

## Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy



### 1. Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1 To enable Kinross-shire Volunteer Drivers (KVD) to establish its commitment to supporting and protecting adults at risk. It also aims to provide guidance for volunteers, employees and service users in order to prevent harm or abuse and to be aware of what measures/steps to take in a situation where harm or abuse could occur.
- 1.2 This policy also details the role of KVD in the Adult Support and Protection (ASP) process under the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. Although we do not have specific legal responsibilities under this legislation, it is KVG&ROS's policy to contribute to ASP investigations where deemed necessary, and to make ASP referrals to the local council in situations where there are grounds for believing there is an immediate serious threat to the life or wellbeing of a service user.

### 2. Definitions and terminology

- 2.1 The ASP framework is a means of allowing local councils to:
- 2.1.1 identify adults who might be at risk of harm
  - 2.1.2 put in place measures to support and protect them if necessary
  - 2.1.3 share information with other agencies.
- 2.2 It is important to note that only service users who meet the following criteria will be eligible for support under the ASP Act:
- are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests;
  - are at risk of harm; and
  - because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

### 3. Preventing harm or abuse from occurring within the Project

In order to reduce the likelihood of harm or abuse occurring within KVG&ROS, a number of safeguards have been put in place, including:

- 3.1 All employees and volunteers involved with the service will be subjected to a Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check and 2 suitable references will be required (who must be known to the volunteer for a minimum of 2 years).
- 3.2 All volunteers will be expected to wear identification lanyards when carrying out journeys.

- 3.3 All volunteers will receive regular support sessions from **KVG&ROS** to enable them to discuss best practice and to identify any issues they have encountered during their time supporting the service users.

#### **4. Responding to disclosures, suspicions or actual instances of harm:**

##### **Actions to take**

- 4.1 KVD acknowledge that it has a duty to respond to report any suspicions of harm or abuse or neglect. In all cases, the safety and care of the adults at risk person must remain paramount. An assumption that the service user is aware that they are at risk should never be made. It is important to respond accordingly and explain what this means and what, as an organisation will be done in response to the allegation/disclosure.
- 4.2 Under the Adults with Incapacity Act (Scotland) 2001, it must be assumed that people have capacity to make their own decisions and to be given practical help before anyone treats them as not being able to make their own decisions Where an adult is found to lack capacity to make a decision then any action taken, or any decision made for, or on their behalf must be made in their best interests.

##### **In emergency situations**

If a volunteer witnesses harm or abuse which is deemed to be an emergency situation, the volunteer should use their judgement to decide whether to use one or more of the following options:

- contact the emergency services immediately;
- call Safeguarding Officer: Pauline Watson (07877840347).

- 4.2.1 KVD will ensure that a staff member will always be available for volunteers to telephone. The Safeguarding Officer should always be the first port of call, but if they cannot be reached, volunteers can contact other KVD members:

- Chairman (David Aird 07834 474 799)

##### **What to do in non-emergency situations**

- 4.3 ***If a volunteer witnesses harm or abuse*** during a visit with a service user which does not require an emergency response, they must decide whether to use one or more of the following options:

- discuss the matter with the service user
- contact Pauline Watson (07877 840347) to discuss the matter after the visit

- 4.3.1 The volunteer must always discuss any concerns around their own or the service user's welfare/safety with the Safeguarding Officer after the visit. They will then arrange a new risk assessment and, in cases where there are concerns about the service user, may consider making an ASP referral to the local authority.

- 4.3.2 ***If a service user (or other person) discloses an instance of harm or abuse to a volunteer or staff member, he/she should:***

- reassure the person that they have done the right thing in disclosing, and allow them to speak without interruption
- listen carefully to what the person is saying even if it sounds 'fanciful', do not dismiss, trivialise or exaggerate the issue
- record what they have been told/witnessed as soon as soon as possible
- not make suggestions, coach or lead to the person in any way (putting words in their mouth for example)

- remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief
- inform the individual that the information shared will be taken seriously
- do not interrogate or ask either detailed or probing questions
- do not make any promises to the service user that you will be able to keep the disclosure a secret, and explain that you will have to pass on the information to the Safeguarding Officer and why
- contact the Safeguarding Officer as soon as they have finished

**4.3.3 *If a volunteer suspects a service user may be at risk of harm or abuse in their own home, he/she should:***

- make a judgement about whether or not it is appropriate to discuss this with the service user. If they do, refer to the guidance above (4.4.2).
- inform the Safeguarding Officer. If the Safeguarding Officer is not available, they should inform the Chairman (David Aird)
- volunteers should do this even if they have heard rumours of harm or abuse or have suspicions but have no firm evidence.

**Recording the incident**

4.4 For both emergency and non-emergency situations, the volunteer must complete a 'Safeguarding Older Adults Notification Form' within 24 hours for all:

- witnessed instances of harm or abuse
- suspicions of harm or abuse
- disclosure of harm or abuse by the service user or others.

4.5 There may be situations where the service user has not disclosed any concerns to the volunteer/staff member, but he/she nevertheless suspect the service user may be being harmed/abused. In such situations the volunteer/staff member can discuss concerns with the Safeguarding Officer or Chairman without seeking the adults at risk person's consent to do so. This information must be provided anonymously, and must not include any personal details which might identify the adults at risk person.

4.6 This 'Safeguarding Older Adults Notification' form should remain factual throughout and it should not contain any personal opinions from the volunteer. Once completed, the report will be sent securely to the Safeguarding Officer who will follow up with volunteer on what actions to take. These should be e-mailed to the Safeguarding Officer, Pauline Watson: [secretary@kvgandros.org.uk](mailto:secretary@kvgandros.org.uk)

4.7 The Safeguarding Officer will log this report and will then follow up with the volunteer on the outcome of the agreed actions. This might include making an Adult Support and Protection referral to the local council, and/or to other agencies, e.g. the police, or a regulatory body.

4.8 Under no circumstance should the volunteer look into the matter themselves; further action should only be taken by KVG&ROS personnel.

**5 Allegations against staff, volunteers or service users**

5.1 KVG&ROS will ensure that any allegations and cases of suspected harm or abuse made against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with swiftly and professionally. Our primary concern is the safety of our volunteers and service users.

- 5.2 In a situation where a member of staff or volunteer suspects any other member of staff or volunteer of abusing a service user, they will have a duty to raise such concerns with KVD. If the allegation is against the Safeguarding Officer this should be reported to the Chairman.
- 5.3 Where a member of staff or a volunteer is thought to have committed a criminal offence, the police will be informed. If a crime has been witnessed the police should be contacted immediately.
- 5.4 If this situation arises, a new risk assessment will be required immediately to determine what level of risk the service users may now be exposed to. This is the responsibility of either the Safeguarding Officer. If the allegation/suspicion relates to the volunteer who is supporting the service user, they will be released from their duties relating to the service user until the allegations have been fully investigated.
- 5.5 The Safeguarding Officer will discuss with the management committee who is the most appropriate person to contact the local Adult Support and Protection Team to discuss further actions and ensure that the procedures of KVD are in line with any enquiries or investigation that may need to be undertaken.
- 5.6 The allegation of harm or abuse will be investigated internally as per KVD policies and procedures. This may include suspension of roles/duties whilst the matter is fully investigated.
- 5.7 The volunteer will be advised to:
- Contact the Chairman if the allegation is against the Safeguarding Officer
  - Keep records of all conversations, meetings, letters and phone calls relating to the allegation that has been made

**Perth and Kinross Council – Community Care Access Team – 0345 301 1120**