



## **Rite to Freedom Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy**

Last update: 12.2023

Rite to Freedom acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of any vulnerable adults involved in the charity's programmes, and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice.

Rite to Freedom believes that it is always unacceptable for a vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all vulnerable adults, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

### **The purpose of this policy is:**

- To ensure that all vulnerable adults who engage with Rite to Freedom's services, and including the children of adult members or users, are protected from abuse whilst participating in Rite to Freedom programmes.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.
- To ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- To ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- To ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

This policy applies to all staff, including employees, trustees, volunteers, freelance staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Rite to Freedom.

### **Definitions**

- A **child or young person** is someone under the age of 18 years.
- A **vulnerable adult** is a person *"who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, trauma and PTSD and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation"*.
- The term **"community care services"** includes all social and health care services provided in any setting or context.
- The term **"harm"** should be taken to include not only ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment that are not physical), but also the impairment of, or an avoidable

deterioration in, physical or mental health. It should also be taken to include the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

- **Abuse** is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse can consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal, or psychological. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

## **Designated Officer**

The designated officers are two of Rite to Freedom's trustees - Chris Lomas and Liz Cirasuolo. If Rite to Freedom staff or volunteers are working in another setting and have a concern or are disclosed to, they should report to that organisation's Designated Officer for Child Protection or Lead Officer for Adult Protection in full and make a brief written account to Rite to Freedom's chair of trustees. The account will be held confidentially at Rite to Freedom. The chair of trustees will share the report with the other related agencies and carry out the necessary official proceedings.

## **Policy**

Rite to Freedom recognises that when working with children, young people or vulnerable adults their welfare is paramount and specific measures are to be taken to safeguard them from harm.

All Rite to Freedom staff and volunteers will be required to subscribe to a code of behaviour and practice designed to safeguard vulnerable adults from harm and to follow published procedures in reporting allegations of abuse.

## **We believe that:**

- the welfare of the vulnerable adult is paramount.
- all vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Staff and volunteers should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

## **We will seek to safeguard vulnerable adults by:**

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made in order to prevent the employment of unsuitable individuals.
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know.
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training, and ensuring everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to and vulnerable adults.

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in Rite to Freedom. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/ exclusion from the organisation.

## **Criminal Records Checking**

Before working with vulnerable adults, Rite to Freedom lead facilitators will be required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) check prescribed for the activity.

The DBS check required will depend upon:

- The nature of the activities being undertaken.
- The policy of partner organizations to the activity.
- The policy of the setting in which the activity takes place.

## **Implementation**

All Rite to Freedom staff will be briefed on the policy annually and must agree to apply it in practice. The policy is deemed to be incorporated in the contract of employment and it is a condition of service with Rite to Freedom that staff understand and operate the policy fully. All staff contracted to work with Rite to Freedom will be given a copy of this policy which will form part of their contractual obligations.

The trustees of Rite to Freedom are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

## **Allegations made against Rite to Freedom staff**

In the event of an accusation of abuse being made against any member of Rite to Freedom's staff, the accusation will be taken seriously and investigated and dealt with promptly.

Rite to Freedom's board of trustees will assess all cases based upon available information. The member of staff against whom an accusation of abuse has been made will be contacted by the appropriate multi agency group and asked to attend a meeting. At this meeting a decision will be made as to whether or not the accused member of staff should be allowed to continue to work with vulnerable adults. At all times the welfare of children, young people or vulnerable adults should be of paramount importance.

In all cases where the accusation of abuse is found to be true, the board of trustees will normally terminate the employment, contract or agreement with the individual. A trustee found to have abused a vulnerable adult will be asked to stand down from Rite to Freedom's board. Lesser measures may be taken at the discretion of the board of trustees.

If a complaint or allegation is made against a member of Rite to Freedom's staff, they should be made aware of their rights under both employment law and internal disciplinary procedures. This is the responsibility of Rite to Freedom's Director. Both the alleged abuser and the person who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. In criminal law the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

## **Monitoring**

The policy will be reviewed every two years, or following changes in legislation or any other significant change or event.

## **Appendices**

A – Code of appropriate behaviour when working with vulnerable adults.

B – Responding to allegations or suspicions.

C – Checklist for reporting allegations or suspicions.

## **Appendix A**

### **Code of appropriate behaviour when working with vulnerable adults**

**Do** treat everyone with respect.

**Do** respect a person's right to personal privacy.

**Do** encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.

**Do** remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned.

**Do** recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of counselling such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse

**Do** give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

**Do** try to avoid being left alone with a single child, young person or vulnerable adult.

**Do** maintain professional behaviour at all times.

**Do NOT** leave young people in unsupervised charge of activities involving other young people or children.

**Do NOT** permit abusive youth peer activities such as initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.

**Do NOT** initiate any physical contact with children. It should not be necessary. If the nature of the workshop requires any physical contact this should be discussed in advance

**Do NOT** jump to conclusions about others without checking facts.

**Do NOT** allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour such as tantrums or crushes.

**Do NOT** show favouritism to any individual.

**Do NOT** make suggestive remarks or gestures to, about or in the presence of children or young people.

**Do NOT** smoke or swear in the presence of children or young people.

**Do NOT** invite children, young people or vulnerable adults to your home.

### **What to do about inappropriate advances**

Vulnerable adults can sometimes make suggestive approaches. Sometimes inappropriate physical contact can happen quite accidentally. If this occurs it is important that you:

- tell the person that their language or behaviour is unacceptable.
- tell the Designated Officer about the incident, however embarrassing this may be.
- record the incident in case accusations are made later.
- consult with the Designated Officer in deciding what actions will be taken to help the person and prevent a re-occurrence.

### **Use of photographs and video**

Individuals should always, where possible, give written permission for photographs or video to be used.

When working with vulnerable adults in institutional settings, such as schools or prisons, the setting should give written permission for photographs or video to be used where individual consent is not able to be sought.

Names of individuals should not accompany photographs unless there is clear written permission from the individual or the responsible adult.

## **Appendix B**

### **Responding to allegations or suspicions**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for Rite to Freedom, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

Rite to Freedom assures all staff that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports their concerns regarding potential abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

#### **If you have any suspicions of abuse:**

Immediately tell the Designated Officer.

Record the **facts** immediately as you know them and give a copy to the Designated Officer or Lead Officer of the organisation in which you are working and to Rite to Freedom's Director.

Ensure that no aspects of Rite to Freedom's activities could cause any further concern.

#### **If a vulnerable adult discloses to you *abuse* by someone else:**

Allow them to speak without interruption, accepting what is said

Attempt to alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgment

Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on

Record the facts including any evidence you have.

Pass all written accounts to the Designated Officer.

#### **If you receive an allegation about any adult or about yourself:**

Immediately tell the Designated Officer.

Record the **facts** as you know them and give a copy to the Designated Officer.

Try to ensure that no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise.

It is important that everyone in Rite to Freedom is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child or adult protection agencies following a referral to them of concern.

**You must refer; you must not investigate.**

**Appendix C**  
**Checklist for reporting suspected abuse**

Name of child/vulnerable adult:

Age:

Home address and home number (if known):

Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? Give details.  
Brief description of what has prompted the concerns: include dates, times etc of any specific incidents.

Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?

Have you spoken to the person directly? If so, what was said?

Have you spoken to parent/carer? If so, what was said?

Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details.

Have you consulted anybody else? Give details.

Your name and role

To whom reported and date of reporting

Your signature ..... Today's date .....