



### Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

#### Purpose

The RSPCA Mid Norfolk & North Suffolk Branch (“The Branch”) works to make a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual, employees, volunteers, customers and donors, to stay safe. This policy seeks to ensure that the Branch undertakes its responsibilities in regard to the manner in which it protects staff, volunteers, children, younger people and/ or adults at risk and that it will respond to any concerns appropriately.

#### Scope

The Branch will provide an approach that will ensure all staff, volunteers, children, young people and adults have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity and its aim is to establish a framework that supports staff and volunteers in their practices and clarifies Branch expectations. This policy applies to all adults including all staff and volunteers and it covers all adults, children, and young people including those it comes into contact with through the following activities: volunteering, working within our charity shops, giving presentations in schools, engaging with the community and visiting people within their own homes.

#### Legislation

The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- The Police Act – DBS 1997
- Mental Health Act 1983
- NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Working together to safeguard Children 2010
- The Children Act 1989, updated 2004
- The Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Modern Slavery Act 2015

#### Definitions

**Safeguarding** is about embedding practices throughout the Branch to ensure the protection of children and / or adults at risk wherever possible. In contrast, child and adult protection is about responding to circumstances that arise.

**Abuse** is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.

Abuse can take a number of forms; including the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Unintentional abuse which may not be considered as a 'selfish act'
- Self-neglect, self-harm and/or hoarding
- Non-accidental injury
- Not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs
- Not taking account of educational, social and recreational needs
- Ignoring or isolating the person
- Failure to ensure privacy and dignity
- Physical/Domestic/Sexual/Emotional/Discriminatory or Psychological Abuse
- Rape and sexual assault
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Radicalisation

### **Definition of a child**

A child is under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a child).

### **Definition of an adult at risk**

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

This may include a person who:

- Is an older person and maybe frail
- Has a mental ill health including dementia
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser

### **Responsibilities**

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures.

We expect all staff and volunteers to promote good practice by being an outstanding role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.

The Designated Safeguarding Champion is Emma Mills, Customer & Volunteering Service Officer (CVSO). This person's responsibilities are:

- To receive staff or volunteers concerns about safeguarding and respond to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately.
- To ensure the policy is in place and appropriate and is accessible
- To ensure the policy is reviewed and monitored
- To ensure staff and volunteers have access to appropriate training/information.

In the absence of the Safeguarding Champion, the Chief Executive Officer and/or Chair of Trustees are also able to be contacted should a safeguarding concern arise.

The scope of this Safeguarding Policy is broad ranging and in practice, it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within the company.

These include:

- Whistleblowing –ability to inform on other staff/ practices within the Branch
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures – to address breaches of procedures/ policies
- Health and Safety policy
- Lone working policy
- Equality and Diversity policy– ensuring safeguarding procedures are in line with this policy, in particular around discriminatory abuse and ensuring that the safeguarding policy and procedures are not discriminatory
- Data protection (how records are stored and access to those records)
- Confidentiality agreement, ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of your duty to disclose
- Safer recruitment policy and procedure
- Staff induction
- Staff training
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints procedure
- Anti-bullying and harassment

## **Principles and Procedures**

### **Safe practice for staff**

Safe practice in the work place is about embedding practices throughout the Branch to ensure the protection of all staff. In contrast, staff protection is about responding to circumstances that arise. All staff have the right to work in a safe and secure environment with policies and procedures in place with assurance they will be adhered to at all times.

Staff should be free from abuse and should seek guidance if concerned from their Safeguarding champion or if unable to do so, the Chief Executive Officer or Chair of Trustees should be contacted.

This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.

### **Types of abuse from members of the public**

- Verbal
- Physical
- Harassment

Abuse can occur whilst staff are walking, taking public transport or driving to and from destination of work, on Branch premises, our shops, at events, during educational talks, collection and drop off of animals, scheduled meetings, via letter, email, telephone or social media.

### **Types of abuse from staff**

- Verbal
- Physical
- Harassment

### **Types of abuse from volunteers**

- Verbal
- Physical
- Harassment

### **Safe practice for volunteers**

Safe practice in the work place is about embedding practices throughout the Branch to ensure the protection of all volunteers. In contrast, volunteer protection is about responding to circumstances that arise. All volunteers have the right to work in a safe and secure environment with policies and procedures in place with assurance they will be adhered to at all times.

Volunteers should be free from abuse and should seek guidance from their role manager or CVSO where necessary. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.

### **Types of abuse from members of the public**

- Verbal
- Physical
- Harassment

Abuse can occur whilst volunteers undertake their volunteer duties in a shop, at events, whilst carrying out a home visit or during other volunteer roles.

### **Types of abuse from staff**

- Verbal
- Physical
- Harassment
- Neglect

## **Types of abuse from other volunteers**

- Verbal
- Physical
- Harassment

## **Boundaries**

Effectively managing boundaries with volunteers and customers requires giving adequate attention to the issue of role management. A role boundary is a clear definition of the duties, rights and limitations of role managers, volunteers and customers. Whilst it is expected that employees establish a rapport with volunteers and customers, they are also responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries between themselves, their volunteers and customers. An example of this may be a member of staff choosing not to accept requests from volunteers or customers on social media to maintain a professional distance.

Boundaries protect and inform both employees and volunteers by clarifying what types of employee and volunteer behaviour are appropriate. They also protect staff from the risk of false allegations of unprofessional conduct. Clear boundaries help to develop trusting relationships with volunteers who know what to expect from their role manager and help develop professionalism by encouraging high standards of work and consistency.

The showing of favouritism towards a particular volunteer or customer is not only open to misinterpretation, it is divisive and dangerous. All members of staff are expected to guard against favouritism. We recognise that it can sometimes be difficult to know where and when to draw the line between personal lives and work and when we are working with loyal customers and volunteers however, it is important that we are always aware of our actions and the effect they may have on our professional relationships as well as the person. If a member of staff is ever in doubt about the appropriate way to respond to a volunteer or member of the public they should seek guidance from their line manager, or the CVSO.

## **Members of the public**

Safe practice in the work place is about embedding practices throughout the Branch to ensure the protection of all customers who come into contact with Branch, face to face, telephone, email or letter. In contrast, customer protection is about responding to circumstances that arise. All customers have the right to be provided with a safe and secure environment of which they come into contact with the Branch.

Customers should be free from abuse and staff and volunteers should seek guidance from the Safeguarding Champion if any issues arise. Should the Safeguarding Champion be unable to assist or unavailable this concern should then be raised with the Chief Executive Officer and in their absence the Chair of Trustees.

This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.

The type of safeguarding principles and procedures will be guided and implemented dependent on the situation and department in question.

Examples of situations where safeguarding procedures may be implemented are as follows:

### **Animal Welfare**

- All appointment details to be confirmed through reception
- Sign in and out when entering or leaving the Branch premises
- To follow the lone working policy and keep footprint tracker charged and on their person
- Confidentiality to be maintained at all times in line with the confidentiality agreement

### **Central Services**

- All members of the public with appointments to wait in reception until called by the person/department they are meeting
- All external and internal members to sign in and out of Branch premises
- Confidentiality to be maintained at all times in line with the confidentiality agreement
- Staff information is not to be disclosed to external parties or member of the public
- Regular health and safety checks to be carried out in line with the health and safety policy

### **Education**

Schools will have their own safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff attending schools for educational visits should be provided with a copy the first time they visit a new school. Staff who regularly attends schools for educational talks will be DBS checked.

- Confidentiality to be maintained at all times in line with the confidentiality agreement
- Educational visits to be recorded on visiting staffs outlook calendar

### **Income Generation and Retail**

- Staff and volunteers to sign in and out of shop premises
- Confidentiality to be maintained at all times in line with the confidentiality agreement

### **Safe Recruitment**

#### **Volunteers**

To help minimise risk and to safeguard staff and volunteers, it is important to have a stable recruitment process for all volunteer roles. This provides an opportunity to ensure the applicant fully understand the nature of the role and environment they will be volunteering in. This also provides opportunity to ensure the candidate is suitable for the role of which they applied.

The application process for all volunteer roles is as follows:

1. Application form
2. Informal discussion/ interview
3. References
4. Branch induction and training

#### **Employees**

To help minimise risk and to safeguard staff and volunteers, it is important to have a stable recruitment process for all job roles. This provides an opportunity to ensure the applicant fully understand the nature of the role and environment they will be working in. This also provides opportunity to ensure the candidate is suitable for the role of which they applied.

The application process for all roles is as follows:

1. Application form through Indeed
2. Shortlisting process by interview panel
3. Candidates shortlisted for interview provided with job description
4. Interview

5. References taken for successful candidate
6. Candidate being given a DBS check if appropriate for the role
7. Branch induction and training

**Policy Author:** EM

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