

STRATHNAIRN COMMUNITY ACCESS AND TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

Policy and Procedures

Overview

S.C.A.T.A. believes that it is unacceptable for any person to experience abuse or harm of any kind; as such we have a firm commitment to safeguard the welfare and well-being of those who benefit from our services and those who work with us in whatever capacity. Our main target group are vulnerable adults, predominately those who are elderly. Vulnerable adults can be described as those who require or may need community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age and illness and who may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the individual is of paramount importance
 - All people including children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief or identity have the right to protection from all types of abuse and harm
- The purpose of this policy and procedures
- To provide protection for the children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive our services
 - To provide all staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk from, a form of abuse
 - To guide employees and volunteers on responding to and reporting child and vulnerable adult protection concerns.

Who the policy applies to

This policy applies to all staff, meaning all employees, trustees, committee members and volunteers, and other personnel conducting work or services on behalf of S.C.A.T.A.

What is Abuse?

Abuse can be described as a “violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by another person” (definition obtained from Scottish Executive); it can consist of both single or repeated acts and can be physical, verbal, psychological, discriminatory, or an act of neglect or omission.

Recognising Abuse

Staff are not expected to be ‘experts’, however there are a number of circumstances under which staff might have concerns that a child or vulnerable adult is being or has been abused:

- The person may tell us about abuse they are experiencing or have experienced
 - Another person may share concerns surrounding abuse of an individual
- Staff can also be concerned through observing any of the following indicators of abuse (note this list is not exhaustive or indicative of abuse taking place):
- Bruising or injuries on an unusual part of the body (an area not normally prone to injuries)
 - Injuries that require medical attention but have not received any
 - Burns, bruising, or other marks
 - Unexplained changes in behaviour
 - Non attendance in activities, sessions or topics of conversation
 - Reluctance to get changes, for example wearing inappropriate clothing
 - The person not trusting certain adults with whom you would normally expect them to have or once had a close relationship (personal or professional)
 - The person shows an unexplained, disturbed sleeping pattern
 - The person self harms or attempts to self harm
 - The person exhibits sexually inappropriate behaviour

What to do if someone discloses and an abusive act or experience

If a child, vulnerable adult or other persons discloses that they are being or have been abused, they have placed that person (staff member or other person(s) acting on behalf of S.C.A.T.A.) in a position of trust.

Staff should:

- Be clear that they have to pass this information on
- Be calm, panic or fear may frighten or silence the person
- Inform the person making the disclosure that they were right to tell someone
- Make it clear that the person is not to blame
- Take what is said seriously and where possible make an exact note of what is said
- Keep questions to a minimum, asking questions only to clarify what the person has said; it is important not to ask probing questions regarding explicit details – this is a role for the investigating officer from either/both the Police or Social Services
- Make a full record of what is said/seen as soon as possible
- Pass the information onto the Co-ordinator of S.C.A.T.A. without delay

The staff member must record the allegation/incident/suspicion on the designated form: 'Vulnerable Adult and Child Protection – Checklist for reporting suspected abuse'; the form is contained in the appendices. This form must then be passed without delay to the Co-ordinator of S.C.A.T.A. (or other nominated person - in his/her absence a committee member or trustee).

Certain information requested on the form may not be available, staff members should not pursue information or use leading questions to obtain information, it must be freely given. Reporting of the allegation/incident must not be delayed by waiting for all requested information. It is the responsibility of the Co-ordinator (or other person) to decide upon whether to report the matter to the relevant authorities. Referrals should be made the same working day, and not exceeding a period of 24 hours. It is the responsibility of the Co-ordinator (or other person) to decide whether to inform the Carer/Family member/Parent of the person of the referral to the Police and/or Social Services.

In situations where urgent medical attention is required, staff should always (where practical) consult with the Co-ordinator (or other person), but it may be necessary to make immediate contact with the emergency services and/or Social Services.

Responding to allegations of abuse, inappropriate or dangerous behavior against a member of staff

Whilst reasonable steps are taken by S.C.A.T.A. to ensure that all clients, staff, and other persons are protected and kept safe from harm; through a process of selection, training and monitoring, situations may arise where a person regardless of age may make an allegation of abuse or inappropriate conduct against a staff member.

Concerns over staff conduct must be treated in the same manner as other concerns, and reported in the process outlined previously. S.C.A.T.A. will instigate the Disciplinary procedure (if proven or suspected beyond all reasonable doubt) and refer the matter to the relevant authorities if required.

February 2024

Appendices

Appendix I – Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse - Includes hitting, shaking, throwing, slapping, pushing, kicking, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health to a child or vulnerable adult they are looking after. Physical abuse, as well as being the result of a deliberate act, can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Neglect or acts of omission - Persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's basic physical and psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment to health and development. It may involve a carer failing to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in a significant impairment of the child's health or development.

Sexual Abuse - Forcing or enticing a child/young person/vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities to which they have not consented, could not consent or were pressurised into consenting. This includes rape, incest and all forms of sexual activity involving children, including pornography and prostitution.

Emotional Abuse/Psychological Abuse - Persistent emotional ill treatment which is likely to cause serious harm to a child's emotional development. This may involve conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved and inadequate and cause children to feel frightened, in danger, be exploited or corrupted. In vulnerable adults, this can include threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, and verbal abuse

Discriminatory Abuse - Including racial or sexual harassment and also abusive treatment based on a child or vulnerable adult's disability. Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence and ignorance. The abuse may be perpetrated by a wide range of people including family members and relatives, people in positions of power and authority, volunteers, neighbours, friends and associates, as well as strangers. There is particular concern when abuse is perpetrated by someone in power or authority, who uses his or her position to the detriment of the Health, Safety, welfare and general well being of a vulnerable person. Staff should always be alert to situations where they may be witnessing "ABUSE OF TRUST".

Appendix II – Checklist for Reporting Suspected Abuse Vulnerable Adult and Child Protection

Checklist for reporting suspected abuse

Name of Person:

Age and date of Birth:

Carer's/Family member/Parent name(s):

Home address (*and phone number if available*)

Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? Give details.

Brief description of what has prompted the concerns. Include dates, times etc of any specific incidents.

Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?

Have you spoken to the Vulnerable Adult/Child? If so what was said?

Have you spoken to the carer/family member/parents? If so, what was said?

Has anyone alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details

Have you consulted anyone else? Give details.

Your name and position

To whom reported and date of reporting

Signature Today's date