



Vulnerable Adults Policy

Reviewed May 2020

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Mission

Horton Community Farm (HCF) is committed to ensuring the protection of vulnerable adults through the development and implementation of effective policies and best practice. Members of the Management Committee, Staff and volunteers, recognise and accept the responsibility to develop and raise awareness of the issues involved in working with vulnerable adults.”

Definition

The broad definition of a vulnerable adult is a person:

Who is eighteen years of age or more, and who may need 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 exploitation (Lord Chancellor’s Department, 1997).

Objectives

- To provide an environment in which vulnerable adults feel safe and valued.
- To ensure that Management Committee members, staff and volunteers take responsibility to always protect vulnerable adults from harm.
- To elect a member of the Management Committee as the designated representative for all Vulnerable Adult matters, and to identify appropriate training opportunities for that member.
- To develop and adopt a set of guidelines for working with vulnerable adults, which all members, staff and volunteers are aware of and adhere to.
- To exercise a Duty of Care and, when necessary, share information and concerns in a confidential manner with the appropriate outside agency e.g., Social Services.
- To ensure that all staff and volunteers who work with, or have responsibility for, vulnerable adults have a criminal records check by the Disclosure & Barring Service.
- To develop a time specific induction period when all new staff and volunteers are introduced to guidelines for working with Vulnerable Adults and policy and procedures.
- To review and update this policy and practice annually.

Abuse

Abuse may be defined as the wrongful application of power by someone in a dominant position. It involves an imbalance of power and exploitation without a full and informed consent. Abuse can take several different forms and may be a single act or repeated acts.

- **Physical abuse** – includes hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing, withholding or misuse of medication.
- **Sexual abuse** – includes sexual assault and rape, or sexual acts where the vulnerable person has not (or could not give) given consent or was forced into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** - includes threats of harm, emotional abuse, humiliation, verbal abuse, intimidation, coercion, harassment, withdrawal of support, isolation and deprivation (physical and sensory).
- **Material / financial abuse** – includes fraud, theft, exploitation, financial transactions, misappropriation e.g., willed inheritance, property, benefits and possessions.
- **Neglect & Acts of Omission** – includes ignoring physical care and medical needs, withholding basic living requirements e.g., adequate nutrition, safe and warm environment, withholding necessary medication and failure to provide access to appropriate health and social care services and / or educational services.
- **Discrimination** – includes harassment and/or exclusion because of race, creed, culture, ability, gender and any slur deemed offensive and abusive.

Code of Conduct

- Staff and volunteers to always treat vulnerable adults with respect and sensitivity.
- Staff and volunteers must ensure that the safety and dignity of those vulnerable adults in their care is always maintained.
- It is the duty of staff and volunteers to ensure that vulnerable adults in their care are aware that there are designated members of staff to help them with any worries and/or difficulties.
- All staff and volunteers should be made aware of the Vulnerable Adults Policy, and the Duty of Care, during induction and of the procedure to follow for reporting possible / alleged cases of abuse or harm.

Sharing Information

- If volunteers have concerns about the possible abuse of a vulnerable adult, or where a disclosure has been made, this must be reported to a member of staff as a Duty of Care responsibility.
- An accurate written record of concerns, disclosures and any related incident(s) must be made by the volunteer using the appropriate Record of Concern Form.
- The designated staff member will liaise with the relevant agencies and forward the record of concern for information. A copy should be kept on file to which designated staff members *only* have access.

It is important for staff and volunteers to avoid making assumptions and discussing concerns indiscriminately. Confidentiality, and respect for the vulnerable adult(s) involved, is of the utmost importance.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the board of directors to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Record of Concern Form

Name of Vulnerable Adult

Address:

Telephone Number:

Please give an account of your concern(s) and why you are concerned:

Please give an accurate and factual account of any disclosure:

Reported by (name and contact details)

Date:

Reported to (staff member)

Date:

Action taken:

Staff member's signature