



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

1. Introduction

Although TASC does not directly provide services to or work with vulnerable adults, we do as an organisation come into contact with vulnerable adults through our research and training and so it is considered important that we are fully compliant with all relevant safeguarding guidance and legislation.

TASC is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of adults by protecting them from physical, sexual, psychological, financial, discriminatory abuse and neglect. TASC accepts that in all matters concerning vulnerable adults, the welfare and protection of such adults is paramount.

2. Policy Statement

TASC is committed to developing and maintaining the highest standards of oversight, governance and probity in all of its dealings. TASC aims to promote and uphold people's human rights and has adopted a "zero-tolerance" stance in relation to abuse.

3. Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a clear understanding of, and consistent approach to, adult safeguarding concerns made known to TASC. Though TASC does not function at an operational level, it may, on occasion, be informed of or become aware of a safeguarding concern and it is important that, in such situations, there is an appropriate response.

4. A Vulnerable Person

A vulnerable person is defined in the HSE Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy and Procedures (p.3) as:

'an adult who may be restricted in capacity to guard himself / herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation'.

5. Defining Abuse

TASC understands the definition of abuse in accordance with Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy and Procedures (p. 8).

'any act, or failure to act, which results in a breach of a vulnerable person's human rights, civil liberties, physical and mental integrity, dignity or general wellbeing, whether intended or through negligence, including sexual relationships or financial transactions to which the person does not or cannot validly consent, or which are deliberately exploitative. Abuse may take a variety of forms'.

6. Applicability

This policy applies to (a) the Board (b) any staff employed; (c) anyone working for TASC, contracted by TASC or acting on behalf of TASC.

7. Background

This Policy has been developed in order to ensure any member of TASC engaged in training or research with these groups clearly understand their roles and responsibilities when safeguarding concerns arise and adopt a broadly consistent approach to safeguarding concerns.

8. Policy

TASC takes a human rights-based approach to adult safeguarding. A human rights-based approach ensures that the rights of an individual are respected, including the rights to dignity, bodily integrity, privacy and respect for culture and beliefs.

9. How to Respond To A Disclosure Of Abuse

A vulnerable adult may carefully select a person to confide in. That chosen person will be someone they trust and have confidence in. It is important that a vulnerable adult who discloses abuse feels supported and facilitated in what may be a frightening and traumatic process for them. A vulnerable adult may feel perplexed, afraid, angry, despondent and guilty. It is important that any negative feelings they may have are not made worse by the kind of response they receive. A vulnerable adult who divulges abuse has engaged in an act of trust and their disclosure must be treated with respect, sensitivity, urgency and care.

It is of the utmost importance that disclosures are treated in a sensitive and discreet manner. Anyone responding to a vulnerable adult making such a disclosure should take the following steps.

- Take what the vulnerable adult says seriously.
- React calmly, as over-reaction may intimidate the vulnerable adult and increase any feelings of guilt that they may have.
- Reassure the vulnerable adult that they were correct to tell somebody what happened.
- Listen carefully and attentively.
- Never ask leading questions.
- Use open-ended questions to clarify what is being said and try to avoid having them repeat what they have told you.
- Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Advise that you will offer support but that you must pass on the information.
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser to the person reporting to you.
- Explain and make sure that the vulnerable adult understands what will happen next. Do not confront the alleged abuser.
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10. Reporting Procedures

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Following a disclosure of abuse, employees should:

- Write down immediately after the conversation what was said, including all the names of those involved, what happened, where, when, if there were any witnesses and any other significant factors and note any visible marks on the individual making the report or any signs you observed.
- Record the event, sign and date all reports and indicate the time the notes were made.
- Ensure that the information is treated with the utmost confidence.
- Allegations should not be investigated by employees.
- Employees should pass that report to the Designated Officer in TASC.

Under no circumstances should a vulnerable adult be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or to risk of harm. In the event of an emergency where you think a vulnerable adult is in immediate danger you should contact the Gardaí in the first instance. The nearest Garda station to TASC is Pearse Street Garda Station 1-6 Pearse St, Dublin 2, D02 W289. T: (01) 666 9000.

11. What Does an Employee/Volunteer do if they Suspect or have reasonable grounds for concern that a vulnerable adult is being abused

Try to ensure in so far as is possible that no situation arises that could cause any further risk to the vulnerable adult.

(a) Record the facts as you know them. Include the person's name, address, the nature of the concern, allegation or disclosure. Employees/volunteers should pass that report to the Designated Officer in TASC.

In accordance with Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy and Procedures (p. 41) TASC has appointed a Designated Officer & Deputy Designated Officer who are responsible for:

- Receiving concerns or allegations of abuse regarding vulnerable persons
- Collating basic relevant information
- Ensuring the appropriate manager is informed and collaboratively ensuring necessary actions are identified
- Ensuring all reporting obligations are met (internally to the service and externally to the statutory authorities)
- Supporting the manager and other personnel in addressing the issues arising.
- Maintaining appropriate records.

Designated Officers:

NAME: Shana Cohen (Deputy)
M: 086 820 8658
E: scohen@tasc.ie

NAME: Sinead Byrne
T: 01 616 9050
E: contact@tasc.ie

12. Confidentiality

All information regarding concern for a vulnerable adult should be shared on 'a need to know' basis in the interests of the person concerned. The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a vulnerable adult is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection. Employees should not give any undertakings regarding secrecy.

13. Compliance

If the Board of TASC has a reason to believe that a person subject to this policy has failed to comply with it, it will investigate the circumstances. If it is found that this person has failed to adhere to this Policy, TASC may take action against the person. This action will be proportionate

and may include seeking the person's resignation from the Board, suspension from the Board or suspension of voting rights.

If a person suspects that a Board member or anyone with responsibility for any aspect of the Safeguarding procedures has failed in his/her duty to adhere to this Policy, they must notify the Chair of the Board or another Board member who then must report it to the Chair.

14. Contacts

For questions about this policy, contact the Board of TASC by:

- Emailing contact@tasc.ie
- or phoning 01 616 9050

and John White will be able to assist you with your query.

Definitions

An adult in need of protection is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect, including self-neglect, may be increased by their

- a) personal characteristics, and/or
- b) life circumstances and
- c) who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests, and/or where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or likely to cause, him/her to be harmed.

Approved by the Board on 07 June 2024
This supersedes version dated 22 July 2022

MIKE JENNINGS



Signature of Chairperson/Company Secretary