

## Vulnerable adult protection policy

Previous version agreed by the Board Autumn 2011

This version agreed by the Board Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2011

Review at least once a year

### Policy statement

AACT acknowledges it has a responsibility for the safety of vulnerable adults. It also recognises that good safeguarding policies and procedures are of benefit to everyone involved with AACT's work, as they can help protect them from erroneous or malicious allegations.

AACT is committed to practices which protect vulnerable adults from harm. The people covered by the policy include not only any employees but also those contracted to do work for the charity and those standing in a voluntary capacity. All those who have unsupervised access to or contact with vulnerable adults (both in person or remotely through electronic media) are required to:

- recognise and accept their responsibilities
- develop awareness of the issues which can cause vulnerable adults harm
- report concerns following the procedure below.

AACT will endeavour to safeguard vulnerable adults by:

- adopting safeguarding procedures for all who work on behalf of the organisation
- reporting concerns to the authorities
- following carefully procedures for recruitment and selection of employees, contractors and volunteers.

AACT will review its safeguarding policies as part of its formal annual cycle of policy reviews.

It is AACT's policy that:

1. All those working on behalf of AACT accept responsibility for the welfare of vulnerable adults who come into contact with AACT in connection with its tasks and functions, and that they will report any concerns about the person's or somebody else's behaviour, using the procedures laid down.
2. There is a Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) within AACT who will take action following any expression of concern and the lines of responsibility in respect of safeguarding are clear. They may be contacted through the telephone numbers given on the website or by email to [dsp@aact.org.uk](mailto:dsp@aact.org.uk)
3. The DSP knows how to make appropriate referrals to relevant agencies.

4. Information relating to any allegation or disclosure will be clearly recorded as soon as possible, and there is a procedure setting out who should record information and the time-scales for passing it on.

5. AACT's policies will be referred to or included in recruitment, training, moderation and policy materials where appropriate, and the policies are openly and widely available to everyone and actively promoted within the organisation.

6. All volunteers and anyone in paid or unpaid work on behalf of AACT with unsupervised access to vulnerable adults will be vetted appropriately.

7. Anybody who encounters concerns in the context of their work on behalf of AACT will be supported when they report their concerns in good faith.

### **Designated safeguarding person**

AACT has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) who is responsible for dealing with any concerns about safeguarding. Contact details are available on the [www.aact.org.uk](http://www.aact.org.uk) website. In the context of vulnerable adults, the role of the DSP is to

1. Know which outside agency to contact in the event of a concern coming to the notice of AACT.

2. Provide information and advice on safeguarding within AACT.

3. Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing under confidential cover.

4. Liaise with appropriate agencies.

5. Keep relevant people within AACT informed about any action taken and any further action required; for example, disciplinary action against a member.

6. Ensure that a proper record is kept of any referral and action taken, and that this is kept safely and in confidence.

7. Advise AACT of safeguarding training needs.

### **Procedure for reporting concerns**

People could have their suspicion or concern raised in a number of ways, the most likely of which are:

1. the conduct of a member of AACT or someone working, volunteering or contracting for AACT
2. a person “disclosing” abuse
3. bruising or evidence of physical hurt
4. unusual behaviour for the person

If someone has such concerns they should be reported to the DSP.

If the concerns relate to the conduct of a member of AACT these should be reported to the DSP immediately. Steps will be taken to fully support anyone who in good faith reports his or her concerns about a colleague and every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality for all parties whilst the allegation is considered.

The DSP will consider the report and either refer this immediately to the authorities or, after taking appropriate advice, decide not to refer the concerns to the authorities but keep a full record of the concerns.

### **Note for volunteers and contractors**

AACT is a small charity, currently with no premises or staff of its own. All our work is done in partnership with other organizations and our contact with beneficiaries and the public will occur on others’ premises and normally under the supervision of a member of the partner organization. In these cases it is important that you follow any safeguarding policies in place at the host organization, for example reporting any concerns to their designated person. If this is impossible in practice, then AACT’s Designated Safeguarding Person should be contacted.

AACT also tends not to have long-term persistent contact with the same individuals. It is quite possible therefore that you will not ‘officially’ know that someone you are talking with is classified as a vulnerable adult. If you have any concerns about the safety of an individual you should report them as outlined below, whether or not you are certain of their ‘official’ vulnerable status, leaving it to professionals in the field to decide on further action.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Recruitment and selection procedures**

AACT has adopted appropriate recruitment and selection procedures for volunteers and consultants in the context of safeguarding and these include the following:

1. A clear definition of any role so that the most suitable appointee can be identified.
2. Identification of key selection criteria.
3. A wide circulation of information about vacancies to ensure equal opportunities.
4. Confirmation of the identity of the applicant.
5. Requirement to declare previous convictions and obtain CRB disclosure for those candidates whose work will bring them into unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults or who will have a management responsibility in relation to those whose work does bring them into such contact.
6. A clear guarantee that disclosed information will be treated in confidence and not used against applicants unfairly, including adherence to the Criminal Records Bureau code of practice.
7. Use of several selection techniques to maximise the chance of safe recruitment, eg interview, references, checks.
8. At least one representative from AACT meeting personally with every applicant, and an exploration of their attitudes towards working with vulnerable people.

## APPENDIX B

### Responding appropriately to someone making an allegation of abuse

1. Stay calm.
2. Listen carefully to what is said.
3. Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – **do not promise to keep secrets.**
4. Tell them that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
5. Allow them to continue at her/his own pace.
6. Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
7. Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in telling you.
8. Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared.
9. As soon as possible, record in writing what was said/communicated, using the person's own words. Note the date, time, any names mentioned and to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
10. 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. That is a task for professionals, following a referral from the Designated Safeguarding Person in the organisation.