

Safeguarding Policy - Vulnerable Adults	P-02
Version	V01
Date of Origin	01/07/2024
Responsible person	Dedicated Safeguard Lead (DSL) Donna Sherred - Mobile 07918026871
Next Review Date -	13/08/2027
Amendments	Reviewed 13/08/25 – Amended - Definition of vulnerable adult, DSL Contact details, Stak reporting form, DBS regularity, useful numbers ie Police and Social Services. Clarity on calling statutory services and care act 2014

This policy refers to safeguarding of vulnerable adults. This means a person aged 18 years or over.

"A vulnerable adult is defined as someone who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs), is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it, as outlined in the Care Act 2014."

Commitment

- We will promote the welfare and safety of any vulnerable adult who uses our services or who we encounter, and protect them from harm.
- We will always listen to vulnerable adults on disclosure of any type of abuse: we will take this seriously and take the appropriate action. We will take appropriate action should we observe / have concerns about abuse or neglect.
- All adults have the right to be safe from harm and should be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- We will make sure we comply with our legal, ethical, regulatory contractual and internal requirements.

STAK.life safeguarding app, in partnership with iTrust:

Our service users, staff and volunteers all have free access to the ground breaking STAK.life iTrust safeguarding & whistleblowing app which gives them a safe anonymous voice. <https://theitrustapp.com/>

"As a speak up provider, iTrust empowers both individuals and organisations to discover the truth. Based on experience, we truly understand the needs of those who report wrongdoing and provide the highest quality reporting to those assessing their information. Building trust and protecting the security and reputation of every party involved is paramount to us – we take the utmost care in all that we do. Your reputation is our reputation".

The application allows individuals to:

- **Speak up and report wrongdoing and concerns (Anonymously if preferred)**
- **Report near misses, Suggest ideas and changes.**
- **Say something positive, All at the scan of a QR code**



1. Safeguarding Policy Principles

1.1 This policy has been agreed by the Directors of STAK.life CIC and is published on the STAK.life website. This policy can be made available in large print or another accessible format if required.

1.2 This policy and its procedures apply wherever staff or volunteers are working with vulnerable adults in order to protect them from abuse, for example in a group or workshop or on any trips.

1.3 The key objectives of this policy are to:

- Explain the responsibilities that Stak.life staff and volunteers have in respect of vulnerable adult protection
- Provide staff and volunteers with an overview of vulnerable adult protection
- Provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where vulnerable adult protection issues arise.

2. Context

2.1 Some adults are less able to protect themselves than others, and some have difficulty making their wishes and feelings known. This may make them vulnerable to abuse.

2.2 We know that some autistic adults are potentially more vulnerable, because their communication may not be understood by others, they may struggle with social interaction or have difficulties understanding people's motives, they may be less able to report abuse and thus be more vulnerable to it. This necessitates greater vigilance among professionals in recognising, reporting and investigating potential signs of abuse as well as ensuring that safeguarding issues remain on the agenda when working with autistic people. It is important for staff and volunteers to believe and validate the experiences of autistic people and not apply their own frame of reference, experiences or values with them as they may experience the world very differently to neurotypical people. Where one to one care is necessary, two responsible adults are to be present where possible and one should have sound knowledge of any care plan. We will strive to ensure that one member of staff will have knowledge of the SPELL framework to support the individual.

2.3 The Care Act 2014, states "A vulnerable adult is defined as someone who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs), is

experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it".

2.4 The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable people. To this end it is the responsibility of all staff/volunteers to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect (see the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person/agency. For purposes of ensuring consistent and widely understood terminology, these policy and procedures will use the phrase 'Vulnerable Adults' to identify those eligible for interventions within the procedures.

2.5 Everyone at STAK.life will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

3. Legal Framework

3.1 This guidance reflects the principles contained within the Human Rights Act 1998, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

3.2 The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA), covering England and Wales, provides a statutory framework for people who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves or who have capacity and want to make preparations for a time when they may lack capacity in the future. It sets out who can take decisions, in which situations, and how they should go about this. It is of paramount importance that the key principles of the act are adhered to, namely.

- Presumption of Capacity
 - Support to make your own decisions.
 - Right to make decisions that others may consider unwise or eccentric
 - Any decisions made for you (after failed capacity test) must be in your best interest.
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- The Human Rights Act 1998 gives legal effect in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
 - The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) created a framework for whistle blowing across the private, public, and voluntary sectors. The Act provides almost every individual in the workplace with protection from victimisation where they raise genuine concerns about malpractice in accordance with the Act's provisions.
 - The Care Act 2014, reforms care and support in England, focusing on individual and carer control. It consolidates existing laws and introduces new local authority responsibilities to prevent, reduce, and delay care needs. The Act emphasizes information, advice, well-being, and safeguarding vulnerable adults. It also grants new rights to carers and establishes a national eligibility threshold for fair access to care services.

4. The role of staff and volunteers.

4.1 All staff and volunteers acting on behalf of Stak.life CIC have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults.

4.2 Staff and volunteers may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy will enable staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific adult protection issues.

5. What is abuse?

5.1 Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons

5.2 Abuse may 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

5.3 Abuse can occur in any relationship and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

5.4 The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets' report suggests the following as the main types of abuse:

- Physical abuse including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions
- Sexual abuse including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressured into consenting
- Psychological abuse including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks
- Financial abuse including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits
- Institutional abuse including the inappropriate use of power and control both on the person and their possessions, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, lack of individual care and disrespect
- Discriminatory abuse including racist, sexist, abuse based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment

6. Procedure in the event of a disclosure.

6.1 It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously

6.2 This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a vulnerable adult has been abused

6.3 Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual

6.4 A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

6.5 This should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant (the vulnerable person) and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed and the account which has been given of the allegation.

7. Responding to an allegation.

7.1 Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer (The DSL for Stak.life) on that working day where possible. It must be understood that in alerting or raising a concern about abuse you are not being asked to verify or prove that the information provided is true. The responsibility in establishing if a crime has taken place lies with the police.

7.2 The nominated member of staff shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local adult social services duty social worker. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made, and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 24 hours. **(See Appendix 1)** for the Stak.life Safeguarding concern/incident reporting form for vulnerable adults at risk. The form should be downloaded OR COPIED , completed and saved securely and only sent to Staklifeoffice@gmail.com once safeguarding actions have been completed.

8. Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse

8.1 In the event of an incident or disclosure:

DO

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen and observe
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure

- Explain areas of confidentiality
- Immediately speak to your manager for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for relevant experience sensitive support in a way that meets their individual needs.

DO NOT

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion- It is imperative that the person feels validated and that your own frame of references, values, bias, or views do not for any part of any conversation, even if you do not share or understand the proportionality or seriousness of the persons. It is the sensitivity to the individuals experience that should be validated, and which is paramount.
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

8.2 It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional adult protection agencies, following a referral from the designated safeguarding lead.

9. Confidentiality

9.1 Vulnerable adult protection raises issues of confidentiality which should be clearly understood by all. Staff and volunteers have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies, and adult social services.

9.2 Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all

9.3 All personal information regarding a vulnerable adult will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection and GDPR guidelines.

9.4 Records will only record details required in the initial contact form

9.5 If an adult confides in a member of staff or volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the Stak.life CIC member of staff or volunteer tells the adult sensitively that we have a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies

9.6 Within that context the adult should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it

9.7 Where possible, consent should be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties

9.8 In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority

9.9 Where a disclosure has been made staff should let the adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result

9.10 Staff should assure the adult that where appropriate, they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why

9.11 The adult's involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account

10. The role of Key individual agencies

- **Dedicated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)– Donna Sherred – Mobile 07918026871**
- **Kent Police Emergency dial 999**
- **Kent Police Non Emergency & advice dial 101**
- **Kent Social Services – Children- 0300041111**
- **Kent Social Services – Adults - 03000416161**

10.1 Adult Social Services

The Department of Health's recent 'No secrets' guidance document requires that authorities develop a local framework within which all responsible agencies work together to ensure a coherent policy for the protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse.

All local authorities have a Safeguarding Adults Board, which oversees multi- agency work aimed at protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults. It is normal practice for the board to comprise of people from partner organisations who have the ability to influence decision making and resource allocation within their organisation.

10.2 Police

The Police play a vital role in Safeguarding Adults with cases involving alleged criminal acts. It becomes the responsibility of the police to investigate allegations of crime by preserving and gathering evidence. Where a crime is identified, the police will be the lead agency and they will direct investigations in line with legal and other procedural protocols.

10.3 Role of Designated vulnerable adult protection officer or designated safeguard lead

The role of the designated officer is to deal with all instances involving adult protection that arise within Stak.life CIC. They will respond to all vulnerable adult protection concerns and enquiries. The designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer for Stak.life is Mrs Donna Sherred - Director

- The role of the Adult Protection Officer is to support the member of staff or volunteer involved with the incident and to ensure the correct procedures are followed
- The Adult Protection Officer could, if agreed with the staff member or volunteer dealing with the incident, make contact with the designated Adult Protection Coordinator in the first instance
- The Adult Protection Officer should ensure that all staff and volunteers are familiar with Stak.lifes Vulnerable Adult Protection Procedures and ensure that all staff and volunteers undertake training where appropriate

11. Training

Training will be provided, as appropriate, to ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of these procedures. DBS Checks will be reviewed on three-year basis for those carrying out regulated activities. Regulated activity refers to specific roles or activities that involve close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups, including children and adults.

12. Recruitment procedure

Stak.life CIC operates procedures that take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults, including arrangements for appropriate checks on volunteers, where applicable.

13. Monitoring and review of the Safeguarding of vulnerable adults Policy

13.1. Stak.life CIC is committed to monitoring the effectiveness of the safeguarding policy and procedures to ensure that they achieve their objectives. The monitoring will be ongoing and form discussion at Director meetings. Reviews and amendments will take place by-yearly or as required if there is an expedient need or change in legislative governance.

13.2. When the policy is reviewed, we will ensure each objective is reviewed, and we will:

- Ensure that staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and

- supervised and have clear roles:
- All staff and volunteers will be informed of their safeguarding responsibilities including the extent of their involvement with vulnerable adults.
- New staff will be informed during their induction.
- A record of safeguarding training will be kept by the DSL

14. Other relevant STAK.life policies and procedures

- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Neuro- Affirmation Policy
- Privacy Policy

End.

Appendix 1



Stak.life CIC

Safeguarding concern/incident reporting form for vulnerable adults at risk

Remember, if it is an emergency and the person is in immediate danger, phone the police on 999.

Otherwise, once completed, please pass this form to the Stak.life CIC designated Safeguarding Officer. See the Stak.life Safeguarding Procedure Policy P-02 for details.

IMPORTANT: Please write clearly and only write facts of what you heard or saw, even if the language used was unpleasant. If you do need to clarify anything, please state clearly that is the case.

Date of incident	
Time of incident	
Location of incident	
Section A: DETAILS OF ADULT AT RISK	
Name	
Date of Birth	

[illegible]

Where (exact location/venue)	
When the incident is alleged to have taken place (date and time)	
YOUR OBSERVATIONS	
Please include your observations here:	
A description/ location of any visible injuries	
A description of the adult's behaviour, their physical or emotional state	
ADULT AT RISK REPORTING THE ABUSE OR NEGLECT	
Only complete this section if the adult at risk reported the incident to you. Record exactly what the adult has said happened using their exact words, even if this is unpleasant language, and anything you said to the adult. Remember you should not investigate, but simply record here.	
SECTION D: ALLEGED ABUSER	
Do you have any details about the alleged abuser Y / N	
Name:	
Address:	
Tel number:	
Their relationship (if any) to the adult at risk:	
Is the alleged abuser a member of staff/ volunteer/trustee or working with the charity in any way?	☐ YES If so, Their role
IMMEDIATELY REPORT THIS TO THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER	
SECTION E: REPORTING THE INCIDENT INTERNALLY	

Are carer's / family members aware of the concerns / allegations?	☐ YES ☐ NO
If yes, how did they become aware?	
Is the alleged abuser aware of the concerns / allegations?	☐ YES ☐ NO
If yes, how did they become aware?	
Who did you report this to in the organisation	
Date and time reported	
Has the adult consented to you reporting this to the Designated Safeguarding Officer	☐ YES ☐ NO
Signed by person making this report	
PRINT YOUR NAME	
Your Role in organisation	

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM.

PLEASE NOW PASS THIS FORM TO THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER OR SAFEGUARDING TRUSTEE.

Please remember your responsibility for data protection. Do not leave this information in an insecure location or discuss with anyone else.

THE REST OF THIS FORM SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER / SAFEGUARDING TRUSTEE

SECTION F: REPORTING EXTERNALLY	
Have you reported this to the Adult Social Care Team?	☐ YES ☐ NO
Who did you speak to	

Date and time reported	
Case referene number (if any)	
Advice given by Social Care team	
Have the police been informed?	☐ YES ☐ NO
If yes, who did you speak to?	
Any case reference number?	
What action are the police taking, if any?	
Detail any other partner organisations you have shared this information with, and reasons? Please include name and contact details.	
SECTION G: ADULT AT RISK'S CONSENT AND WISHES	
Is the adult at risk aware that you are reporting the concern to Social Care, Police or other agencies?	☐ YES ☐ NO
Have they consented to this?	
Please complete here any further information in respect of their wishes	
Any further action you will take	

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM.

PLEASE NOW FILE THIS INFORMATION SECURELY AFTER COMPLETING AND REPORT TO THE DEDICATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD. THE NATURE OF THE CONCERN AND WHAT ACTION WAS TAKEN.