

**Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre
Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedure**

Last Reviewed: June 2019

Next Review: June 2020

Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

Purpose

This document sets out the organisation's overall approach to protecting vulnerable adults from abuse. It is supported by procedures which detail *how* this policy is to be carried out by staff, volunteers and trustees.

Legal Framework

Laws exist to protect vulnerable adults, including,

Data Protection Act 1998

Human Rights Act 1998

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Protecting of Freedoms Act 2012

Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice: 0-25 years –
Statutory Guidance

LOCAL CONTEXT

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following external documents:

- Gloucestershire County Council: Adult Safeguarding: Multi-agency policy and procedures for the protection of adults with care and support needs in Gloucestershire.
<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adults-and-older-people/report-suspected-abuse-safeguarding-adults-at-risk/>
- Gloucestershire Mental Capacity Act Multi-Agency Policy, Procedures and Guidance
<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adults-and-older-people/mental-capacity-act-2005-multi-agency-policy-procedure-and-guidance/>

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

1. GRASAC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults who use its services.
2. Vulnerable adults are people aged over 18 years who are or may be in need of community care services because of disability, age or illness and may be unable to take of themselves or to protect themselves from harm or exploitation (No Secrets 2000; Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006).

Community Care services are provided to the following:

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- People with learning disabilities
- People with physical disabilities
- People with mental ill health
- People with drug or alcohol dependencies
- People with certain types of physical illness
- People with dementia
- People who are frail due to age or other factors
- People who are homeless

The types of abuse experienced by vulnerable adults include;

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse and exploitation
- Neglect
- Psychological abuse
- Financial abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Institutional abuse

3. GRASAC will:

- Ensure that all staff, volunteers and Trustees have enhanced DBS checks and are precluded from involvement in the organisation as appropriate (see separate DBS Policy).
- Ensure that all individuals providing 1:1 Support complete Adults Level 3 Safeguarding Training
- Provide clear and detailed procedures on decision making, accountability and recording of vulnerable adult safeguarding situations
- Provide thorough and effective training to staff and volunteers on vulnerable adults protection procedures
- Appoint a member of staff to be the Designated Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer and someone to deputise for the designated person when they are not available
- Provide regular and consistent supervision and support to volunteers and staff which have as their basis, the safety and welfare of clients (whether adults or children)
- Ensure that the organisation is able to learn from specific vulnerable adult protection situations and to review policy and procedures as a result if necessary
- Maintain a current knowledge of vulnerable adult protection procedures nationally and within Gloucestershire
- Promote empowerment and autonomy for adults, including those who lack capacity for a particular decision as embodied in the Mental Capacity Act 2005, implementing an approach which appropriately balances this with safeguarding.
- Report any serious safeguarding incidents to the Charity Commission in line with regulatory requirements for charities in England and Wales <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission> and make contact with Adult Safeguarding Board for advice and guidance.

4. The organisation operates a confidential service but if it is assessed that a vulnerable adult is being abused then confidentiality can be breached within procedural guidelines. In this event, a volunteer is expected to discuss the action they propose to take with a service user beforehand unless it is the trained assessment of the Designated (or deputy) Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Officer that this would place the vulnerable adult at greater risk.
5. If it is felt that a vulnerable adult is at risk of significant harm through abuse or neglect and the details of the vulnerable adult are known, the designated agency in Gloucestershire should be contacted following discussion and agreement of any actions with the Designated Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Officer.
6. All discussions about specific vulnerable adult protection situations need to be recorded by the volunteer/worker and Designated (or deputy) Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Officer, regardless of the eventual action taken.

Vulnerable Adult Protection Procedures

Purpose

This document sets out what action will be taken if it is suspected that a vulnerable adult is at risk of abuse. It is supported by a Vulnerable Adults Policy which sets out the overall approach of GRASAC to protecting vulnerable adults from abuse.

1. General Procedure

The Designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer for GRASAC is the Service Manager. If the Service Manager is not available the Service Director needs to be contacted. If neither is available, the specified trustee who needs to be contacted (as Deputy Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Officer) is Louise Livesey.

No individual volunteer or worker will be expected to make a decision regarding the protection of vulnerable adults alone

No volunteer should make a referral regarding an adult who may be at risk, or break confidentiality without prior discussion with, and preferably the agreement of, the Designated (or deputy) Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Officer

2. Confidentiality

3. Confidentiality in this respect refers to the requirement not to share anything about a service user without their consent to anyone outside of GRASAC. It is vital that information is shared within the organisation so that the safest decisions are made.

Maintaining the confidentiality of those who use GRASAC is a vital part of the ethos of the organisation and, generally, this can be assured. However, when a worker or volunteer has a strong suspicion that a vulnerable adult is at risk of harm, the responsibility to safeguard the vulnerable adult overrides that of confidentiality to a

service user or colleague. Volunteers and workers **MUST** break confidentiality if necessary, in these circumstances.

At the start of any work being carried out, it will be clearly explained that confidentiality cannot be maintained where the volunteer/worker believes that there is danger to a client or risk to others by the client. Volunteers/workers need to be clear with vulnerable adults about where boundaries lie. Vulnerable adults can be reassured that no information can be disclosed without their consent, **unless related to a significant risk to their life, the lives of others or the welfare of a child.**

If confidentiality cannot be maintained, the information will only be shared with relevant people.

Whenever there is either evidence or suspicion of abuse the volunteer/worker concerned will discuss these concerns with the vulnerable adult. The volunteer/worker will explain clearly to the vulnerable adult the reasons for having to pass information on to other professionals and the procedures for dealing with Safeguarding.

Vulnerable adults will be kept informed of decisions by GRASAC and supported appropriately.

4. Consent

Generally, GRASAC works on the basis of consent and in many situations consent to take action can be sought from a service user without compromising their safety but consent must not be sought if it may place a vulnerable adult at greater risk. If the vulnerable adult is deemed to be at risk of immediate harm, the Designated (or deputy) Children's Safeguarding Officer can decide to make a report without the consent of the vulnerable adult.

5. What to do if you think a vulnerable adult is being abused or neglected in any situation

A volunteer/worker may be given direct information about a vulnerable adult who is currently at risk of harm or they may be given information which leads them to a professional judgement that a vulnerable adult is being harmed or is at risk of harm.

The volunteer/worker with immediate concerns about safeguarding should report the matter to the Designated (or deputy) Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours. The Designated (or deputy) Vulnerable Adult Officer will discuss the situation with the volunteer/worker, which will be recorded, signed and dated as will subsequent decisions. The Designated Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Officer (or deputy) will decide whether to report to the Police (if the child is in immediate danger) or Local Adult Safeguarding Board (if risk of harm of not imminent) via GCC's designated helpdesk. Click on this link for the procedure to report:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adults-and-older-people/report-suspected-abuse-safeguarding-adults-at-risk/>

If there is consent from the service user to make a safeguarding referral then this can be agreed and made immediately by telephone by the Service Manager and followed up in writing within 24 hours. The contact details are provided at the end of this document.

If gaining consent from a service user may place a Vulnerable Adult at greater risk of harm then this route is not an option and referrals should only be made by GRASAC.

If there is no consent from the child Vulnerable Adult or the client (where they are not the vulnerable adult) to make a safeguarding referral and no identifying details are available regarding the Vulnerable Adult, then no referral can be made by GRASAC but the Vulnerable Adult or adult client can be encouraged to make the referral themselves.

Situations where no referral is possible may still leave volunteer/worker with uncomfortable feelings and these should be discussed in person with the Service Manager, Volunteer Co-ordinator and/or at Supervision Meetings.

6. What to do if you suspect a Staff Member, Volunteer or Trustee is abusing a Vulnerable Adult

If the information you have regarding risk to a Vulnerable Adult relates to abuse by a member of GRASAC you should immediately inform the Service Director. If the allegation concerns the Director, you should speak directly to the Trustee Deputy Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Officer.

The member of GRASAC will be suspended immediately for the duration of the Police or Social work investigation and any subsequent disciplinary action (as laid out in the relevant GRASAC Handbook) on the authority of the Designated Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Officer and a member of the Board of Trustees. This is not an assumption of guilt but serves to allow the appropriate investigation to take place and protects the member of staff or volunteer from further allegations.

7. Record Keeping

Records must be made of discussions, decisions and actions taken at all stages of the procedure, clearly indicating who was present.

Records will be kept securely in a confidential place in the GRASAC office.

8. Contact Details for Referrals:

Service Manager – Magdalena Gulcz-Hayward – 07864 650087

Director – Maggie Stewart – 07760 787856

Trustee Board Member (Dr. Louise Livesey) – 07944 933709

Gloucestershire County Council adult help desk on 01452 426868 (Mon to Fri 8am to 5pm) and / or email socialcare.enq@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Out of hours - Adult Services Emergency Duty Team on 01452 614194.

If concerned about the immediate safety of a vulnerable adult the police should be contacted (at any time) by dialling 101.