Reg. Charity No. 1171075

Safeguarding vulnerable adults policy and procedure

Next Review August 2020

Introduction

Sadaka is committed in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults engaged in the breadth of its activities.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of the trustees and volunteers working on behalf of Sadaka in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse. All adults have the right to be safe from harm and should be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To explain the responsibilities Sadaka trustees and volunteers have in respect of vulnerable adult protection.
- To provide all those involved in Sadaka with an overview of vulnerable adult protection information.
- To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where protection issues arise.

Context - Vulnerable adults

For the purpose of this document, 'adult' means a person aged 18 years or over. Some adults are less able to protect themselves than others, and some have difficulty making their wishes and feelings known. This may make them vulnerable to abuse. The broad definition of a 'vulnerable adult' (referred to in the 1997 Consultation Paper 'Who decides?', issued by the Lord Chancellor's Department) is a person:

> *"Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation."*

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults. To this end, it is the responsibility of all those involved with Sadaka to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect (see the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person/agency.

For purposes of ensuring consistent and widely understood terminology, this policy and procedure will use the phrase 'Vulnerable Adults' to identify those eligible for interventions within the procedures.

The role of trustees and volunteers

All trustees and volunteers working on behalf of Sadaka have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults. Trustees and volunteers may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy will enable trustees/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific protection issues. Any reporting requirements should be referred to a Sadaka trustee.

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

Types of Abuse under the Care Act 2014

- **Physical abuse** - including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **Domestic violence** - including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.
- **Sexual abuse** - including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting
- **Psychological abuse** - including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** - including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
- **Modern slavery** - encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment
- **Discriminatory abuse** - including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- **Organisational abuse** - including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** - including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

- **Self-neglect** - this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding

Procedure in the event of a disclosure

It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion of abuse. Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual. A full record should be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

This should include information in relation to:

- the date,
- the time,
- the place where the alleged abuse happened,
- your name and the names of others present,
- the name of the complainant and,
- where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused,
- the nature of the alleged abuse,
- a description of any injuries observed,
- the account which has been given of the allegation.

Responding to an allegation

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to Sadaka's trustee on that working day where possible. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The trustee will take the following actions depending on the nature of the disclosure:

- If the disclosure comes from a volunteer concerned for the service users - the trustee shall investigate the disclosure and report back with their findings and any actions.
- If the trustee becomes concerned that the organisation is not able to deal with the issue - the trustee shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local social services duty social worker or another appropriate organisation.
- If the disclosure comes from a private individual concerned for themselves or someone they know - the trustee shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local social services duty social worker.
- If the disclosure raises concern about a Sadaka's trustee or volunteer - the concerns will be investigated in line with the Sadaka's Disciplinary Procedure.

Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

DO

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen

- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to a trustee for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation if appropriate
- Remember the need for ongoing support

DON'T

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional adult protection agencies.

Whistleblowing statement

It is vital that volunteers notify the trustee about their concerns. It is the responsibility of the trustee to take action, not the individual volunteer. However, if a volunteer is concerned that the trustee is not taking sufficient action the volunteer should notify other Sadaka trustees or notify an appropriate independent body (see contact no.'s at end of this document).

Confidentiality

Volunteers and trustees have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about protection with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and social services. Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

All personal information will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time, as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only record details required in the initial contact form.

If an adult confides in a volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the volunteer tells the adult sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies. Within that context, the adult should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it. Where possible, consent should be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties. In

some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the adult is the priority

Where a disclosure has been made, all members should let the adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result. Members should assure the adult that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The adult's involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

Recruitment procedure

Sadaka operates a procedure that takes into account the need for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults, including arrangements for appropriate checks on new volunteers and trustees where applicable. Where permitted under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, Sadaka will request DBS checks on new members of volunteers/trustees or volunteers/trustees moving into a new role.

Sadaka will ensure that all volunteers have a role description that outlines the work they do. Each role description will state whether a DBS check will be required, at what level and for which workforce.

Useful Contact Numbers/websites:

- Safeguarding Adults team at RBC -if you have concerns about an adult and are not sure if it is a safeguarding issue
    - call 0118 937 3747 (via main call centre),
    - or Emergency Duty Services (outside of office hours) on 01344 786512 / 01344 786 543.
- http://www.reading.gov.uk/adultabuse. The Safeguarding Adults team at Reading Borough Council works closely with the other Councils in the West of Berkshire, the police, probation, health and a range of private and voluntary agencies to try and prevent adult abuse occurring and stop it when it happens.
- If you are/someone is in danger call 999.
- West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board - http://www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk/
- Making Safeguarding Personal Video - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUkMMMEU4m4

Adult Social Care Contact numbers:

- Reading – 0118 937 3747
- West Berkshire – 01635 519056
- Wokingham – 0118 974 6227

To find out information for services to adults with mental health needs - or their carers - please contact the Community Mental Health Team on 0118 960 5612.

Chair of Board of Trustees
Sunila Lobo

Dated 8 April 2020