



OPS001

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Version 2.0

21st September 2011

Named person responsible for policy: James Banks, National Services Director

Contact: james.banks@voiceability.org

POLICY STATEMENT

VoiceAbility is committed to promoting the rights of all people to be safe and secure and to be free from any form of abuse.

All VoiceAbility employees and volunteers who have contact with service users will have undergone the enhanced disclosure of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Vetting and Barring Scheme check; they will also be appropriately trained and supported to adhere to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults' Policy and Procedures.

VoiceAbility will take all suspicions of abuse seriously and respond to them appropriately following the procedures outlined in this document.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. VoiceAbility is committed to promoting the rights of all people to be safe and secure and to be free from any form of abuse. All VoiceAbility staff and volunteers have a duty to protect vulnerable adults from abuse and to be alert to the possibility of abuse. **Staff and volunteers should familiarise themselves with this policy and the local safeguarding vulnerable adults procedures.** These will be available on the local authority website and a copy will be in each of the local offices. VoiceAbility staff will take all suspicions of abuse seriously and respond to them appropriately following the procedures outlined in this document.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. For the purpose of this policy a vulnerable adult is defined as anyone 18 years of age and over, who are, or may be, in need of community care services. For example:

- people with mental health needs or mental illness
- people with a physical disability
- people with drug and alcohol related problems
- people with sensory impairment
- people with a learning difficulty/disability
- people who have a physical illness
- people with an acquired brain injury

- 2.2. People who abuse:

- Are often well known to their victims but can be strangers
- Might be a relative, partner, son or daughter, friend or neighbour, a paid or voluntary worker or a health and social care worker.
- Could be another vulnerable adult or service user
- May not realise they are abusing and can sometimes act out of character and abuse because of the stress of caring.

2.3. Abuse can take place in a wide range of setting such as:

- The vulnerable adult's own home.
- A carer's home
- A day centre
- A care home
- A hospital
- The workplace
- Educational institutions
- The community and public places

3. RECOGNITION

3.1. The 'No Secrets' Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse defines abuse as "the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons".

3.2. The abuse of vulnerable adults can take many forms (see also Appendix B for Indicators of Abuse), such as:

3.2.1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may include physical assault ranging from rough, inappropriate or careless handling, to direct violence – hitting, slapping, pushing or kicking. It can include medical mistreatment such as the misuse of medication and the withholding or inappropriately altering medication or treatment regimes. It is also the misuse of restraint.

3.2.2. Psychological/Emotional Abuse

Psychological or emotional abuse may include verbal abuse, threats, bullying, racial abuse, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

3.2.3. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse may include rape and sexual assault, or sexual acts and inappropriate touching to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent, or was pressured into consenting or acts of a sexual nature where one of the participants is in a position of trust, power or authority.

3.2.4. Financial or Material Abuse

Financial abuse may include improper use of, or withholding, a person's money or property; theft, fraud, exploitation or pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance.

3.2.5. Neglect or Acts of Omission

Neglect could include ignoring medical, physical or social care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of daily living needs, such as medication, food and drink, and heating.

3.2.6. Discriminatory Abuse

Discriminatory abuse may include racist or sexist remarks or comments based upon a person's impairment, origin, colour, disability, age, illness, sexual orientation or gender, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

3.2.7. Institutional Abuse

Institutional abuse includes the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to vulnerable people. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to discrimination through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, stereotyping, or, malicious intent. It includes failure to ensure necessary safeguards in place to protect vulnerable adults and maintain good standards of care in accordance with individual needs, including training of staff, supervision and management, record keeping and liaising with other care providers.

3.3. Self Harm and Suicidal Behaviours

In their own right, self-harming and/or suicidal behaviours do not fall under the safeguarding procedures. In the event of life threatening actions having taken place then ring 999. If you consider there may be a need to disclose information to someone else please consult the confidentiality policy or discuss with your line manager.

4. ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN CASES OF ALLEGED/SUSPECTED ABUSE

- 4.1. It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to report abuse and **not** your responsibility to investigate it further. This is because asking questions may compromise future investigations by the police or local authority.
- 4.2. If the vulnerable adult is in danger first ensure they are safe and if immediate help is needed, call the emergency services on 999.
- 4.3. If abuse is discovered or suspected this must be reported at the earliest opportunity to the local authority following the procedure outlined below.
- 4.4. If a member of VoiceAbility staff is thought to have abused, this procedure must be followed and HR informed. Staff may also use the whistle blowing policy.

- 4.5. If the allegation of abuse comes from a third party then this needs to be reported in the same way; the alerter needs to be clear with the local authority where the allegation has come from and record this on the reporting form in Appendix C.
- 4.6. Where appropriate VoiceAbility managers need to give consideration to contacting the police or the Care Quality Commission **in addition** to the local authority.
- 4.7. If you work in an host organisation you may need to inform them **as well** as the local authority. You need to discuss this with your line manager; if you speak to another manager please bring the fact that you work in a host organisation to their attention.
- 4.8. If the person is funded by another local authority then you need to alert the authority where the person resides, as well as the authority with responsibility for funding. The authority where the person lives will have responsibility for any investigations.

5. REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR CASES OF ALLEGED/SUSPECTED ABUSE

- 5.1. Only ask the person sufficient questions to establish what has happened i.e. accident or possible abuse.
- 5.2. Give consideration as to whether the person can be supported to raise the alert themselves.
- 5.3. Inform your line manager or another manager at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.4. If danger exists, ensure that the person and any other vulnerable adults are protected.
- 5.5. If a person is seriously injured seek immediate medical treatment and report to your line manager at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.6. Be careful not to destroy or contaminate evidence.
- 5.7. The VoiceAbility manager will work with you to decide if a safeguarding alert should be made and support you with making this alert to the local authority. For volunteers, contact should be made with the volunteer co-ordinator or in their absence any manager.
- 5.8. As soon as possible complete the safeguarding form including when and to whom within the local authority the abuse was reported. Documentation may be required for criminal proceedings at a later date. The alert should be followed up in writing. It is important to know what action is to be, or has been, taken following the alert, and contact with the local authority must be made to establish this.

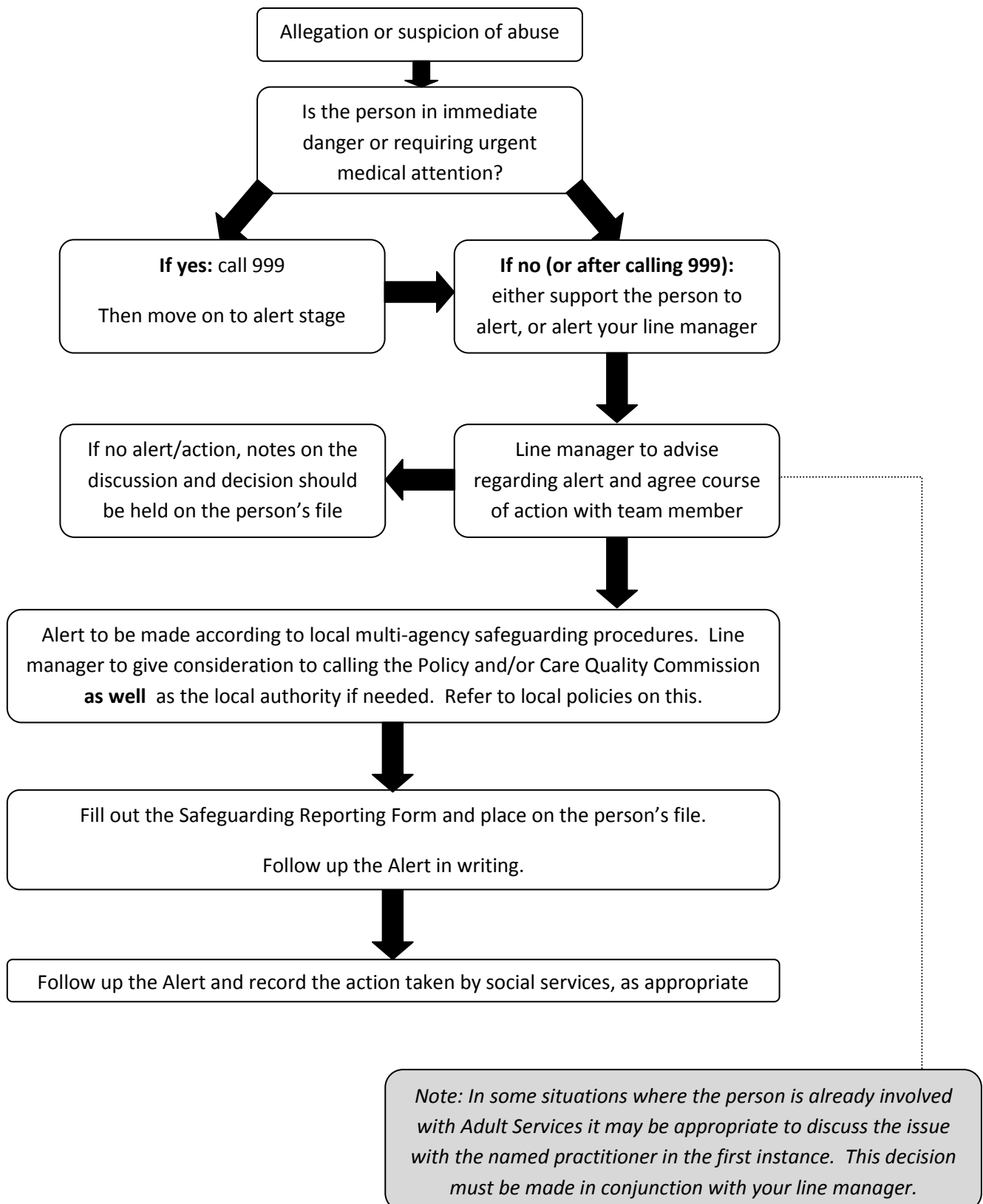
5.9. See Appendix A for flow chart summarising reporting procedures.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

6.1. People have a right to expect that all staff and volunteers will deal sensitively and sympathetically with their situation. It is important that information remains confidential and that only those with a 'need to know' should be privy to it.

7. SAFE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

7.1. All VoiceAbility employees and volunteers who have contact with service users will have undergone the enhanced disclosure of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Vetting and Barring Scheme check. They will also be appropriately trained and supported to adhere to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults' Policy and Procedures.

APPENDIX A – SUMMARY OF ACTIONS AND REPORTING PROCEDURE

APPENDIX B – INDICATORS OF ABUSE

Physical Abuse:

- Unexplained bruising: some types of bruising are particularly characteristic of physical abuse. Bruising may be faint or severe. There may be a pattern to the bruising e.g. when and where it occurs
- Non-accidental injury;
- Hand slap marks
- Marks made by an implement
- Pinch or grab marks, or grip marks – this could indicate that the person has been shaken, inappropriately restrained, or forcibly removed
- Black eyes

Psychological/Emotional Abuse:

- Denied access to social activities and other services
- Denied time alone with other people
- Appears scared, anxious or withdrawn
- Unexplained sleep disturbances
- Referred to in a disrespectful manner
- A reluctance to accept medical attention
- Humiliated in front of others

Financial Abuse:

- Sudden inability to pay bills
- Apparent lack of knowledge of income
- Disparity between income and satisfactory living conditions
- Extraordinary interest from other in person's finances
- Unauthorised disposal of property, possessions
- Under pressure to make or alter a will

Sexual Abuse:

- Disclosure by means of hints and veiled comments
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes
- Fear of pregnancy that may be exaggerated
- Difficulty in walking/sitting with no apparent explanation
- Bleeding, bruising, torn tissue or injury to the rectal and vaginal area
- Self-mutilation

Institutional Abuse:

- Is unacceptable practice encouraged, tolerated or left unchallenged?
- Are service users respected and treated with dignity?
- Are the staff well-treated and do they enjoy their work?
- Are the staff given appropriate training?
- Is there a high staff turnover?
- Does the organisation have a safeguarding adults' policy?

APPENDIX C – REPORTING FORM**Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults****CONFIDENTIAL**

Please return the completed form immediately to your line manager

Your Name:	Reported/Referred to:
Position:	Date/Time:
Details of Service User:	
Name:	Telephone:
Address:	
Age/DoB:	Gender:
Has service user given consent for referral?	
Details of Carer (if relevant):	
Name:	Telephone:
Address (if different from above):	
Relationship to vulnerable person:	
Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? Please give details:	

Brief description of what has prompted these concerns:

Details of alleged perpetrators (if known):

Name:

Telephone:

Address:

Relationship to vulnerable person:

Date and time of incident(s)/disclosure:

Have you spoken to the vulnerable person? If so, as accurately as possible, report what was said and done by whom. Continue on separate sheet if necessary:

Record indicators of abuse (see list) and any supporting evidence:
Further action taken by yourself (if any) or the Service User:
Name and contact details of any External Agencies contacted (if any):
Details of any advice received:
Name and job title of person to whom this report is being passed:

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

Time:

For completion by your line manager

Date/Time received:

Reference no./Case no.

Details of further action taken (person(s) contacted and when) :**Details of follow up:**

Date	Person(s) contacted	Details	Action Taken

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

Time:

Copies of this form should be held with the person's file and by the Line Manager.