

Safeguarding Adults – Policy for the NAS Volunteering Network

Document Title	Safeguarding Adults - Policy for the NAS Volunteering Network
Reference Number	SO-0344
Version Number	V2.0
Date of Issue	26 June 2007
Latest Revision	09 July 2009
Distribution	Regional and National Teams, Branches, Befriending, Social Groups, Heads of Departments at Head Office
Owner	Director - Services
Policy Leads	Kate Spink
Department	Service Operations

Purpose

To create awareness amongst staff and volunteers about safeguarding adults issues throughout the NAS volunteering network and to outline procedures when responding to an incident or allegation of abuse or neglect.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers throughout the NAS. The Volunteering Network describes any aspects of the organisation where staff and volunteers work with adults with an autism spectrum disorder on behalf of the NAS. This includes, but is not limited to branches, befriending, social groups, administration or office based work experience and focus groups. It should be read in conjunction with No Secrets: The Protection of Vulnerable Adults by the Department of Health and the Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure of the relevant Local Authority.

Safeguarding Adults

(Concise Statement)

The NAS Volunteering Network is committed to safeguarding the rights and responsibilities of adults with autism spectrum disorders.

Adults with autism access a range of different types of informal support through the co-ordinated activities of the NAS.

No Secrets-guidance issued by the Department of Health in 2000, sets out expectations to promote joint working across all agencies involved in the lives of vulnerable adults including Local Authorities, NHS Trusts, Police, support providers and the Voluntary Sector, in order to reduce the risk of abuse and neglect.

The NAS is committed to promoting the rights of adults with autism. All staff and volunteers will report any concerns relating to suspicions of abuse or neglect to the Regional Safeguarding Adults Designated Officer. Each Regional Team has a Safeguarding Adults Designated Officer to whom any suspicions or cause for concern must be reported. See also 7 below.

1 Introduction

It is every adult's right to live in safety and be free from abuse or the fear of abuse, regardless of their age, race, sexual orientation, physical and intellectual ability or gender.

In promoting the rights and responsibilities of adults with autism it is vital to empower them to make choices and decisions about their lives. Having a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder does not necessarily mean that an individual is vulnerable or would want to be seen in that way.

2 Definition of abuse and neglect

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person(s).

It is something done, or not done in the case of neglect, by one person in a position of power to another. It results in a loss of rights and is harmful, morally reprehensible and often illegal.

It is the duty of all staff and volunteers to promote the rights and best interests of adults with an autism spectrum condition.

3 Indicators of abuse and neglect

No Secrets (2000) identifies the following main forms of abuse:

- **Physical Abuse** - includes but is not limited to hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint.
- **Sexual Abuse** – includes any act which is by its nature sexual, to which consent has not been given e.g. rape, sexual assault.
- **Psychological Abuse** – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, intimidation, and verbal abuse.
- **Financial or Material Abuse** - including theft, fraud, exploitation, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions and benefits
- **Neglect** - includes ignoring medical or physical needs, withholding food, drink, heating and shelter, failure to provide access to adequate health or social care or educational services.
- **Discriminatory Abuse** - includes racist and sexist remarks or comments base on a person's difference, age or illness and other forms of harassment.

4 Rights

Adults with autism spectrum conditions have the same rights and responsibilities as all UK citizens. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 sets out that all adults are assumed to have capacity to make decisions about their lives unless it is otherwise proven.

If a person's capacity to make decisions is in question then advice must be sought from the Designated Officer.

5 Disclosure

People who are survivors or victims of abuse need to be in control of the disclosure process. The needs of the survivor or victim include:

- the need to be believed;
- to tell at their own pace;
- to be heard;
- to be supported.

It is vital that the person to whom the disclosure is made is non-judgemental, does not coach or ask probing questions and makes notes of the conversation as soon as is possible after the event. It is important that all original notes made are retained, even if they are subsequently typed up/re-written.

The person making the disclosure should be supported to make a decision about what action they want to take in relation to the alleged abuse.

A list of support agencies is available at appendix 1.

6 Confidentiality

Confidentiality cannot be assured, as depending on the disclosure and individual concerned, information may need to be shared internally, with the Designated Officer and with other agencies. This could include the Police and Local Authority. The informant must be made aware that this is the case. However, information will only be shared on a need to know basis, and the person making the disclosure should be reassured that the information they give or have given will be treated within best practice codes of conduct for confidentiality.

7 The Safeguarding Adults Designated Officer

The role of the Safeguarding Adults Designated Officer is to provide advice and reassurance to the staff member or volunteer, and make decisions about what to do next. The Safeguarding Adults Designated Officer will ensure that the appropriate contact is made with the Local Authority to promote partnership working and good practice.

8 Behaviour standards

All Staff and volunteers are responsible for promoting the wellbeing of people with autism that they support.

Behaviour standards guidelines for staff and volunteers can be found at Appendix 2. (See also Code of Conduct policy.)

9 Training

All staff and volunteers will be trained in Adult Safeguarding in line with the training procedure (see Appendix 3).

Equal Opportunities

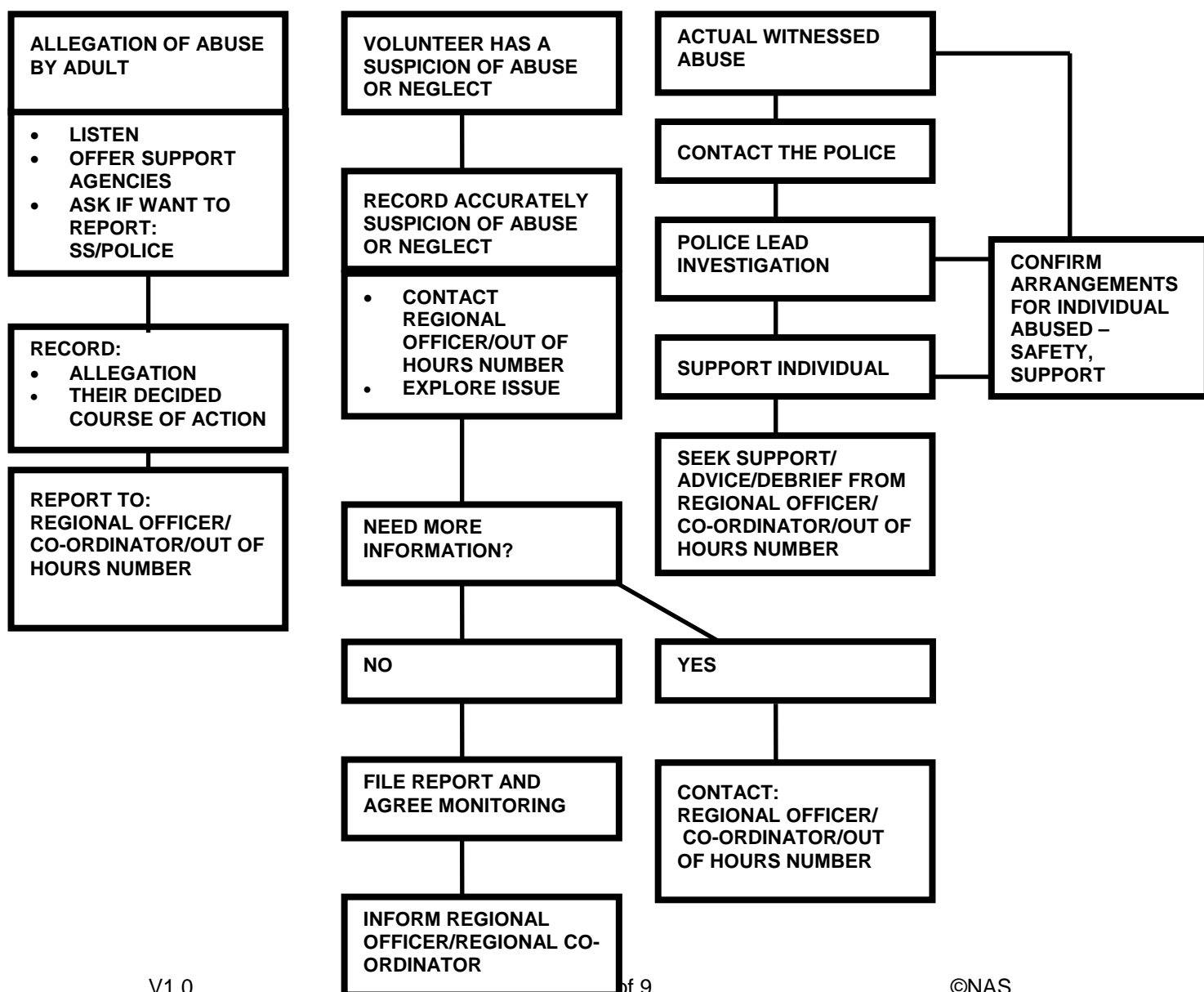
NAS employees and volunteers shall not discriminate against any person on the grounds of race, nationality, age, beliefs, sexual orientation, or social standing and shall work in such a way as to give equal opportunity for each person to achieve the maximum benefit and potential consistent with respecting the dignity and value of fellow human beings.

Safeguarding Adults - Procedure

In the event that a member of staff or volunteer suspects that an adult with an autism spectrum disorder may be experiencing, or be at risk of, abuse or neglect, he/she should at the earliest opportunity contact the Regional Officer for guidance and support who will, in turn, seek advice from their Designated Officer.

Each Region has an Out-of-hours contact for emergency advice for safeguarding issues. Please ask your Regional Officer for this number.

Reporting Procedure



Safeguarding Adults – References

No Secrets - The Protection of Vulnerable Adults, Department of Health
In Safe Hands, National Assembly for Wales
Mental Capacity Act 2005
Sexual Offences Act

Other policies and guidance

Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy SO-0194
Abuse - Indicators and Vulnerability of Adults with an Autistic Spectrum
Disorder Policy SO-0188
Equal Opportunities Policy HR-0005
Anti-Bullying, Anti-Harassment, Anti-Discrimination Policy SO-0231
Adult Service User Statement of Rights Policy SO-0252
Code of Conduct Policy SO-0308

Support Agencies

Appendix 1

The National Autistic Society provides a free and confidential 24 hour Helpline which is available to all staff and volunteers. The helpline offers independent advice and support on any work related problem. In addition, up to eight face-to-face counselling sessions with a qualified counsellor are also available free of charge.

Bupa helpline tel: 0800 371 536

<p>Fpa 50 Featherstone St London EC1Y 8QU Tel: 020 7608 5240 Helpline : 0845 310 1334</p>	<p>Respond 3rd Floor 24-32 Stephenson Way London NW1 2HD Tel: 020 7383 0700 admin@respond.org.uk</p>
<p>Regard (The national organisation of disabled lesbians and gay men) Unit 2J Leroy House 236 Essex Rd London N1 3QP Tel: 020 76884111 regard@dircon.co.uk</p>	<p>The Ann Craft Trust Centre for Social Care University of Nottingham University Park Nottingham NG7 2RD Tel : 0115 951 5400 Ann-craft-trust@nottingham.ac.uk</p>
<p>Rape Crisis A list of national rape crisis centres is available at www.rapecrisis.org.uk info@rapecrisis.org.uk</p>	<p>Voice UK Wyvern House Railway Terrace Derby DE1 2RU Tel : 01332 295775 voice@voiceuk.org.uk</p>
<p>British Institute of Learning Disabilities (bild) Campion House, Green St, Kidderminster DY10 1JL Tel: 01562 723 010 enquiries@bild.org.uk</p>	<p>People First (self help for people with a learning disability) 4th Floor Hampton House 20 Albert Embankment London SE1 7TJ Tel: 020 7820 6655 general@peoplefirstltd.com</p>

Behaviour Standards Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers

Appendix 2

You must:

- ❖ treat everyone with respect
- ❖ provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- ❖ respect each person's right to personal privacy
- ❖ encourage people to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- ❖ remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- ❖ be aware that any physical contact with another person may be misinterpreted
- ❖ recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with people
- ❖ operate within the organisation's principles and guidance and any specific procedures
- ❖ challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse

You must not:

- ❖ have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with anyone
- ❖ allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate behaviour
- ❖ make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures
- ❖ jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- ❖ either exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues
- ❖ show favouritism to any individual
- ❖ rely on your good name or that of the organisation (faith or charity) to protect you
- ❖ believe "it could never happen to me"
- ❖ take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.

Training Matrix for all Staff and Volunteers

Appendix 3