**Invisible Army**

**Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy**

# Introduction

Invisible Army is committed to safeguarding vulnerable adults, engaged in the breadth of its activities.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of us and volunteers in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse.

 All adults have the right to be safe from harm and should be able to live free from fear

 of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The key objectives of this policy are:

* To explain the responsibilities we and volunteers have in respect of vulnerable adult protection.
* To provide us with an overview of vulnerable adult protection
* To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where vulnerable adult protection issues arise.

# Context

For the purpose of this document ‘adult’ means a person aged 18 years or over.

Some adults are less able to protect themselves than others, and some have difficulty making their wishes and feelings known. This may make them vulnerable to abuse. The broad definition of a ‘vulnerable adult’ referred to in the 1997 Consultation Paper ‘Who decides?’ issued by the Lord Chancellor’s Department, is 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”.

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults. To this end it is the responsibility of us to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect (see the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person/agency.

For purposes of ensuring consistent and widely understood terminology, these policy and procedures will use the phrase ‘Vulnerable Adults’ to identify those eligible for interventions within the procedures.

# The role of us and volunteers

We and the volunteers working on behalf of Invisible Army have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults.

We and the volunteers may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy will enable us/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific adult protection issues.

Not us or volunteers will be in a position of caring for a vulnerable adult, 1-1.

# Procedure in the event of a disclosure

It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a vulnerable adult has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

This should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

# Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Vulnerable adult protection raises issues of confidentiality which should be clearly understood by all.

We and volunteers have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and adult social services.

Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

All personal information if a safeguarding concern has been raised regarding a vulnerable adult will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only record details required in the initial contact form.

If an adult confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the adult sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.

Within that context, the adult should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent should be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority.

Staff should assure the adult that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The adults’ involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

# Responding to an allegation

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to:

* In an emergency, call the Police on 999.
* If it is not an emergency but you need help fast, call the Police on 101.
* Use Bristol City Council online form to report suspected adult abuse if nobody’s health or safety is in immediate danger.

[www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/report-suspected-abuse](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/report-suspected-abuse)

* **Care Direct** on **0117 922 2700**, 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. There is an answerphone service outside these hours.

A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 24 hours.

This has been confirmed by:

Tina Gue

Carina Andrews

Date: 30/07/2021