



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adult and Children

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

1. Rights and Responsibilities

1.1 Responsibilities of SUFA

- To ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the adult protection policy and are adequately trained
- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected
- To support and where possible secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability
- To CRB check volunteers and employees that have access to or work with Vulnerable Adults and children

1.2 Responsibilities of SUFA employees and volunteers

- To be familiar with the adult protection policy and procedures
- To take appropriate action in line with the policies of SUFA
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions. Failure to do so will be regarded as gross misconduct, possibly resulting in the withdrawal of SUFA's support for their practice.

1.3 Support for those who report abuse

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they be staff, service users, carers or members of the general public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
- If SUFA clients, they will be given immediate protection from the risk of reprisals or intimidation
- If Staff or VOLUNTEERS they will be given support and afforded protection if necessary in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

1.4 The Vulnerable Adult or child has the right:

- To be made aware of this policy
- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
- To be involved in any process as appropriate
- To receive information about the outcome

2. Good Practice

2.1 Listening to the Child/Vulnerable Adult

If a child/vulnerable adult says or indicates that he/she is being abused or has been abused, the person receiving this information should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child/vulnerable adult.
- Tell the child/vulnerable adult she/he is not to blame and that it is right to tell.
- Take what the child/vulnerable adult says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child/vulnerable adult who has an impairment is implying.
- Keep questions to a minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Give time to listen to the child/vulnerable adult without prompting.
- Ask open questions.
- Reassure the child/vulnerable adult, but do not make promises of confidentiality that may not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible.

It may occur that a child/vulnerable adult wishes to have a third party friend or parent/guardian/carer present before they will offer any information. This is perfectly acceptable and should be encouraged. However, great care must be taken not to let the other person speak for the child/vulnerable adult especially where that person is the child's/vulnerable adult's parent/guardian or carer.

2.2 Responding to Suspicions or Allegations

Before commencing any action we recommend that you:

- Inform a child protection officer at Social Services or the NSPCC.
- Inform SUFA. If no one is immediately available, do not delay taking further action.
- Agree that any third party (guardian/parents or carer) will tell no one else what has been said.
- Agree that any third party can act only as a supporter.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working within the SUFA network in a voluntary or paid capacity, or others working to decide whether or not child/vulnerable adult abuse is taking place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children in order that the appropriate agencies can make inquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child/vulnerable adult.

The Social Services Department/NSPCC has a statutory duty under The Children's Act 1989 to ensure the welfare of a child/vulnerable adult. When a child protection referral is made its staff has a legal duty to investigate. This may involve talking to the child/vulnerable adult and family/guardian or carer and gathering information from other people who know the child/vulnerable adult. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police.

3. Records and information

3.1 Information passed on to Social Services or the Police, must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity of making detailed records. Information should include the following:

3.1.1 The nature of the allegation.

3.1.2 A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.

3.1.3 The child/vulnerable adult's account, if given, of what happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.

3.2 Reporting the matter to the police or Social Services Department/NSPCC should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information.

3.3 Wherever possible, referrals telephoned to the Child Protection Unit/NSPCC

should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

- 3.4 A record should be made of the name and designation of the Social Service/NSPCC member of staff or police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of any call, in case any follow up is needed.
- 3.5 Please also complete the Record of Alleged Abuse, PRIOR to contacting Social Services or the Police.

4. Complaints against Staff/Volunteers

- 4.1 This includes anyone working with children/vulnerable adults in a paid or voluntary capacity under the SUFA name.
- 4.2 A senior figure within SUFA may be informed of situations where they are unsure about whether the allegation constitutes abuse or not, and are therefore not sure what action to take.
- 4.3 It is acknowledged that feelings generated by the discovery that a member of staff or volunteer is, or may be, abusing a child/vulnerable adult, will raise concerns among other staff or volunteers. This includes the difficulties inherent in reporting such matters. However, it is important that where there is concern for the welfare of a child/vulnerable adult due to reported abuse or harassment action should be immediate.
- 4.4 SUFA assures all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child/vulnerable adult.

5. Good Practice

- 5.1 All children/vulnerable adults have a right to be safe and be treated with dignity and respect. False allegations of abuse are rare but the following basic guidelines will help safeguard children/vulnerable adults, staff, volunteers and SUFA.

6. Recruitment and Selection of Staff/Volunteers

Anyone may have the potential to abuse children/vulnerable adults in some way; it is therefore important that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children/vulnerable adults. It is essential the same procedures be used consistently whether for staff or volunteers.

7. SUFA Standards

SUFA are required by law to have all staff and volunteers checked through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). CRB checking is not optional.

SUFA trustees must report all incidents to SUFA's insurers.

8. Good Practice in the Care of Children/Vulnerable Adults

- 8.1 Promoting good practice can reduce the possibility of potentially abusive situations and help to protect staff/volunteers. The following are more specific examples of care which should be taken when working within SUFA:
 - Always be publicly open when working with children/vulnerable adults. Avoid situations where a volunteer and an individual child/vulnerable adult are working completely unobserved.
- 8.2 As a general rule it makes sense for staff/volunteers not to:
 - Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children/vulnerable adults.
 - Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.

- Use or allow the use of inappropriate language.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child/vulnerable adult, even in fun.
- Allow allegations made by a child/vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children/vulnerable adults they can do for themselves. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children/vulnerable adults, particularly if they are young or have impairments. These tasks should only be carried out with the full consent of parents and the children/ vulnerable adult's involved. There is a need to be responsive to the child's/vulnerable adult's reactions if an individual is fully dependent upon you, talk with him/her about what you are doing, give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in assisting with any dressing or undressing, or where there is physical contact or lifting or assisting a child to carry out a particular activity.

8.3 Parents/guardians or carers should be informed of any incident that involves a child/vulnerable adult:

- Being accidentally hurt
- Who seems distressed in any manner
- Who appears to be sexually aroused by your actions or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Any such incident should also be reported to another colleague as soon as possible and a brief written note made of it.

Date Implemented: March 17	Future Review Dates			
	2018	2019	2020	Notes
Date to reviewed	April	April	April	
Date approved By Trustees				