
Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy

The National Energy Foundation (NEF) is a charity that works to improve energy efficiency and assist those in fuel poverty. NEF personnel come into direct and indirect contact with adults in fuel poverty, some of whom may be deemed as vulnerable, through delivery of a range of services including attending events and managing a Helpline. While in the general conduct of its business, NEF staff are not usually in a position of responsibility for vulnerable adults, we recognise the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of those with a vulnerability.

Aims

This Policy Statement has been drawn up in order to enable the National Energy Foundation to:

- Promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm, abuse and coercion occurring.
- Ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported.

Definitions

The Care Act (2014)¹ defines vulnerable adults as people 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

Abuse is defined as a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons, including: physical abuse; psychological abuse; financial or material abuse; sexual abuse; neglect or acts of omission; organisational abuse; modern slavery; domestic abuse and discriminatory abuse.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff, including senior managers, trustees, associates, interns, volunteers, and anyone working on behalf of NEF will be made aware of this policy. However, the policy predominately applies to those who come into contact with vulnerable adults as part of their professional function.

The National Energy Foundation will:

- When present at events where vulnerable adults may be in attendance, ensure that NEF is in communication with other parties and organisations in attendance regarding safeguarding.

¹ Available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted/data.htm>

NEF does not intend to take ultimate responsibility for safeguarding vulnerable adults at such events, as it will generally lie with the event organiser; however the NEF staff member will make sure that they are aware of the chain of responsibility and which individual/organisation has overall safeguarding accountability.

- Assess the vulnerability of all calls taken by the Helpline to determine whether or not the person can be deemed as a particularly “vulnerable caller” and, if so, make sure the appropriate actions are taken. As an energy charity, NEF does not intend to take further action than requesting an advocate, referring and signposting vulnerable adults to, or contacting directly, the relevant statutory agencies or organisations which can identify, prevent and stop abuse. This could include the relevant local Safeguarding Adults Board.
- Ensure that we report into the relevant local Safeguarding Adults Board and are aware of their policies e.g. For Oxfordshire - <https://oxfordshirescb.proceduresonline.com/> and Buckinghamshire - <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/4513142/bcc-safeguarding-adults-policy-section-1.pdf>
- Make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if it believes an adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect. An enquiry should establish whether any action needs to be taken to prevent or stop abuse or neglect, and if so, by which statutory agency or organisation.
- Act within legislation on Data Protection and Confidentiality. NEF will usually gain permission from service users before sharing information about them with another agency.
- Pass information to the relevant Adult Social Care service when more than one person is at risk. For example: if the concern relates to a worker, volunteer or organisation that provides a service to vulnerable adults or children.
- Endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to preventing abuse and welfare of adults.
- Ensure that a Designated Named Person is always within post within the organisation.
- Ensure that the Designated Named Person understands his/her responsibility to refer incidents of adult abuse to the relevant statutory agencies (Police/Adult Social Care Services Directorate).

The Designated Named Person for Safeguarding Adults in NEF is Alison Vickers, Project Manager, 01908 354531 alison.vickers@nef.org.uk. They should be contacted for support and advice on implementing this policy and procedures. The Deputy Safeguarding Lead is .

Implementation

NEF is committed to putting in place safeguards and measures to reduce the likelihood of abuse taking place within the services it offers and to ensure that all those involved with NEF will be treated with respect. Therefore, to achieve these aims, everything NEF does must be underpinned by the following key principles:

- **Empowerment:** Providing people with support, assistance and information, enabling them to make choices and give informed consent.
- **Protection:** Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Prevention:** It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality:** Proportionate and least intrusive response, appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Partnership:** Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability:** Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

The scope of this Safeguarding Policy is broad ranging and in practice, it will be implemented in conjunction with a range of other policies and procedures within the organisation.

NEF is committed to safer recruitment policies and practices for paid staff, trustees and volunteers. This may include Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for staff and volunteers who work in a customer facing capacity, ensuring references are taken up and adequate training on Safeguarding Adults is provided.

All staff will report any concerns to the Designated Named Person who will be responsible for advising on further actions. Concerns will be reported on the Safeguarding Reporting Form at the earliest opportunity following an incident or following a concern coming to light.

The Designated Named Person will consider what, if any, actions should be taken and these will be reported on the same form. The Designated Named Person will be responsible for any external referrals and will report these to the SMT on a regular basis.

Home Visits

Where NEF staff are likely to be visiting the home of a vulnerable person they will follow the agreed procedure

- Encourage the resident to be accompanied by an advocate, relative or friend
- Conduct a Risk Assessment in advance of the visit
- Discuss any concerns with the Designated Named Person and agree any specific actions
- Update the Risk Assessment after the visit to provide information for future visits

Monitoring

The safeguarding aspects which would typically be monitored by the Designated Named Person would include:

- Safe recruitment practices in accordance with NEF's Staff and Volunteer Recruitment policies
- DBS checks undertaken, where relevant
- References obtained for new staff
- Training – register/ record of staff training on vulnerable adult protection
- Monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned
- Checking that policies are up to date and relevant
- Reviewing the current reporting procedure in place

Managing Information

All staff must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard vulnerable adults. The public interest in safeguarding vulnerable adults may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need to know basis only, as judged by the Designated Named Person.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise service users or their families/ carers that they will keep secrets.

GENERAL

Staff and volunteers should

Be aware that someone (whether a child, young person or adult) could misinterpret their actions however well intentioned.

Never jump to any conclusions about others without checking the facts.

Never make inappropriate remarks or gestures about a vulnerable person, even in fun.

ATTITUDE

Staff and volunteers should

Demonstrate respect for a vulnerable person's safety and welfare.

Behave in a responsible way towards all adults with whom they come into contact.

Speak to a vulnerable person using appropriate language.

Listen to what they are saying and reiterate details if they do not feel they have been sufficiently well understood.

CONTACT WITH VULNERABLE ADULTS

Staff and volunteers will take every measure possible to ensure they are never out of sight of other staff and volunteers whilst working with vulnerable adults.

Where a visit takes place to a person's home, always request an advocate, relative or friend be present.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Staff and volunteers should never engage in touching of any kind.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Permission will be sought from the host or partner organisation regarding any photography of vulnerable people at events. This is especially relevant if photos are to be publicised by NEF.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Named Person for Safeguarding Adults or by an appropriate delegated senior officer. This policy and accompanying guidance will be monitored and reviewed through learning from complaints, compliments and concerns and changes to legislation.

Alison Vickers, Project Manager

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