



Regenerate-RISE is a registered charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee that provides day care services and a programme of outreach to the isolated elderly in the local community

SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

August 2009

1. INTRODUCTION

- Regenerate-RISE fully recognises the responsibility it has regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults, where welfare is defined as health, happiness, prosperity and well-being of that adult. A vulnerable adult can be anyone over the age of eighteen. This policy is designed to provide guidance for staff and volunteers in dealing with suspicions of, and incidents of abuse. Any final decisions in relation to referral to appropriate agencies will be made by the RISE Co-ordinator. If the member of staff or volunteer disagrees with the decision of the RISE Co-ordinator that no further action is necessary, the member of staff or volunteer should refer their concerns to the Chair of the local Advisory Committee for their decision – or to the Chair of Trustees of Regenerate-RISE.
- It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to record and report concerns under this policy.
- Regenerate-RISE’s policy has been devised in accordance with the Department of Health’s document “No Secrets – Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse” (2000). This guidance makes protection responsibilities clear and gives Regenerate-RISE the ability to dismiss or otherwise discipline employees or volunteers who fail in this duty.

2. THE TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITY FOR VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION

The Trustees fully recognises its responsibilities with regard to vulnerable adults protection and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults.

- The Trustees will ensure that Regenerate-RISE:
 - Designate a Trustee for vulnerable adult protection who will oversee Regenerate-RISE’s Vulnerable Adults Protection policy and practice and champion vulnerable adults protection issues and raise awareness of issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults.
 - Has procedures in place for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse of vulnerable adults.
 - Ensure the designated Trustee provides an annual report to the Board of Trustees on vulnerable adult protection matters to include changes affecting vulnerable adult protection policy and procedures, vulnerable adult protection training received and the number of incidents/cases that have occurred (no names).

- Ensure that this policy is approved by the Board of Trustees, and is annually reviewed and updated.
 - The Trustees and Advisory Committees shall receive appropriate training to assist with the above duties.
 - The Board of Trustees will ensure that Regenerate-RISE operates a safe recruitment policy.
- Where services or activities are provided separately by another agency the Trustees or Advisory Committee will seek assurance that the agency concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place for safeguarding vulnerable adults and there are arrangements to liaise with Regenerate-RISE on these matters where appropriate.

3 DEFINITION OF A VULNERABLE ADULT

No Secrets defines a Vulnerable Adult as:

A person 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 or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Department of Health (2000) Section 2.3 pp 8-9

The term “Adult Abuse” is subject to wide interpretation and definition

No Secrets provides the following definition as a starting point:

“Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons”

Department of Health (2000) Section 2.5 p 9

A further definition is then given because a number of factors need to be considered in more detail:

“Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Psychological
- An act of neglect
- An omission to act
- It may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent

Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it”.

Department of Health (2000) Section 2.5 p 9

Abuse is an infringement of legal and human rights. It may be a misuse of power and may constitute a criminal act.

Significant harm

In determining how serious or extensive abuse must be to justify intervention, a useful starting point can be found in *Who decides?* Building on the concept of “significant harm” introduced in the Children Act, the Lord Chancellor’s Department suggested that:

“Harm” should be taken to include not only ill-treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment that are not physical), but also the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development”.

Department of Health (2000), Section 2.18 p 12

It goes on to state that the seriousness or extent of abuse is often not clear at referral. It is important therefore to approach reports of incidents or allegations with an open mind. In making any assessment of seriousness the following factors need to be considered:

- The vulnerability of the individual(s) involved
- The nature and extent of the allegedly abusive acts
- The length of time the alleged abuse has been occurring
- The impact of the alleged abuse on the adult who has been victimized or exploited
- The risk of repeated or increasingly serious acts of abuse occurring involving the same or other Vulnerable Adults
- Whether the individuals involved have capacity to understand the risks

Categories of Abuse

The main forms of abuse are:

- **Physical** – hitting, punching, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Sexual** – rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the Vulnerable Adult has not consented, or could not consent to or was pressured into consenting to.
- **Psychological** – emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material** – theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** – ignoring medical or physical care needs; failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services; the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory** – when a person is treated in an unfair manner because of his/her membership of a particular social group or when practices and procedures operate in such a way that they have a negative impact on a specific social group.

Department of Health (2000) Section 2.7 p 9

4. ELEMENTS TO THE POLICY

There are four main elements to our policy:

PREVENTION through the training of staff and volunteers and the maintenance of a Regenerate-RISE protective ethos.

PROCEDURES for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse or neglect.

SUPPORT TO VULNERABLE ADULTS who may have been abused or neglected.

PREVENTING UNSUITABLE PEOPLE FROM WORKING WITH VULNERABLE ADULTS

➤ Prevention

We recognize that high self-esteem, confidence, supporting friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help prevention.

We will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where vulnerable adults feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure that vulnerable adults know that there are staff and volunteers within Regenerate-RISE whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Include in pastoral support, opportunities for vulnerable adults to develop the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to know who to turn to for help
- Staff and volunteers will receive adequate training in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults

➤ Procedures

- Regenerate-RISE will follow the locally agreed multi-agency procedures.
- We will ensure that all staff and volunteers receive the appropriate training and support
- We will ensure that the designated RISE Co-ordinator will refer incidents requiring investigation to the POVA Lead Officer within the local authority
- We will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the role of the designated Adult Protection Officer – RISE Co-ordinator
- We will ensure that all staff and volunteers take individual responsibility for referring vulnerable adult protection concerns using the proper channels and within the timescales set out in the locally agreed multi-agency procedures.
- We will ensure that all staff and volunteers know where the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Procedures and the locally agreed multi-agency procedures are located and that staff and volunteers have the facility to become familiar with the policy.

- Provide training for all staff and volunteers from the point of their induction, to be updated every three years at a maximum, so that they will know:
 - Their personal responsibility
 - The locally agreed multi-agency procedures
 - The need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse or neglect
 - How to support and to respond to a vulnerable adult who tells of abuse or neglect
 - Work to develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding vulnerable adult protection matters including attendance and written reports at vulnerable adult protection conferences, core groups and vulnerable adult review conferences.
 - Keep clear detailed written records of concerns about vulnerable adults (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Social Care immediately.
 - Ensure all records are kept secure with the lead person and in a locked location.

- **Supporting vulnerable adults**
 - Regenerate-RISE recognises that vulnerable adults who are abused may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world as benevolent and meaningful. They may have feelings of helplessness, humiliation and some sense of self-blame.
 - Regenerate-RISE may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of vulnerable adults at risk.
 - Regenerate-RISE recognise that some vulnerable adults actually adopt abusive behaviour and that these vulnerable adults must be referred on for appropriate support and intervention.
 - Regenerate-RISE will endeavour to support such vulnerable adults through ensuring that:
 - i) Regenerate-RISE's ethos (1) promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment, (2) gives vulnerable adults a sense of being valued.
 - ii) Liaison with other agencies supporting the vulnerable adult.
 - iii) Regenerate-RISE is committed to developing productive and supportive relationships with family members, whenever it is in a vulnerable adult's best interest to do so.
 - iv) Recognition that vulnerable adults may live in a home environment where there is domestic violence or alcohol abuse and may be vulnerable and in need of support and protection.

5. PREVENTING UNSUITABLE PEOPLE FROM WORKING WITH VULNERABLE ADULTS

- Regenerate-RISE will operate safe recruitment practices including ensuring ISAs are checked, enhanced CRBs are carried out and reference checks are undertaken, prior to employment or voluntary work.
- Regenerate-RISE will contact the local authority in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff and adhere to the relevant procedures set out in this policy.
- Regenerate-RISE will ensure that any disciplinary proceedings against staff relating to vulnerable adult protection matters are concluded in full even when the member of staff or volunteer is no longer employed or volunteering and that notification of any concerns is made to the relevant authorities and professional bodies and included in references where applicable.
- Regenerate-RISE will ensure that all staff, volunteers and agency workers are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with vulnerable adults.
- Regenerate-RISE will ensure that all staff, volunteers and agency workers are aware that any sexual relationships with vulnerable adults are improper and could result in legal proceedings taken against them under the Sexual Offences Act 2004 (Abuse of position of trust).

6. DEALING WITH DISCLOSURE AND PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING CONCERNS

- If abuse of a vulnerable adult is suspected, staff or volunteers should:
 - i) Listen to the allegations with the vulnerable adult and refer to the designated RISE Co-ordinator. When discussing with the vulnerable adult, staff or volunteers must have regard to the following:
 - Allow the vulnerable adult to speak freely
 - Do not trivialize the issue being discussed
 - Do not make suggestions
 - Reassure the vulnerable adult they have done the right thing in disclosing the issues
 - Only ask the questions to clarify the situation, do not probe or interrogate so as to investigate the allegations
 - Let the vulnerable adult know the information disclosed cannot be kept secret and that the information will have to be discussed with other people on a need to know basis
 - ii) If you suspect abuse of a vulnerable adult, you should in the first instance inform the RISE Co-ordinator, who in turn will be responsible for notifying the local authority.
 - iii) In the event that the RISE Co-ordinator is not available, you should either contact the Chair of the Advisory Committee or a Trustee, who will take the appropriate action.

- iv) An immediate assessment will be carried out to assess whether the vulnerable adult concerned is in immediate danger, whether there has been a crime committed and if so, is there a need to preserve and/or protect any evidence. It is important that staff do not investigate as this is not within their remit.
- v) Where when following an assessment, any of the above applies, contact must be made with the emergency services and a full detailed record must be made.
- vi) Where it has been decided that further action is necessary, the matter may be reported to either:
 - The Police
 - The local authority

7. RECORD KEEPING

- A written record should include details such as: the date and time of the report in addition to the name and position of the person making the report.
- Any written record should be factual and should not include opinions or any personal interpretation of the facts presented. It should include the following:
 - The vulnerable adult and staff/volunteer details
 - The reason for the concern
 - Any apparent signs of physical abuse (if any)
 - Any account given to you by the vulnerable adult concerned
 - Dates and times of any incidents
 - Date and time of when notes are made
- Ensure that any written record is kept in a locked secure location.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

- **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**
 - Staff and volunteers will ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. If in any doubts about confidentiality, staff or volunteers will seek advice from the designated officer, a Trustee or outside agency as required.
 - The Designated RISE Co-ordinator will disclose any information about a vulnerable adult to other members of staff or volunteers only on a need to know basis.
 - All staff and volunteers must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard vulnerable adults.

- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a vulnerable adult to keep secret any disclosure that they may make.
- Adults who have capacity have the right to insist on confidentiality, unless there are circumstances in which the wishes of the competent vulnerable adult's wishes can be Over-ridden such as disclosures to the appropriate agency would be in the public interest, such as in the event of concern over an individual or public safety or well-being.
- Do not promise confidentiality as it is important for staff and volunteers to be able to share concerns and seek assistance and further guidance.
- If you have reason to believe a crime has been committed, you should, in the first instance seek the consent of the vulnerable adult to inform the police. If the vulnerable adult (with capacity) does not consent to the police being informed, consideration should be given to whether it may be appropriate to disclose the information in terms of public interest in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. In such cases advice from the RISE Co-ordinator must be sought.
- Any information that is shared should be on a need to know basis and the vulnerable adult should be informed that only the relevant information will be disclosed to only the individuals who need to know.
- Advice should be sought from the RISE Co-ordinator if in doubt as to the amount of information which can be shared.

The Platt Christian Centre
22 Felsham Road
Putney, SW15 1DA
Tel: 020 8780 9330 (day time)
07774 116972 (all other times or when Centre is closed)
mosmith@regenerate-rise.co.uk

The designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer for RISE is the Chief Operating Officer
 Julia Przetakiewicz julia@regenerate-rise.co.uk

The designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Trustee is
Dr Sara Morgenstern

The local authority is Wandsworth Council
For information or to report an incident, contact the Access Team on 020 8871 6000
Or email: accessteam@wandsworth.gov.uk

This policy is due to be reviewed: August 2018

Tick when review has taken place

Reporting Form: Vulnerable Adult Protection Incident/Concern

Name of Staff member/Volunteer:	
Address of Staff member/Volunteer:	
Telephone Number – Mobile:	
Email Address:	

Date of Concern:	
Name of Vulnerable Adult:	
Address of Vulnerable Adult:	
Telephone No of Vulnerable Adult:	

Summary of Concern/Incident:

Signature of Staff Member/Volunteer: **Date:**

For Office Use: Passed on to: Date: Informed Wandsworth Council
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