

The Royal Air Forces Association Volunteer Programme Safeguarding Policy for Volunteers

This policy sets out to protect members, clients, donors and visitors, who are deemed to be vulnerable adults, from abusive behaviour; to clarify the competencies and expectations for volunteers and staff in the areas of support and reporting and to ensure robust monitoring and review of how people who are abused are supported and managed.

For the purposes of the following policy, both Branch and Association volunteers will be referred to as 'volunteers'.

Statement of policy

The Royal Air Forces Association is committed to preventing, identifying and responding to the abuse of adults as far as is reasonably practicable. Therefore volunteers and staff have a responsibility to safeguard adults, themselves and the Association, by reducing and managing risk.

Introduction

Adults who are vulnerable and in need of protection require vigilance and understanding by staff and volunteers who work with them. This policy has been developed in the recognition of the fact that the Association works with adults who may be at risk of mistreatment and abuse and seeks to safeguard and protect all involved in Association activities.

The Association is committed to the mental and social welfare of each individual regardless of race, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability and economic status. This policy relates to all volunteers, staff and clients within the welfare services and activities offered by the Association.

Policy

The policy for safeguarding adults is:

- The adult's welfare is and must always be, the paramount consideration
- All adults have a right to be protected from abuse and neglect
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and neglect will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

The Association accepts that adults have their own rights. In particular they have the right to have their own basic needs met and to be free from harm and exploitation.

Each Branch, Club, Area Office, Wings Break Hotel and Sheltered Housing Scheme should have a nominated Safeguarding Officer.

All Association volunteers and staff are responsible for:

- Preventing and being alert to physical, verbal, institutional, psychological or emotional abuse, an act of neglect or an omission to act, an adult being persuaded to enter into a financial arrangement or sexual relationship to which they have not, or could not have, consented.



- Making sure that all adults are aware that they will be listened to, that it is all right to report concerns and that appropriate action will be taken in the event of any type of abuse or neglect.
- Reporting any alleged or suspected abuse of an adult, in accordance with the Association's policy and procedures regarding safeguarding.
- Ensuring risk management plans are in place where appropriate and / or necessary.

Definition of Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is any person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care/support services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Procedure

The Association will take all necessary steps to protect from abuse vulnerable adults with whom it has contact.

- If an adult makes an allegation against another adult it will be taken seriously and reported.
- In matters concerning the welfare of adults at risk, it will be explained that there can be 'no secrets', and that information shared will have to be reported to the relevant agencies and dealt with in accordance with the law and guidance.
- A copy of the policy will be made available to volunteers, staff, Branches, Clubs and clients.
- Volunteers and staff will have an understanding of what constitutes abuse and the procedures that need to be followed.
- The risk of volunteers or staff being potential, actual or convicted perpetrators of harm against vulnerable adults is reduced by carrying out an Enhanced DBS clearance check (or equivalent) which is checked every five years.
- Volunteers and staff are made aware of and understand their professional boundaries and that their practice reflects this.

How to deal with a disclosure of abuse

- If you become aware that an adult may be at risk of harm or when someone is telling you directly that they are being or have been abused, you should be aware that the person may feel very vulnerable and upset.
- Be supportive and reassuring by listening to the client carefully. Do not ask unnecessary questions, it is not your role to investigate.
- It is important that all those directly involved with an adult seen to be at risk of harm act in a supportive and facilitating manner. They should avoid being judgemental and should not introduce personal or third party experiences of harm.
- Every effort should be made to enable the person to express their wishes and to make decisions to the best of their ability where appropriate but you must remember your duty of care.
- You should advise the client that the information they have given will have to be passed on to the Area Welfare Officer or Hotel Manager who may have to inform the local Adult Social Care or Community Care Department of the allegations as it is they who may be required to investigate further.
- Permission is not required from the person before reporting concerns of suspected abuse.
- When you feel it is appropriate to leave the person who is disclosing the abuse, the information given by them should be passed on immediately to the Area Welfare Officer, Hotel Manager or the Head of Welfare.
- Should you be concerned for the immediate safety and wellbeing of an individual, the emergency services i.e. police, ambulance, should be contacted immediately. If you suspect that a criminal act has been committed, for example physical or sexual abuse, you should contact the police immediately and take steps to preserve evidence. Volunteers and staff should not place themselves at risk.
- If the Area Welfare Officer or Hotel Manager is not available then contact should be made with the Association's Safeguarding Officer or their Deputy.

- In cases where you hear allegations about yourself or your colleagues, or hold suspicions or concerns in which colleagues are implicated, then the Association's Safeguarding Officer should be consulted without delay.
- When making a referral, as much information as possible should be given. This will include
 - Reasons for concern;
 - Previous concerns (if any);
 - Full name, date of birth and address of all relevant parties, including the client's family members / person or organisation with responsibility for the individual's capacity, if necessary;
 - The names and designation of any other professionals known to the client (e.g. doctor).

Under no circumstances should referrals be delayed whilst obtaining the above information, or waiting for the client to make a formal complaint.

Recording

- You must record the nature of your concerns and anything the person may have said to you, using as far as possible the words used by the person.
- The form (Appendix III) and notes must be signed and dated by the person completing the form. This information forms the basis of referral and will also be required if there is an investigation.
- The information should be held securely.

Legal Position

Aspects of safeguarding and protecting adults are affected by certain laws. This list is not exhaustive. Further reading and research is recommended

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 (see Appendix II)
- Mental Health Act 1983 (also 2007)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Care Standards Act 2000

For Scotland

- Government's White Paper 'Modernising Social Services' 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- 'Safeguarding Adults' National Service Framework of Standards 2005

Contact Details

RAFA Safeguarding Officer	0116 268 8771 or 07827 968607
Rory O'Connor	rory.oconnor@rafa.org.uk
RAFA Deputy Safeguarding Officer	0116 268 8774 or 07584 240524
Sophie Witkowski	sophie.witkowski@rafa.org.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer	http://openlylocal.com/councils
Police (local number)	101 (or 999 in any emergency)
Area Welfare Officer	Please contact the appropriate AWO for your Area:
Eastern	Paul Davies – 0116 258 8781

Midlands	Tracey Khan – 0121 449 9356
North East	Karen Leahair – 01347 847525
North West	Michael Grell – 01772 426930
Northern Ireland	Sarah Waugh – 02890 325718
Scotland & Overseas	Mike McCourt – 0131 2255221
South East	Sue Smith – 0208 2866667
South West	Glenford Bishop – 01392 462088
Wales	Barbara Howells – 01495 249522

Appendices (can be obtained on request by contacting welfare@rafa.org.uk)

- I Categories and Indicators of Adult Abuse
- II Capacity and Incapacity
- III Form for Reporting Concerns about a Vulnerable Adult
- IV Safeguarding Adults Alert and Refer – flowchart
- V Good Practice Guidelines
- VI Quick Reference Guide