

## **Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy of the Leeds Writers' Circle**

### **Introduction**

The characteristics of adult abuse can take a number of forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s). Victims may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach with their worries.

There may be some situations where victims are unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this information to others.

### **Aim of Policy**

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all circle members are clear about their responsibilities.

### **Definition**

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

This **may** include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental illness including dementia
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless

### **What is abuse?**

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take a number of forms:

- a) Physical abuse e.g. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, neglect or abandonment
- b) Sexual abuse e.g. involvement in any sexual activity against his/her

will, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism

- c) Emotional/psychological abuse e.g. intimidation or humiliation
- d) Financial abuse e.g. theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money from pensions or savings etc.
- e) Neglect or acts of omission e.g. being left in wet or soiled clothing, or malnutrition
- f) Discriminatory abuse e.g. racial, sexual or religious harassment
- g) Personal exploitation - involves denying an individual his/her rights or forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will
- h) Violation of rights e.g. preventing an individual speaking his/her thoughts and opinions
- i) Institutional abuse e.g. failure to provide a choice of meals or failure to ensure privacy or dignity

### Reporting Procedures

If the allegation or suspicion of abuse is discovered by a member, then they should inform a member of the committee as soon as possible. The member of the committee will then inform the member responsible for adult protection (or in his absence, the Chairman). A committee member discovering an allegation or suspicion of abuse will, similarly, report it to the member responsible for adult protection.

The committee member should make a written record of the allegation or suspicion of abuse (see appendix 1) and discuss the situation with the member responsible for adult protection.

If a member has been told about the allegation of abuse in confidence, they should attempt to gain the consent of the member to make a referral to another agency. However, the gaining of the consent is not essential in order for information to be passed on. Consideration needs to be given to:

1. The scale of the abuse
2. The risk of harm to others
3. The capacity of the member to understand the issues of abuse and consent

If there is any doubt about whether or not to report an issue to Social Services then it should be reported.

In emergency situations (e.g. where there is the risk or occurrence or severe

physical injury), where immediate action is needed to safeguard the health or safety of the individual or anyone else who may be at risk, the emergency services must be contacted.

Where a crime is taking place, has just occurred or is suspected, the police must be contacted immediately.

### **Responsibilities**

All members have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions that they might have concerning adult abuse.

The member responsible for adult protection is IAN HARKER.

The committee member responsible for 'championing' this issue at committee level is Dennis Clarkson (Secretary).

### **Legislation**

NHS and Community Care Act 1990  
Mental Health Act 1983  
Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998  
Care Standards Act 2000  
September 2006

**Leeds Writers' Circle incident Report Form**

Name:

Course:

Address:

Telephone:

Briefly describe what happened (include times and dates):

Names and contacts of witnesses:

Name of person completing form:

Date:

Name of Manager responsible for investigation:

Date:

Action taken:

Policy adopted at EGM of Leeds Writers' Circle on 15 December 2008.

David Agnew.....Chairman

David Agnew.....Proposer

David Thom .....Secunder