

## **SAFEGUARDING NOTES** (these notes should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy)

### **1 Children & Young People**

RCL strongly believes all children and young people have a right to protection from harm. All RCL volunteers & trustees need to understand their responsibilities to safeguard children and promote their welfare and are clear about actions they must take if they have concerns about a child's welfare.

All organisations which make provision for children and young people must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child / young person is paramount.
- All children and young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicion and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All volunteers and trustees have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

A child is defined by the Children Act 1989 as anyone less than 18 years of age. Everyone should follow the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008 and any Local Safeguarding Children Board protocols for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children. They must know who to contact to express concerns about a child's welfare.

#### **RCL believes that:**

- All child abuse contravenes children and young people's rights.
- All children and young people have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- The situation for all children and young people must be improved through promotion of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation.
- Child abuse is never acceptable.
- We have a commitment to protecting children and young people with/for whom we work.
- When we work through partners, they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards for the safeguarding of children and young people in their programmes.

## 2 Vulnerable Adults

Protection from abuse should become an integral part of the policy and practice of all organisations working with, or coming into contact with, adults at risk.

The broad definition of a vulnerable or an 'at risk' adult is:

'A person who is 18 years of age or over, and 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/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation'. (*Law Commission – Who decides?: Making decisions on behalf of mentally incapacitated adults 1997*)

People with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people and disabled people may fall within this definition. All adults at risk have a right to protection from harm.

We must ensure that:

- All adults at risk, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicion and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All volunteers & trustees have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.
- All partner agencies and organisations must co-operate with each other on issues relating to the identification, investigation, treatment and prevention of abuse of adults at risk.
- Each agency has a responsibility to share information on a 'need to know' basis so that effective decisions can be made and appropriate preventative action taken.

**RCL believes that:**

- All adults at risk have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- Abuse of adults at risk is never acceptable.
- We have a commitment to protecting adults at risk with/for whom we work.
- When we work with partners, they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards for protection of adults at risk in their programmes.

## Core Values and Principles:

- Adults at risk have the right to privacy, dignity, independence, self-determination, choice, fulfilment and the maintenance of all the rights and entitlements associated with citizenship.
- A person's right to involvement in decision-making is promoted to the fullest capacity.
- A person is enabled to protect him/herself from harm.
- Involvement of others significant to the person's life is identified and supported.
- The response is appropriate and only as intensive as the situation demands.
- An adult at risk and the alleged abuser have the right to the protection of the law.
- An adult at risk will have the opportunity and right to comment or complain about the service they receive.
- Adults at risk will have the opportunity and right to independent advice and advocacy when they request it. This will also apply to those adults at risk who are incapable of making such a request but are deemed in need of such independent advice and advocacy.
- The awareness and understanding of other agencies, organisations and the public is raised and with it, a commitment to respond.

## 3 DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

### Children and Young People

The term child abuse is used to describe ways in which children and young people are harmed, usually by adults and often by those they know and trust. There are four main types of abuse, though a child may experience more than one kind at any one time.

- **Physical Abuse** - Occasions when parents, carers, adults or other children deliberately inflict injuries on a child or knowingly do not prevent such injuries. It includes injury caused by hitting, shaking, biting, burning, giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison and attempts to drown or suffocate them.
- **Emotional abuse** – Occasions when adults fail to show children and young people due care and attention or threaten, use sarcasm, taunt or shout at a child / young person causing loss of self-confidence or self-esteem. These may also occur when an adult repeatedly ignores or fails to respond to a child's progress or places unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations constantly.
- **Neglect** – Occasions where adults fail to meet a child / young person's essential needs, such as adequate food, warmth, clothing and medical care. It also includes occasions where children and young people are left alone without proper supervision.
- **Sexual Abuse** – Occasions where males and females use children and young people to meeting their own sexual needs.

## Adults at Risk.

- **Physical Abuse** – includes hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, undue restraint or inappropriate sanctions. Possible indicators include: multiple bruising, which is not consistent with the explanation given; cowering and flinching; unusually sleepy or docile.
- **Sexual Abuse** – includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not, or could not, consent and/or was pressured into consenting. Possible indicators include: unexplained and uncharacteristic changes in behaviour; excessive washing; deliberate self-harm.
- **Psychological Abuse** – includes threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Possible indicators include: anxiety, confusion or general resignation; loss of confidence; excessive or inappropriate craving for attention.
- **Financial Abuse** – includes theft, fraud, pressure around wills, property or inheritance, misuse or misappropriation of benefits. Possible indicators include: unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills; sudden withdrawal of money from accounts; personal possessions going missing.

Whilst not classified as an individual category of abuse, racial and homophobia motivated abuse can take any of the above forms and needs to be noted.

## 4 GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

All volunteers & trustees should be actively encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. Adherence to the good practice guidelines also helps to ensure and maintain the good reputation of RCL.

The following are practical examples of how to create a positive, non-threatening culture and climate.

### **Promoting good practice.**

Abuse, particularly of a child, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand those feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate course of action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school, sports or arts environment or a social care setting. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with people at risk in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, mentor or volunteer will have regular contact with people at risk and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

### **Good practice in reality means:**

- Always working in an open environment e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations.
- Being aware of personal space and keeping an appropriate distance.
- Treating all people at risk with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of people at risk first.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust, which empowers people at risk to share in the decision making process.
- Being an excellent role model e.g. not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children and young people.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act *in loco parentis*, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and / or other medical treatment to children or young people.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs or any extraordinary situation.
- Attaining written consent if volunteers & trustees are required to transport children and young people in their cars.

## 5 PREVENTION OF ABUSE – DEVELOPING POSITIVE SERVICE CULTURES & GOOD PRACTICE

- Wherever possible, abuse must be prevented. Creating 'safe care' or support for people at risk involves a holistic approach, which is centred upon the needs of the cared-for/supported person. It also recognises that this will only be achieved through effective recruitment, induction, support, training and management of volunteers & trustees.
- Volunteers & trustees are encouraged to be alert and to feel confident about reporting abuse.
- Volunteers & trustees should be aware of signs and causes of abuse in both community and service settings. Detailed knowledge and understanding of procedures are underpinned by appropriate and ongoing training and support.
- A good balance is maintained between confidentiality and positive information sharing.

### What we will do:

RCL will meet our commitment to protect people at risk from abuse through the following means:

**Awareness:** We will ensure that all volunteers & trustees are aware of the issues of safeguarding and the risks to vulnerable groups.

**Prevention:** We will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that all volunteers & trustees minimise the risks to people at risk.

**Reporting:** We will ensure that all volunteers & trustees are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of people at risk.

**Responding:** We will ensure that action is taken to support and protect people at risk where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

### RCL Roles and Responsibilities

RCL will:

- appoint a designated lead person for safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk.
- Ensure volunteers & trustees are aware of their own safeguarding responsibilities and can identify the designated lead person.
- require volunteers & trustees to adhere to the Safeguarding Policy and Notes.
- will review the Safeguarding Policy and Notes regularly.