence of the worker under investigation

5.5 In the event of a case of abuse the following numbers should be contacted:

- The Individuals Care Manager/Referrer
- Social Work Adult Services **01475 715010**
- Social Work Emergency Out of Hours **0300 343 1505**
- Police **999**

6 Investigating

6.1 Factors to be considered

All allegations or incidents of adult abuse should be investigated and responded to but the extent of the investigation and formality of the response will be dictated by the seriousness of the abuse. Factors to be considered are the:

- Vulnerability of the individual
- Nature and extent of the abuse
- The reliability of the reporting process (e.g. whether anonymous)
- Length of time it has been occurring
- Impact on the individual and/or on others
- Risk of repeated or increasingly serious acts involving this or other vulnerable adults
- Whether the vulnerable adult gives permission for further action

If at all in doubt, formally investigate.

6.2 Options available

The Co-Ordinator has two options available to them in responding to allegations of abuse in this context. Options are:

- Using the organisation's existing Incident Reporting framework
- Convening a formal Protection Panel (see below)

The first may be appropriate for minor incidents or one-off incidents of abuse that are relatively clear-cut and unlikely to be repeated. The latter should be considered in all other situations.

7 Protection Panels

Within the Organisational framework the Protection Panels will usually consist of the following representatives:

- The Chief Executive
 - An employee
 - A trustee
- The inclusion of an employee is intended to allow the panel the fullest knowledge of the victim and relevant background information.
 - The Chief Executive will nominate this person.
 - The membership of the panel is subject to change if any of those people who would normally sit on the panel are implicated in the abuse.
 - Protection Panels will meet within 7 working days of any report of alleged abuse being referred by the manager and report their findings within 7 working days of having concluded their investigations. The time taken on the investigations themselves cannot be prescribed but it is expected that the panel will seek the fullest co-operation of all within the organisation to progress the matter as promptly as possible.
 - The panel's findings will be considered by the Chairman and the Board of Trustees for them to approve and oversee any associated recommendations.
 - In response to very serious allegations of abuse, it may be necessary to involve someone from outside the organisation on the Protection Panel (e.g. a representative of the local Community Mental Health Team or Social Services) to provide further assurance that the alleged abuse has been thoroughly investigated and responded to.

8 Recruitment

Our team will:

- Follow standard procedures in drawing up job descriptions, specifications and advertisements
- Conduct standard interviews
- Take up at least 2 references prior to appointment, at least one of which should be a previous employer
- Conduct a Disclosure Scotland check as required
- Ensure that new staff have a proper induction, including an introduction to the organisation's Vulnerable Adults Protection policy and procedures
- Ensure that new staff are made aware of the organisation's whistle blowing policy
- Ensure that staff are given adequate supervision

9 Staff Support and Training

We will provide training/instruction for all workers on the operation of this policy commensurate with their responsibilities. This training/instruction will be integrated with training offered associated areas of work such as risk assessments, support planning, etc. Such training to be conducted as part of the induction of new workers and thereafter will be repeated annually. It is recognised that working with situations that may involve the abuse of a vulnerable adult can be upsetting and stressful for workers, particularly those who may have had personal

experience of similar issues. In relation to this, we will ensure that workers involved in reporting, witnessing or investigating cases of adult abuse will be supported appropriately. This will include:

- Access to counselling
- Space to debrief and discuss the issues within the line management structure
- Support and protection in the event of any retaliatory action from an abuser harassing a worker or acting aggressively as a result of their abuse being uncovered

Appendix 1 - Categories and Indicators of Adult Abuse

The existence of any one factor from the following lists should not be taken on its own as being an indicator that abuse is occurring. Rather it should be viewed as an alert to the need to make a further assessment and to consider other factors associated with the person's situation. In many cases, an assessment will be necessary to exclude the possibility that the physical/mental signs or behavioural changes that are causing concern are indicative of mental illness or substance misuse rather than mistreatment or abuse.

Some vulnerable adults may reveal abuse themselves by talking about or drawing attention to physical signs or, where verbal communication is limited or confused, displaying certain actions or gestures. Workers need to be alert to these signs and consider what they might mean.

9.1 Physical Abuse

The use of force which results in pain or injury or a change in the person's natural physical state or the non-accidental infliction of physical force that results in bodily injury, pain or impairment. Indicators might be:

- Injuries inconsistent with the account of how they happened
- Lack of explanation as to how injuries happened
- Bruising, burns or other marks
- Unexplained falls/minor injuries
- Particularly subdued behaviour in presence of carer, relative, worker

9.2 Sexual Abuse

The involvement of a vulnerable adult in sexual activity or relationships which:

- they do not want or have not consented to
- they cannot understand and lack the capacity to consent to
- they have been coerced into because the other person is in a position of power, trust or authority
- are against the law

Non-contact sexual abuse might also be an issue (e.g.: forcing a vulnerable adult to look at sexual media, indecent exposure, photography, etc.).

Indicators might be:

- Bruising, infection, tearing in genital area
- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- Bruising to thighs and upper arms
- Unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Unusual wetting or "soiling"
- Significant change in sexual behaviour or attitude
- Unusually overt sexual behaviour/language
- Reluctance to be alone with an individual known to them
- Self harming
- Withdrawal, sleep disturbance and/or poor concentration
- Fear of assistance with bathing, dressing, etc.
- Excessive fear/apprehension of, or withdrawal from, relationships

9.3 Psychological or Emotional Abuse

Behaviour that has a harmful effect on the vulnerable adult's emotional health and development or any other form of mental cruelty that results in:

- a) Mental distress
- b) The denial of basic human and civil rights, such as privacy and dignity
- c) The negation of choices, wishes and self-esteem
- d) Isolation or over-dependence and has a harmful effect on a vulnerable adult's emotional health, development or well-being

Examples of such abuse include:

- Preventing a vulnerable adult from using services
- Denial of access to friends
- Ignoring
- Harassment
- Use of threats, bullying, swearing
- Intimidation

Indicators might be:

- Visible discomfort or silence from the vulnerable adult when perpetrator is present
- Vulnerable adult not allowed to express an opinion
- Vulnerable adult denied freedom of movement or access to others
- Alteration in psychological state (e.g.: withdrawal or signs of fear)
- Insomnia, tearfulness, change of appetite

9.4 Financial or Material Abuse

The use of a vulnerable adult's property, assets, income or any other resources without their informed consent and authorization. Financial or material abuse occurs where an individual's funds or resources are being used inappropriately by a third person. It can include:

- a) The withholding of money
- b) the unsanctioned use of a person's money or property
- c) The entry of a person into contracts or transactions, for example loans and gifts, which are not understood, are to their disadvantage and which have been entered into as a result of duress or pressure of some kind.

Indicators might be:

- Unexplained lack of money to maintain lifestyle
- Unexplained and unusual bank withdrawals
- Lack of accountability shown by person handling vulnerable adult's affairs
- Unusual interest shown by others in vulnerable adult's assets
- Unjustified obtaining of Appointeeship or Power of Attorney without vulnerable adult's understanding or consent

9.5 Neglect and Acts of Omission

The repeated deprivation of assistance that the vulnerable adult needs for important activities of daily living, including the failure to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous to the vulnerable adult or to others.

Examples of such abuse might include:

- Failure to provide food, shelter, clothing or heating
- Failure to provide agreed personal or medical care

- Inappropriate use of medication or over-medication
- Denial of needs
- Ignoring

Indicators might be:

- Physical condition of living space is poor
- Physical condition of vulnerable adult is poor
- Untreated injuries or other medical problems
- Inconsistent or reluctant contact with medical or social care agencies
- Poor personal hygiene

9.6 Discriminatory Abuse

This occurs when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals. It is the exploitation of a person's vulnerability, resulting in repeated or pervasive treatment of an individual which excludes that individual from opportunities available to others. Incitement to discriminate is also treated as equivalent to actual discrimination. Indicators might be:

- Verbal abuse, derogatory comments or inappropriate use of language
- Signs of a sub-standard service being offered
- Repeated exclusion from rights afforded to ordinary citizens (e.g.: health, employment, criminal justice)
- Expressions of anger or anxiety
- Denial of a person's communication needs (e.g.: access to a signatory)

9.7 Institutional Abuse

The mistreatment or abuse of a vulnerable adult by a regime or individuals within an institution can take the form of repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect or poor professional practice. Institutional abuse occurs when the routines, systems and norms of an institution compel individuals to sacrifice their own preferred lifestyle and cultural diversity to the needs of the institution. Research has shown that the culture of an institution is a powerful indicator of the practice and attitudes of those working within it. Institutions that have a "closed" culture, where there can be a lack of accountability, have been shown to be more likely to foster poor practice. Indicators might be:

- Inadequate staffing levels
- Inappropriate or poor care
- Lack of adequate procedures (e.g.: for medication, management of finances)
- Failure to ensure privacy or personal dignity
- Public discussion of personal matters
- Denial of visitors, phone calls
- Absence of individual care plans
- Inadequate or delayed response to reasonable requests
- Interference with mail

10. Conflict of Interest

Care must be taken to ensure that, when giving advice to clients, staff are mindful of our Code of Conduct and, in particular, the policy on conflict of interest. Our definition of conflict of interest is as follows:

Where an employee has a financial or personal interest, kinship or relationship, or engages in any activity (paid or unpaid) which could enable them to secure personal advantage (other than salary) or advantage for a close relative as a result of their being employed by the Organisation or influence their judgement in relation to the performance of their duties on behalf of the Organisation.

If you are unable to work with a person because to do so would breach our conflict of interest, the client must be informed in writing and they must be signposted to another organisation which could support them.



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Statement of commitment

Trust Befriending and Supportive Communities are firmly committed to diversity in all areas of our work. We believe that we have much to learn and benefit from diverse cultures and perspectives, and that diversity will make our organisation more effective in meeting the needs of all our stakeholders. We are committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued, and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute. We will regularly evaluate and monitor our progress towards diversity.

Policy

It is our policy to operate within the principles of equality and diversity in all aspects of its work. This includes employment, client services and the use of volunteers. The service is committed to ensuring that no person receives less favourable treatment or reduced access to services on the grounds of gender, age, disability, race, nationality, ethnicity, marital status, sexuality, family responsibility, trade union activity, class, political or religious belief.

We will ensure that all our staff and management committee members involved in the recruitment process are aware of this policy and have received training and support.

A copy of this policy will be made available to any applicant for a post within the organisation.

We will only request information and PVG where it is necessary and relevant to the position sought. Where the position requires such a check we will make this clear in the informal discussions, application form and interviewing process. (Organisation) undertakes to treat all applicants for positions within the organisation fairly and not to discriminate against a person on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed unless it is relevant to the post applied.

Throughout the recruitment process when receiving information that shows a conviction, we will take into consideration: -

- Whether the conviction is relevant to the position being offered
- The seriousness of the offence revealed
- The length of time since the offence took place

- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since offending took place
- Whether they are barred from working with the particular client group

Decisions relating to our selection for interviews and appointment will always be based on the requirements outlined in Volunteers Role Description and Person Specifications and decisions on the suitability of volunteers will always be undertaken by at least two people within the organisation.

The impact of this policy will be monitored and evaluated to ensure that the principles of equal opportunities are achieved.

As part of our commitment to promote equality and diversity, and to preventing discrimination (organisation) will:

- Provide induction, and ongoing training for staff and volunteers that promotes an awareness of equality, diversity and discrimination.
- Monitor the diversity of our clients, volunteers and staff and identify where practice could be improved for underrepresented groups.
- Encourage individuals to be aware of who they are, including their personal prejudices and the negative impact that this can have on their work with others
- Ensure that all staff, volunteers and service users are aware that discrimination, harassment, abuse or intimidation of others will be taken seriously and will be acted upon. In the case of employees and volunteers this may result in disciplinary action being taken, which may include dismissal from role.

This policy links to several other policies including but not limited to; Recruitment and Selection, Rehabilitation of Offenders, GDPR, Grievance and Disciplinary.

Date of Policy: November 2022

Next Review Date: October 2025



Matching and Ending Procedure

Matching is the process that connects volunteer befrienders to service users (befriendees). It involves making decisions on the suitability of two people to be matched to achieve an effective befriending partnership.

The Importance of Matching

The aim of the process is to ensure that by personalising each match, both parties are given the best possible chance of a successful and fulfilling partnership. Matching decisions are made by the Befriending Coordinator who has met both the volunteer and newcomer. Matching decisions should take into account befriendees' needs, volunteer's capability, their profiles and preferences. All matching decisions are formally recorded.

Giving Choice in Matching

The matching process involves asking both parties for their opinion on who they would best relate to and why. This should be done in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy in order that individuals are not discriminated against. (See Equality and Diversity Policy)

Information Sharing

When a prospective match has been identified, the following steps are taken:

1. Volunteer is invited to a matching meeting where we will try to offer a choice of more than one befriendeer, discuss their profiles, including some brief information on their background and any special circumstances if relevant. If they accept one of the options, this process is continued, if they decline they remain on the 'awaiting match' list. We will ask the volunteer to confirm what information they wish to share.
2. The selected befriendeer is contacted by telephone to discuss potential befriender. If they accept, this process is continued, if they decline they remain on the 'awaiting match' list.

Issues to Consider in Matching

The issues that can influence choice in matching volunteers and befriendees can be varied and complex. The overall goal is to achieve positive compatibility that meets the needs and expectation of those involved. In order to reach a balanced decision, it is important to be aware of the attitudes of everyone involved.

Issues that may need to be taken into account can include:

- Volunteer's experience and abilities
- Language needs of Befriendeer and language skills of volunteer
- Location (matches in close proximity are favoured)
- Times available
- Age
- Gender
- Race, ethnicity, culture, religious beliefs
- Political Beliefs
- Interests
- Opinions of family members (in certain cases)
- Sexuality
- Commonality of experience – both parties having a shared similar life experience, it may prove either helpful or unhelpful

The Befriending Coordinator keeps people fully informed of progress and likely outcomes in such situations. In some instances, we may be unable to meet specific requests, i.e. an older Syrian woman indicates preference for an Arabic and English-speaking female of a similar age. If this cannot be accommodated, an alternative match is offered (i.e. younger Arabic speaker or non-Arabic speaker of similar age). In this instance, encouragement to try the match for a couple of meetings is fully offered with a consideration for close support and supervision offered in case this match does not work out.

“Gut Feeling”

Often the matching of a specific volunteer with a befriender will “feel right”. Whilst these feelings can be helpful, it is important to clarify and articulate the underlying reasons. Matching should not be based on gut feeling alone, but should allow much more detailed consideration of issues relevant to the programme and those involved in it.

Rejection

Once information has been exchanged both parties are invited to discuss concerns they may have. The opportunity to reject the match offered before the meeting takes place is built in to be part of the matching process. The negative effects of rejection after meeting should be emphasised to volunteers, along with the expectation for them to fulfil the commitment agreed with the programme once they have been introduced to a Befriender.

Beginnings

Beginnings and endings are important elements in a successful befriending partnership. There are potential issues that need to be acknowledged. At the beginning of the relationship there is the potential of rejection for both parties, and both parties may feel anxious or awkward during the early stages, with concerns around not gelling. The successful handling of beginnings by the Befriending Team can enable a relationship to get off on a positive footing, and the sensitive management of endings is important so that any positive achievements of the relationship are not negated.

First Meetings

The way in which a relationship starts usually sets the tone for what is to follow. The Befriending Coordinator must consider that volunteers and newcomers can be apprehensive about first meetings and find them stressful. The Befriending Team will be sensitive towards this and provide the necessary support and close monitoring of the situation. First meetings usually take place where best suits the befriender (at home, local café etc) and the Befriending team will be present. Trust Befriending will always try to include the referrer.

During the first meeting the following activities will be covered:

- Reiterate the scope of the programme (duration, general scope and programme’s Objectives)
- Explore types of activities that could be undertaken and explore shared interests
- Invite both parties to share information about themselves with one another
- Discuss practical issues such as meeting times and exchange of contact details/preferred means of communication
- Confirm date, time, location for first lone meeting
- Discuss any outstanding questions

A member of the Befriending Team usually meets the volunteer around ten minutes prior to the introduction to the Befriender. This is to enable the Team to share any relevant information about health and safety in terms of the home visit and offer support to the volunteer for first meeting nerves. Volunteers and Befriendees are invited to contact the Befriending Team after the first meeting to discuss any concerns or additional questions they may have.

Volunteers are asked to contact the Befriending Team after their first lone meeting to provide a brief overview on how it went. The Befriending Team will contact the Befriender at this point. Both parties will be asked if they are happy to continue. If so, the Befriending Support Worker will have contact with the volunteer on a monthly basis to do their expenses and will have an informal update. Befriendees and/or Referrers will be contacted after one month,

at the mid-way point and one month prior to ending. We operate an open-door policy for each party to contact the Befriending Team at any time when they need support. Extra support, reassurance and opportunities to talk about how the relationship is developing will always be available from staff if both parties feel they require it in order to establish their own confidence levels.

Relationship Development Monitoring

There is no set pattern for how a relationship might develop, but the potential for a settling-down period must be appreciated.

After one month the Befriender/Referrer and Volunteer will be asked to feedback their thoughts so far. This check in is an opportunity to ensure both parties are still happy for the befriending to continue. The Befriending Team will always be available to provide extra support to any new match which may be taking time to settle. We will also carry out formal reviews with Befriender/Referrer and Volunteer at 3 months and 6 months. Peer Support is also a useful resource for our volunteers, so we provide the opportunity to meet up quarterly.

If the match is not working for either party, there is the opportunity to seek support to talk through things with the Befriending Team and it may be that the best option is to conclude the match. Encouragement will always be offered to continue, however, it may be in the best interests of either party to end the match appropriately and look for an alternative match.

Endings

The befriending programme is facilitated for 6 months, though if requested and required, relationships can continue beyond this period for an agreed amount of time in a case by case basis. The Befriending Team will contact both parties prior to agreed ending (6 months or later if previously agreed with both parties) to check how things are and prepare both for the ending of the relationship.

Communicating ending and gathering feedback

At the point of ending we encourage our volunteers to maybe do a wee something special with their befriender to mark the occasion. The Befriending Team is of course available to support the process in any way, including attending the last visit with the volunteer, as we know that endings can be emotional.

The Befriending Team will contact the Befriender/Referrer/Family Member on the ending and work with them in completing the exit interview and evaluation, exploring their initial objectives and progress throughout the befriending relationship as well as an opportunity to provide feedback.

An Exit Interview and Evaluation will be carried out with the Volunteer where we will ask for their feedback on their time with the project. We have a celebratory lunch with the volunteer to thank them for their involvement.

There is no 'notice period' for ending a match. The expectation is that volunteers are committed for 6 months. If a match isn't working out or if it needs to come to an end due to a change in personal circumstances (such as a volunteer or newcomer moving away) this will be dealt with on an individual basis. This is made clear in the volunteer induction.

Endings need to be handled sensitively with the Befriending Team offering extra support to the volunteer, who will be dealing with their own feelings about the ending, along with responding to those they were matched with.

Unplanned Endings

It is recognised that the partnership may be ended unexpectedly and these abrupt endings may cause the other party to feel abandoned and rejected. An abrupt ending may also lead to feelings of rejection, hurt and anger. Such feelings will be recognised and responded to and care will be taken to offer alternative opportunities.

Unplanned endings are never pleasant, however unavoidable. Extra support will be put in place to both parties where appropriate such as phone calls and face to face appointments. Each will be asked if they would want to continue in the project, and if they do then we would return to the matching process.

Demand for further matches

Many Befriendees ask to remain on our waiting list to receive another volunteer befriender. While priority will go to individuals who have not yet received the service, they will often receive a new match within the year.

Also, many volunteers remain on our list waiting to be re-matched. Obviously, the time scale of both depends on befriender needs/preferences and also volunteer availability. We will not re-match a previously matched pair without outstanding circumstances.



Rehabilitation of Offenders Policy

1. As an organisation using the Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services (VSDS) checking service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust and complies fully with our **Equality and Diversity and Safeguarding policies**, Trust Befriending and Supportive Communities (Later referred to as collective us/we/our) undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a PVG check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
2. We are committed to the fair treatment of our staff/volunteers, potential staff or users of our services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
3. We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.
4. Unless the nature of the position allows us to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**.
5. A Protection of vulnerable groups (PVG) check is carried out when someone has been offered a position to become a member of staff or a volunteer with our projects.
6. All application forms, job adverts and recruitment documentation will contain a statement that a PVG check will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
7. We encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is included in the relevant section of the Application Form, which is only seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.
8. We ensure that all who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**.
9. At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
10. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a PVG check with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.



Confidentiality Policy

Trust Befriending and Supportive Communities recognises that the handling of identifiable written, verbal and computerised information is necessary for effective functioning. Information is held and shared about befriendees, volunteers, and employees. The main aims of this policy are to:

- ensure that information given in trust is treated with respect
- ensure that information is protected through clarity about how it is to be stored and shared
- ensure that the boundaries of confidentiality are clear, and understood by all.

Aims of the policy

The aims are to:

- protect the best interests of befriendees, volunteers, and employees.
- make explicit the responsibilities of all parties concerning confidentiality
- ensure volunteers, and employees are aware of their responsibilities to protect confidential information.

Procedure when confidentiality is broken

Volunteers and employees are required to maintain confidentiality in accordance with this policy. Inappropriate disclosures will be treated as a disciplinary matter and dealt with by the Project Coordinator, in accordance with our disciplinary procedures.

Exceptional disclosure of information

Exceptional circumstances may occur where the protection of a befriender, volunteer, employee or a third party or another person must be ensured and to do so would involve disclosure of information, whether or not agreement has been reached with party affected. In this situation, the volunteer or employee involved should follow the procedures set down in Trust Befriending and Supportive Communities Policy on Safeguarding.

The Project Coordinator will conform with Health and Safety legislation by informing people of any notification received about contagious or notifiable disease suffered by any person with whom members of the workforce may have had contact in conducting their work.

In the event of a serious issue arising of a line management nature, (e.g. professional misconduct), volunteers or employees may, within the Policy, raise it with the Project Coordinator with or without the volunteer or employee's agreement and it will be dealt with in accordance with the Trust Befriending and Supportive Communities Complaints Procedure.

Finally, there is a legal requirement to disclose information in the event of a policy enquiry which has the back up of necessary legal documentation.

The befriending confidentiality triangle

Volunteers will not share any information about their befriender or about visits to their befriender with anyone except the Befriending Team Staff. Volunteers must share all information relevant to the progress of the match and the safety and wellbeing of both parties with the Team Staff. It is not acceptable for volunteers to withhold information from the Team Staff even at the request of the befriender. Project Coordinator will inform befriendeds (preferably in writing) of this three-way confidentiality at the outset of the befriending relationship.

Information and training

All volunteers and employees will be provided with this policy document and new volunteers and employees will receive a copy of this policy on taking up appointment. We will provide volunteer and employee training on issues relating to confidentiality and the contents of this policy in order to ensure that work practices are in line with the requirements. Employees will inform befriendeds and carers of this policy document and ensure a copy is available to them.

Files containing personal information

Files containing information about staff, volunteers or befriendeds are confidential, with access to a volunteer's or employee's file being limited to the Project Coordinator and Support Worker and to those individuals at any time, during office hours. All files containing personal information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, with the Project Coordinator holding the keys.

Personal issues affecting volunteers or employees

Volunteers and employees have the option of discussing personal issues adversely affecting their work in confidence with any Befriending Team Staff Member. That (member of staff) can then take appropriate measures to address these issues without breaking confidentiality, subject to the volunteer's or employee's agreement. This may include discussion with an appropriate other person, and placing a record of this into the volunteer's or employee's personal file.

Phone calls and letters

Any mail sent to a staff member and marked Private and/or Confidential will not be opened by another member of staff. This applies particularly to Police Check correspondence which may not be opened by anyone other than the addressee or the Project Co-ordinator

Monitoring and reviewing the policy

The working of this policy will be monitored regularly, with a record of the number and nature of formal complaints being held by the Project Coordinator for monitoring purposes. A review of this policy will take place within a year of its adoption to ensure its effective operation.



Alcohol and Drugs Policy

Our approach to the consumption of alcohol, drugs and other substances (including new psychoactive substances) that have intoxicating and/or behaviour-altering effects or impair judgement (referred to in this policy as “other substances”) is based on the need to ensure a safe and productive befriending experience. Because of the serious nature of the risks posed by the abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances while befriending vulnerable adults, any breach of the rules in this area will be investigated and subject to disciplinary procedures.

A befriender will be regarded as ‘under the influence’ of alcohol, drugs or other substances if their behaviour, speech, ability to concentrate or otherwise perform their duties is in any way affected.

Drugs

The consumption, storage, distribution or sale of illegal drugs or any other behaviour altering and/or intoxicating substance, including new psychoactive substances, while befriending is strictly prohibited. We will report any illegal activities to the police or other relevant authorities. You must not present yourself for befriending under the influence of illegal drugs or any other substance taken for non-medical purposes.

Medicines and Prescription Drugs

If you are taking prescription drugs or any other medicine that may affect your performance or your ability to carry out any of your duties, then you must inform the Project Coordinator of this so that steps can be taken to ensure that either the visit can be done safely or postponed with befriender.

Alcohol

Consumption of even a small amount of alcohol may be sufficient to adversely affect the abilities of an individual and could pose a risk to health and safety. Remember that alcohol remains in the bloodstream for up to 24 hours following consumption and that the consumption of a significant amount of alcohol in the evening may leave you unfit in the morning.

You must not present yourself for befriending visit under the influence of alcohol. You must not consume any alcohol during befriending visit.



Handling Money and Prescription Medication Policy

Prescription Medication

Our befriendees may have complex needs, they are all in receipt of services and will have a package of care in place that will most likely include support around medication. Befrienders are not to be handling any medication, prescription or over counter, for their Befriender. This is to prevent any possible complications with medication (contradictions, reactions or double dose etc)

If you have any concern for your befriender around medication, please use the phone numbers provided to you to contact the Befriending Team. We will take the appropriate action and support you through your visit as needed.

Money

We encourage all our Befriendees to be in control of their own finances when visiting or out with their Befriender. Therefore, our volunteers should not be handling money belonging to the befriender.

However, in rare cases, a befriender may have limited capacity in that area. In this case, we would discuss with the family/carer and the volunteer to agree on a fixed amount allotted each visit to be kept in a separate purse/wallet for the volunteer to take. **All receipts must be kept and returned to family/carer along with remaining money at the end of each visit.**



Volunteer Support and Supervision Policy

We recognise that volunteers make a vital contribution to our achieving aims and the added value that volunteers bring to our organisation. Within both befriending projects, volunteers are involved in:

- 1:1 befriending
- Group Befriending
- Supporting at events in local communities

Trust Befriending and Supportive Communities aims to have a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship with our volunteers; with their involvement informing and developing our work, and our work enabling individuals to learn skills and achieve personal development through befriending.

Support and Supervision

Once placed, we will expect volunteers/befrienders to comply with existing policies and procedures. All volunteers/befrienders are covered under Inverclyde Community Development Trust's Public Liability Insurance.

All volunteers/befrienders will have had an induction to their volunteering/befriending which will involve an overview of the relevant policies and procedures. Following Induction, volunteers will have regular 1:1 support and supervision meetings every 3 months as a minimum with a named contact to identify areas for support, review progress, volunteer development, or to discuss any issues. A record of these discussions will be held as part of the individual volunteer's records. Volunteers can have access to their records at any time.

Where volunteers have holidays or other commitments which mean that they cannot attend their normal volunteering or planned supervision, they should advise their named contact to ensure that the organisation is aware and to arrange alternative dates. If volunteers require a longer break from their volunteering, they should discuss this with their named contact at supervision or by telephone, if this arises between supervision sessions. We endeavour to be as flexible as possible to accommodate the needs of volunteers.

Volunteers can access learning and development opportunities which are relevant to their volunteering role throughout their time with Trust Befriending and Supportive

Communities. Opportunities for Learning and Development will form part of the discussions at support and supervision sessions.

Where a concern is highlighted – either by a volunteer or about a volunteer that cannot be discussed or resolved via supervision, this will be dealt with using the organisation's Disciplinary, Grievance and Dismissal Policy.

Volunteers will be able to claim reasonable expenses for their volunteering including attending supervision sessions or further training in line with the Expenses Policy.

Support outwith 1:1 Supervision

Where a volunteer has any questions or concerns these can be raised between supervision sessions by contacting your named contact by telephone or email, if the situation is urgent and they aren't available ask if a manager is available to speak to or request an urgent call back.

The organisation will provide group supervision opportunities every 3 months and volunteers are encouraged to attend these sessions as they are a good opportunity to meet other volunteers and discuss common challenges and receive support.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of the policy and procedures lies with the Project Coordinator. Implementation and adherence to this policy is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers within the organisation.

Data Protection Policy

This policy gives an overview of how we collect, process and use individual's personal data. More detail on some issues can be found in our Confidentiality Policy.

This policy also acts as our Data Retention & Disposal Policy, Subject Access Requests Policy, Legitimate Interests Policy and Data Breach Reporting Policy

Organisation details

- Organisation Name: Trust Befriending
- There is no Data Protection Officer. Data Protection responsibilities lie with Project Coordinator, currently Karen Wilkie. karen.wilkie@the-trust.org.uk
01475 553366

1. The 7 GDPR key principles in the context of Trust Befriending

1. Lawfulness, fairness & transparency. We have a valid reason (service provision) for collecting and using personal information. We use it fairly and we are clear, open and honest about how it will be used. See Lawful Basis and Individual Rights sections below.
2. Purpose limitation: We are clear about our purposes for collecting and using information. See Purposes section below.
3. Data Minimisation: The data we collect and process is adequate for the purpose, relevant to it and limited to what is necessary.
4. Accuracy: Our systems enable us to keep personal information updated and correct.
5. Storage limitation. See Retention Schedules below
6. Integrity and confidentiality (security). We keep most information in hard copy in locked filing cabinets in locked offices. Information kept electronically is kept to a minimum and has an appropriate level of security: it is in encrypted files on password-protected un-networked computers, and backups are to an encrypted cloud service.
7. Accountability. We have a Privacy Policy, Data Protection Policy and Confidentiality Policy. See section on Accountability & Governance below.

2. Personal data

Personal data is information identifying an individual directly or indirectly in combination with other information. Principal identifiers in our documentation are names, contact details and photos/video. We do not use identification numbers or location data or online identifiers.

3. Our purposes for processing information

- We collect and process information about staff, volunteers, befriendees and referrers for the purpose of providing our befriending service.

- We process information about staff members to make recruitment decisions, administer payroll & pensions and provide supervision and support.

4. Lawful basis for processing information Consent

Although we rarely rely on it as the sole lawful basis of processing data under GDPR, we obtain written consent from volunteers, befriendeds and referrers on Request for Service forms, Volunteer Application forms and additional specific consent forms. Requests are prominent, separate from other information and require a positive opt-in; records of consents are kept and consents are refreshed if anything changes.

- We ask for consent to use photos and video in publicity and reporting.
- Some befriended information comes from other sources such as health & care professionals. We ask for consent on Request for Service forms to collect this information and also to share information with volunteers.
- Some of our befriendeds have a lack of capacity to provide consent. Carers' consent on Request for Service forms addresses this to a large degree, but it is a reason to have an additional lawful basis beyond consent.
- Parents of volunteers under 13 are asked for their consent to us requesting information from a referee.

Legitimate Interests

- For staff, volunteers, befriendeds and referrers an additional legal basis for is legitimate interests: we need to collect and process the information to provide and evaluate the service and manage the organisation.
- The Information Commissioners Office has confirmed that these legitimate interests are a sound basis on which a befriending service can process information.

Special Category Data and Criminal Convictions and Offence Data

- Special Category Data: Health. This principally relates to members (although some health information may involve volunteers or staff. We rely on GDPR Article 9(2)(a) consent and Article 9(2)(h) social care
- Criminal Convictions and Offence Data: we process this in connection with volunteers and staff PVG Scheme Applications. We rely on Data Protection Act 2018 Sch.1, Pt.1, 2 - social care & Sch.1, Pt.2, 29 consent
- The Information Commissioners Office has confirmed that befriending services are social care services for GDPR and DPA purposes.

Other:

- Contract and legal obligation are additional lawful bases for processing staff information.

5. Individual Rights. Right to be informed

At the time of collecting personal data, we provide individuals with concise, transparent intelligible and easily accessible privacy information written in clear and plain language.

This includes:

- Our purposes for processing their personal data,
- Our retention periods for that personal data
- Who it will be shared with.

Rights of access to, rectification of and erasure of data: we give information about these rights on Request for Service and Volunteer Application forms.

Rights to restrict processing, to have data portability, and to make objection to the use of data have special features and are unlikely to be invoked in relation to our service.

6. Subject Access requests: also see Privacy Policy

Any individual has the right to see what personal information we hold about them. They are entitled to be given confirmation as to whether we hold or process their personal information, and if so they are entitled to access all their personal information as well as details of:

- The purposes for which we process their personal data;
- The categories of their personal data we process;
- The recipients, or categories or recipient to whom personal data has been or will be disclosed
- How long we expect to store their data;
- Where they did not give us the personal data, the source from which we collected the personal data.

They are entitled to have any mistakes in their personal data rectified, and to have the data deleted if they would no longer like us to store or process their personal data, or to request restriction of our processing of their personal data.

7. Accountability & Governance

A Record of Processing Activities (ROPA) is maintained which satisfies GDPR Article 30 and Data Protection Act 2018 requirements re Special Category or Criminal Conviction and Offence data

8. Annual Data Protection Fee

There is an exemption for not-for-profit organisations, and we satisfy the requirements of it.

9. No Data Protection Officer (DPO) registered with ICO.

We are not processing special categories of data on a large scale so do not need a DPO. To avoid confusion the Trust Befriending staff member responsible for information security and management is called the Data Protection Champion. This is currently the Project Coordinator.

10. Data Retention & Disposal Policy

- Staff, volunteer, befriender and referrer files (including computer files) are kept for 6 years after they leave the service or organisation.
- Records of group activities (including group risk assessments) are kept for 6 years from date of activity.
- Accounting records (which contain information on volunteers expenses claims) are kept for 6 years from financial year-end.
- Hard-copy marketing materials that include photographs of individuals, such as posters, leaflets and pull-up banners are replaced every 6 years at maximum.

- Website and Social media content: photographs of individuals are replaced every 6 years at maximum.
- Evaluation material containing photos (e.g. photoreports, independent evaluations, Impact Reports and Films) is kept indefinitely in hard copy and digital archive and are accessible for up to 6 years through our website. Survey questionnaires are shredded once the information has been transcribed into electronic file.
- Project Co-ordinator has responsibility for ensuring data is disposed of on schedule.

11. Data breaches: also see Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

- A breach occurs if there is an accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data.
- Likely breaches might be through an email being sent to the wrong person, someone outside the organisation gaining access to a filing cabinet, or the loss or theft of a laptop or paper files
- If there is a confirmed or suspected breach of personal data, the staff member discovering it should contact the Project Co-ordinator immediately.
- The Project Co-ordinator and staff involved will try to contain the breach, minimise its effects and recover any data where possible.
- They will investigate the breach and assess the risks associated with it (for example, identity theft, fraud, safety of members, reputational damage) the potential adverse consequences for individuals, how serious or substantial those are and how likely they are to occur. If it is likely there will be a risk to people's rights and freedoms then the data subject(s) and the Information Commissioners Office will be notified immediately.
- A record of the breach, together with any action taken to remedy it and prevent its recurrence will be made on an Incident Report form. A report will also be made by the Project Co-ordinator to the Trust Board, either immediately or in the next bimonthly report depending on the seriousness of the breach.
- If the breach is the result of an inappropriate disclosure by a volunteer or staff member it may also be a disciplinary matter and be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary procedures.



Lone Working Policy

In this guide “Lone Worker” refers to volunteers carrying out their role in isolation from other workers without close or direct supervision such as in clients’ homes or outside core working hours.

1. Introduction

All of our volunteers are required to work on their own as part of their placement. We will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that while they are required to work alone or unsupervised, our volunteers are protected from risks to their health and safety.

2. Responsibilities of Our Staff Team and volunteers

Our Staff Team are responsible for the implementation of these guidelines. Volunteers are responsible for informing us of any concerns about working alone.

All volunteers must comply with any advice, procedures or working practice introduced to minimise the risks identified regarding working alone.

All volunteers must inform our Staff Team of the times of their visits if outside of working hours (Mon-Fri, 9-5)

3. Safe Systems of Work

When volunteers are working alone the following specifics should be considered:

- a) Required ability of volunteers, for example: professional training; experience; medical fitness/physical capability
- b) Suitability of equipment
- c) Means of communication, for example: telephone; remote or manual alarm systems; regular visits by competent persons
- d) Emergency procedures, for example: means of summoning help; means of raising alarm
- e) Ongoing Support and Supervision for all volunteers, formal and informal.

4. Summary

Working alone is not illegal, but it can bring additional risks to a work activity. We have developed these good practice guidelines to control risk and protect our volunteers. All volunteers should familiarise themselves with the guidelines and follow them. Apart from ensuring the lone worker is

capable of performing the tasks associated with their job description without supervision, the other most important factors to be certain of are:

- a) The lone worker has full knowledge of the hazards and risk to which they may be exposed
- b) All available information on clients is reviewed before visiting
- c) The lone worker knows what to do if something goes wrong
- d) A lone worker system is being utilised so that someone knows the whereabouts of a lone worker and the length of time that he/she will be working alone.

5. Lone Working Precautions

Each service which requires volunteers to work alone requires a specific Lone Working Risk Assessment and the provision of good practice guidelines relating to the specific work area in terms of service users and location.

Risk Assessments and precautionary measures should take account of:

- Remoteness of the place visited
- Means of travel
- Potential communication problems
- Likely weather conditions
- Access to telephones or provision of mobile phones and alarms
- Emergency contact arrangements
- Medical conditions which might make a person unsuitable for lone working
- Providing and implementing safe systems of work
- Agreeing a lone working system which enables every lone worker to have a named member of staff who is aware of their anticipated work pattern

New volunteers will be accompanied on their 'induction' visit, this allows a supported introduction as well as a chance to review risk assessment with the volunteer and befriender as situations which are new to them and may present special risks.

It is the responsibility of the staff team to monitor the tasks being carried out by volunteers. In particular, they are responsible for ensuring that if the nature of the tasks changes in any way a new risk assessment is carried out. Project Co-ordinators must ensure that any lone worker follows good working practices and safe systems of work.

Control measures will be identified by risk assessment and will include:

- All volunteers working alone are to carry and use a mobile phone
- Staff must ensure a list of lone workers' emergency contact details is available and up to date.

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR VOLUNTEERS

The following points are listed as basic precautions to observe:

Working Outside Core Hours

Some volunteers may work outside core office hours. If you work alone late in the evening or at weekends out of core office hours you must:

- Ensure you tell a family member what time you expect to return home if you will be working unusual hours. If you live alone have a nominated person who you will contact.
- Inform a member of staff of the client visit (this will be added to the on-call rota).
- Have emergency contact numbers on your phone.

At any time in any circumstances where you feel threatened or unsafe, you should remove yourself from situation if safe to do so and/or call for assistance. You should be mindful of your own safety.

Lone Visits

Before the visit

- Risk assessments, either by phone or in person, should be carried out prior to a volunteer visiting any client. Concerns should be referred to Project Co-Ordinator.
- If there are any concerns prior to a visit then the volunteer should contact the staff team for advice.
- Ensure that you have the correct address for the person you intend to visit.
- Ensure that identification is available and have a mobile phone containing emergency contact numbers within easy reach.
- Ensure that your phone is fully charged.
- If you are delayed and no longer on schedule, advise member of staff accordingly.
- In case of emergency, make sure that your emergency contact is notified under the heading ICE (In Case of Emergency) on your mobile phone contact list.

During the visit

- A dynamic risk assessment should be made on all visits.
- If on arriving the volunteer has any concerns whatsoever about entering the property, then they should cancel the appointment using their mobile phone or call staff member and give them the telephone number to cancel the appointment.
- If the befriender does not answer the door after several rings, try phoning their number, check with neighbours or look through windows if safe to do so.
- If you have emergency contact details for the befriender, call them. If you still get no response call the office or named member of staff.
- When the door is answered, show your ID and look at the individual for any signs of aggression or indication that they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If in doubt, say you have had an urgent call you need to deal with and leave. Call your named member of staff immediately.
- If the befriender has a pet that is known to be excitable or dangerous, ask for it to be put into another room or secured during the visit.
- Put yourself in an alert frame of mind, do not discuss personal matters, do not get over familiar, be friendly but always professional, let the befriender go into each room ahead of you and, where possible, keep yourself between the door and the befriender.

Please remember if in doubt do not make the visit

After the visit

- Carry your keys in your hand
- Carry a torch at night
- Check the interior of your car, particularly behind the front seats before getting in
- DO NOT hang around making notes etc, drive off and stop later in a busy place
- Car alarms are effective as a warning mechanism
- Belong to a national breakdown organisation or have arrangements with local garages in the event of a breakdown
- Do not stop if flagged down at the scene of an accident; telephone the emergency services and check that it has been reported

Safety in your car

- Volunteers who transport befriendees must ensure they have the necessary level of insurance
- Always park in the direction that you need to leave
- If you think you are being followed, go directly to the nearest Police station or another 'safe haven', e.g. shop, GP surgery or straight back to base if you are sure someone will be there
- Keep car doors locked when driving around
- Whenever possible keep to well-lit main roads – do not take short cuts down poorly lit roads unless necessary
- Where possible avoid parking in deserted, poorly lit locations or in a confined space that you may get blocked into
- Secure the vehicle when you leave it, do not leave belongings on show in the vehicle

Emergencies at the Befriender's home

- If faced with a medical emergency, then dial 999 and follow the instructions given. If unsure if it is an emergency, then dial 111 and ask for advice.
- If your befriender is unwell and unable to call the doctor, ask if they wish you to do so or whether they would like you to contact a family member. If they say no and you are concerned about them, contact your named member of staff or the on-call number.
- If you smell gas, are aware of an electrical problem, or there is flooding, telephone the appropriate emergency number and follow the instructions given.

Emergency system for volunteers

- There may be no prior warning signs and on entering the house the volunteer may feel uncomfortable.
- If, at any time during the visit, you feel vulnerable, or a potentially violent or aggressive situation is developing, leave and notify your named member of staff.
- If you are unable to leave and are able to make a call then a call should be made to your named member of staff to alert them of the situation by using the agreed code word. This should be done by the volunteer apologising to the client saying that they should have called the office with some information: "Tell Mrs Figgins I am running late!!!!"
- The person taking the call needs to know where the volunteer is and when to ring, so the message should continue along the lines of "I understand that you need to deal with this urgently, so if you need to speak to me further I am with **Mr/Mrs/Miss Name, of address** for the next **fifteen minutes**". If you wish the call to be made sooner than fifteen minutes then say you will be there for 5/10 minutes or whatever.

- The named member of staff will call after the interval given to see if everything is all right. If you leave the befriender's home before the time indicated please telephone your named member of staff before you drive off, and advise that you are all right and everything is fine.

If a volunteer is missing

If the volunteer has not returned home at the agreed time and their partner/nominated person has not been successful in contacting them the partner/nominated person should call the office or on-call number.

If the volunteer cannot be contacted, the named member of staff will view the Befriender details and contact them from their last visit to ascertain their whereabouts.

If the volunteer is no longer with the Befriender, the member of staff will ascertain what time they left and how much time they would need to return home. If the volunteer is missing for over 2 hours, the member of staff will ring 101 and report the circumstances of the missing member of staff/volunteer to the police. The police should be provided with the name, address, phone numbers, car registration, details of last visit, time last seen and emergency contact details.

Review

This guide will be reviewed every three years.