



Safeguarding Policy

Forest Voluntary Action Forum believes that it is always unacceptable for a child, young person or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to ensure that its working practices minimise the risk of abuse to those less able to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

Aim of the Policy

'The specific aim of this policy is to outline the practice and procedures for both paid staff and volunteers in Forest Voluntary Action Forum to enable them to contribute to safeguarding the welfare of their service users. It also seeks to protect the worker themselves especially in terms of working alone and attention is drawn to the Lone Worker Policy of Forest Voluntary Action Forum'.

We recognise that :-

- The welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount
- Everybody, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, identity or other characteristics have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- It is essential to work in partnership with others, including relatives, carers and other appropriate agencies, to promote and secure the welfare of those affected by our work
- In order for the welfare of the vulnerable to be safeguarded all trustees, staff and volunteers of Forest Voluntary Action Forum must be aware of and fulfil their individual and organisational responsibilities in their work

Forest Voluntary Action Forum will seek to safeguard all children, young people and vulnerable adults who use their services by :-

- Valuing, listening to and respecting to the vulnerable at all times
- Adopting working practices that, at all times, protect both the vulnerable person and the Forest Voluntary Action Forum trustee, member of staff or volunteer from harm or abuse
- Recruiting or appointing paid, volunteer or contract staff by safe and equitable processes ensuring appropriate references are taken up and conducting Disclosure and Barring Service checks where necessary
- Providing effective management for trustees, staff and volunteers to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities around safeguarding in a competent manner. This to include support in identifying the multitude of signs of abuse and recognition of the potential perpetrators of abuse

- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practices with trustees, staff, volunteers, relatives, carers and others as appropriate
- Sharing any concerns with external agencies who need to know and involving relatives and others when required
- Ensuring appropriate records of dates, times, those involved and what actions are taken relating to instances of alleged or actual harm or abuse are kept in a secure format. These will be followed up as necessary, reported as required and are reviewed to support any examinations of trends or repeat instances to enable, if appropriate, safer working practices to be adopted.

NOTE: some examples of abuse are criminal offences and must be reported to the police

Support for those who report abuse

All those making a complaint, allegation or expressing concern about abuse or harm, whether they are trustees, staff, volunteers, service users or members of the general public should be reassured that :-

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will be treated with the utmost confidentiality
- That should their concerns be shared with the appropriate authorities they will be made aware of this policy, receive fair and respectful treatment, be involved as appropriate, kept informed of developments and conclusions and protected with anonymity where necessary

NOTE : any complaint about Forest Voluntary Action Forum will be dealt with through the Complaints Policy as well as by any safeguarding requirements.

It is the policy of Forest Voluntary Action Forum to treat all allegations or suspicions of abuse or harm with the utmost seriousness it is important to consider :-

- The nature and consequences of the risk involved and do they accept such a risk
- Is the vulnerable person able and willing to make their own decisions and choices
- How serious is the issue in terms of extent, impact, risk of escalation, length of time it has been going on for and the perception of the issue by the vulnerable person.

NOTE: as before, some examples of abuse are criminal offences and must be reported to the police

In summary :-

- It is the primary responsibility of the trustee, employee or volunteer to protect the vulnerable person if they are at risk and to protect themselves
- Each trustee, employee or volunteer has a duty to take action
- Nobody should have to cope alone with issues of harm or abuse

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