

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

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1. Introduction

This policy is based on UK guidelines for child protection (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010). It outlines our commitment to safeguard all children, young people and vulnerable adults. We believe that everyone has the right to protection from abuse regardless of their gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

Many of the people who work / volunteer with and through Refugee Radio are vulnerable (children, older people, disabled people, people with mental health issues). It is important that Refugee Radio provides a safe environment for them. If you are worried or confused about anything in these guidelines please contact the Chief Executive.

Abuse can be sexual, physical, emotional, economic, or it could be that you suspect someone vulnerable is being neglected. Although bullying is not defined as a form of abuse in "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010"¹ there is clear evidence

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<http://publications.education.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00305-2010>



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that abusive and serious bullying (including cyber bullying) can frequently cause fear, exploitation or corruption.

Refugee Radio has adopted the ASIST framework for dealing with people who are suicidal (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training). All staff and all volunteers working directly with vulnerable clients on the mental health project will be required to complete this training prior to working with the client group. This is a two-day course certificated by Grassroots ASIST.

All staff working directly with clients on the mental health project will access external clinical supervision independently of their regular line-management supervision (for example by the Chief Executive). This is in line with best practice for mental health professionals delivering clinical interventions. This external clinical supervision will be provided by Amy Hutson (or other suitably qualified therapist appointed by Refugee Radio).

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, freelancers, volunteers and Trustees.

3. Legal requirements

There is a range of relevant legislation including: Children Act 1989; Children Act 2004; Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; Disability Discrimination Act 2005; Mental Capacity Act 2005; the Data Protection Act 1998 (children and young people and project photography); the Equality Act 2010 (protected characteristics). These contain specific requirements such as those around notifying child protection agencies of allegations of abuse.

4. Definitions

The term child/children is used throughout this document and is to be read as meaning children and young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday.

The term vulnerable adult is used throughout this document and is defined as in the “No Secrets” guidelines published by the Department of Health in 2000 as someone “who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, of age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.” As a general rule, it should be presumed that any Refugee Radio client does or potentially does meet the definition of vulnerable by dint of qualifying for Refugee Radio’s service catchment.

5. Organisational responsibilities

Each individual is responsible for capturing any abuse or potential abuse and reporting it immediately to the Safeguarding Officer (Steve Silverwood).

The Chief Executive is responsible for investigating all cases and referring them to other agencies if necessary. The Chief Executive is responsible for this policy.

Any issues involving the Chief Executive would be referred upwards to the Trustee board.



6. Procedure

5 areas of concern to be aware of when working with vulnerable adults:

1. Suicide
2. Self harm
3. Danger to others
4. Abuse
5. Neglect

If the person concerned is an adult, then concerns will be passed on to social services / relevant agencies only with their wishes / agreement UNLESS we believe they or someone else are at serious risk of harm in which case we would do so in any case. In this instance, we would use the emergency numbers listed below or call Brighton and Hove Adult Social Care advice line on 01273 295555 (or 0345 608 0191) , as appropriate with the nature of the concern.

6.1 Dealing with vulnerable people

When working / volunteering with vulnerable people all staff and volunteers are expected to:

- Treat people with respect
- Use appropriate language and challenge any inappropriate language used
- If you need to talk to a vulnerable person on their own, meet in a place that is open and public
- Be aware of personal boundaries including physical contact

6.2 Dealing with someone you suspect is being abused

It is important that you know what to do if you suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused at work, at home or in the volunteering setting. If you are concerned that abuse may be taking place you should refer the matter immediately to the Chief Executive (Stephen Silverwood 07920 886356) who will assess whether to investigate or report the matter further. If for any reason the Chief Executive cannot be contacted, ring the NSPCC Helpline for further advice on 0800 800 5000.

If further investigation is necessary the matter will be referred to Social Services. If you feel the child or vulnerable adult is at risk of significant harm or in immediate danger contact the Police by dialling 999.

In the event of referral to the Social Services, copies of all relevant correspondence must be filed and copied to the Chief Executive.

Even if something seems quite small it is important to discuss it with the Chief Executive. It could be that other people have also noticed something wrong.

Do not try to investigate it further yourself; it is important that the situation is dealt with in an appropriate manner.

If someone tells you that they are being abused:

- Take them seriously and reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Listen to them but don't question them or try to investigate further
- Never promise not to tell anyone else, explain that you will have to report it to someone who can help them
- As soon as possible write down what they have told you so that you don't forget and report to the Chief Executive.
- The Chief Executive will report to the local safeguarding board to check whether any further action needs to be taken
- Remember that until the police or social services investigate it is important that you do not discuss anything with anyone else. You may well need to talk to someone because you feel worried or stressed by the situation. If so, speak to the Chief Executive and they can find an appropriate person who will be able to support you and talk to you.

Refugee Radio wants to ensure that all concerns, and allegations of abuse will be dealt with appropriately - this may require a referral to children's or vulnerable adult care services and if necessary, the Police.

Refugee Radio will undertake safe recruitment, selection and vetting processes including enhanced DBS checks for relevant staff and volunteers. We will make sure that all new staff and volunteers read and then sign that they have understood the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and procedures. We will review all policies and good practice regularly.

6.2 Reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse

Disclosure:

- Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as the protection of the child or vulnerable adult should always have precedence over any other issues.
- Listen to the child /vulnerable adult rather than question him or her directly. Offer him / her reassurance without making promises, and take what they say seriously.
- Allow the child/vulnerable adult to speak without interruption. Accept what is said – it is not your role to investigate or question. Do not overreact or pass judgement.
- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on. Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event, Use the child's words or explanations – do not translate into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the child was trying to say.
- Contact Chief Executive for advice and/or guidance.
- The Chief Executive may then discuss the concern / suspicion with the relevant organisation, and, if appropriate, make a direct referral.
- Record any discussions or actions taken within 24 hours.



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In any case where an allegation is made, or someone has concerns, a report should be made and accurate records kept. Details must include, as far as practical:

- Name of child or vulnerable person
- Age (if under 16)
- Home Address (if known)
- Date of Birth (if known)
- Name/s and Address of parent/s or person/s with parental responsibility
- Telephone numbers if available
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of somebody else? If so, record details
- What has prompted the concerns?
- Include dates and times of any specific incidents
- Has the child or vulnerable person been spoken to?
- If so, what was said?
- Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser?
- If so, record details
- Who has this been passed on to, in order that appropriate action is taken? e.g. school, designated officer, social services etc
- Has anyone else been consulted?
- If so, record details

The Chief Executive will inform the relevant outside organisation of the incident.

Record keeping:

All client information will be recorded on our secure database (CharityLog). Every entry is logged with time, date and the identity of the person recording it. Every contact and action shall be logged, especially in connection with a safeguarding concern. Any case where there is a risk or safeguarding incident identified shall be flagged ****Risk Assessment****. When opening any flagged case for the first time, all users shall review the notes under the risk assessment. These notes are “live” and can be edited at any time, so a copy of each entry shall also be separately recorded in the uneditable case history section of that client’s record.

All physical records, information and confidential notes should be kept in separate files in a locked drawer or filing cabinet. The Chief Executive will have access to these files

6.3 Dealing with suicidal ideation and suicide attempts

It is possible that at some point a vulnerable adult or child may have suicidal thoughts. You will feel much more confident about dealing with the situation if you’ve considered what steps to take before it happens. Don’t shy away from the subject, if you think that someone is contemplating suicide talk to them about it. Talking will not make it any more likely to happen and you will be able to assess what the risk is and what kind of help they might need. It is OK to ask directly if they are thinking of taking their life, as you need to find out how much consideration they’ve given to it.

Refugee Radio has adopted the ASIST suicide intervention framework. If possible you should find a member of the organisation who has completed the “suicide first



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aid” training and ask them to help you deal with the person who is suicidal. If this is not possible then follow these steps and ensure you debrief with a supervisor to discuss completing the training yourself in future.

1. **Ask directly** if the person is thinking about suicide. Respond to clues.
2. **Listen to the reasons** why they feel the way they do. Encourage the person to talk. Notice any reasons to live. Discuss the “ambivalence”: the conflict between the part of them that wants to die and the part that wants to live.
3. **Review the risks:**
 - a. Do they have a current plan?
 - b. Do they have any resources/support from others?
 - c. Are they receiving treatment for a mental health issue?
 - d. Have they made any previous suicide attempts?
4. Agree with the person that you need to establish a **safeplan**.
 - a. Deal with each issue in the risk review e.g. if they are planning on an overdose then try to come up with a plan for what you will do with the pills for now.
5. In all cases **keep yourself safe**. Do not get involved physically if the person is distressed and threatening.
6. **Ensure the person is not left alone:**
 - Stay with them if you think that the risk of suicide is high; and/or
 - Arrange for someone to be with them while they get through the immediate crisis.
 - Make a commitment for future resources.

EMERGENCY HELP OPTIONS:

- You can call 999 in an extreme emergency. They may send police as well as, or instead of, ambulance.
- If urgent then contact Brighton Urgent Response Service on 01273 242220 (or 0300 304 0078) or take the person to a hospital accident and emergency department (A&E).
- If less urgent then take the person to a GP or call the emergency duty service if out of hours: 01273 29555
- Otherwise you can call Sussex Mental Healthline: 0300 5000 101 advice line or call the NHS 24 helpline (information and advice is available in culturally appropriate languages): 111 or 0845 4647

6.4 Dealing with self-harm

Self-harm is a deliberate act by someone who intends to harm themselves in some way. There are many ways in which people self-harm including cutting, burning,



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causing physical harm by banging against something or hitting, scratching or poisoning.

- **Don't force anything** – Let the person raise and talk about it, let them choose how much they wish to disclose.
- **Don't take it personally** – Self-harm is about the person, not the people around them. People do not harm themselves to be dramatic, annoy others or to make a point.
- **Understand your feelings** – Be honest with yourself about how this self-harm makes you feel. It is OK to be apprehensive.
- **Be supportive without reinforcing the behaviour** – It is important that the person who self-harms knows that you are there to talk to for support. Set aside your personal feelings about the behaviour and focus on what's going on for your mentee. Be clear about your boundaries and what you can and can't do.
- **Take care of yourself** – Talking about self-harm can be emotionally draining. Take a break if you feel you need to.
- **Acknowledge the pain of the person** – Accepting and acknowledging that someone is in pain doesn't make the pain go away, but it can make it more bearable.

Five basic steps when encountering anyone experiencing significant mental distress:

1. Assess risk of suicide or self-harm
2. Listen non-judgementally
3. Give reassurance and information
4. Encourage the person to get appropriate professional help
5. Encourage self-help strategies

If you believe the situation is life threatening call 999 or 112 then inform the relevant person such as project coordinator or Chief Executive.

7. References to other relevant policies

- Staff Handbook
- Equality and diversity
- Health and Safety
- Volunteer policy
- Recruitment policy
 - In particular this policy overlaps with the requirement to assess a potential worker's awareness of suicide prevention and safeguarding through application, in person at the interview and through corroboration of References
 - Via the mandatory DBS check for all staff and volunteers
 - Through the Induction Policy which covers the signing of this policy

See also: ASIST Suicide Intervention Skills Training Handbook (copy in Policies and Procedures folder)



8. Declaration

I have read, understood and acknowledge receipt of the Safeguarding & Vulnerable Adults Policy. I will comply with the guidelines set out in this policy and understand that failure to do so might result in disciplinary or legal action.

Signature:

Date:
