



## Vulnerable Adult Policy

### *Vulnerable Adults*

A vulnerable person is any adult who

- May be in need of community care services by reason of age or illness or disability (physical or mental)
- May be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation

**Definition of Significant harm:** Ill-treatment including sexual abuse, forms of ill treatment that are not physical; the impairment of or unavoidable deterioration in physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development'.

**Definition of Risk:** Refers to situations or behaviours which present a real or potential threat of harm to a person's health, development, safety or well-being. Vulnerable people can be at risk because of the actions or behaviour of others or they can be at risk because of self-neglect, their behaviour and lifestyle.

**Ivybridge Caring** is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use our services are not exploited or abused and that working practices minimise the risk of abuse. If abuse is reported to us or volunteers recognise abuse, this policy outlines what steps should be taken. This policy compliments our Equal Opportunities Policy.

### Values

- All individuals will be treated with equal respect regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual identity or impairment.
- The rights of all individuals will be upheld and decisions will be taken in partnership with the vulnerable person. There will be no unnecessary delay in resolving matters. Intervention will be no more than is necessary to protect the individual
- Personal information will be treated in the strictest confidence within the limits of the law, and following Ivybridge Caring's Confidentiality Policy.

### Aims

- To respond sensitively to reported incidents of self neglect and abuse.
- To respect the rights and wishes of the vulnerable person.
- To work to the highest standards of good practice.

### Procedure

What to do if abuse is reported or suspected

If you have general concerns about a vulnerable person because of signs and symptoms you have noticed, discuss these with your Co-ordinator or a member of the Committee.

**Mobile: 07791 239357**

**E-Mail [info@ivybridgearing.co.uk](mailto:info@ivybridgearing.co.uk)**

**Registered Charity No.1135960**

If you feel the matter is urgent due to the severity of the symptoms contact your Coordinator or a member of the Committee who will contact the appropriate agency.

All reports of suspected or alleged abuse must be recorded in detail.

### Action to take when abuse is disclosed

Listen carefully to what your client is saying.

Give your client time to say what he or she wants to.

Make initial enquiries and establish the situation as far as possible without starting an investigation.

Sensitively ask open questions (not leading questions) to obtain key information:

- What has happened
- When did the activity take place
- Where did it take place
- Who is involved

Discuss with your client what action he/she wishes you to take

Ensure that your client knows how to contact the police to report the incident if he or she wishes to do so.

### If your client asks you not to take any action

You must explain to your client that you must inform your Co-ordinator. Inform your client you understand that he or she does not wish to take any action and you will inform your Coordinator of this. If the abused client does not want the matter to go any further then his/her wishes should be respected unless the following apply:

- Where the alleged abuse has been perpetrated by a professional, a paid helper or volunteer of any organisation who may have access to other vulnerable people
- Where there is likelihood of a serious crime occurring
- Where the client lacks the mental capacity to make an informed decision

### If your client wishes action to be taken

You should record all the information that you have been told and what you have observed e.g. bruising. The wishes of the vulnerable client should be taken into account and their consent (if they are able to give it) should be obtained regarding further action and the sharing of information.

## Support to Volunteers

It is recognised that dealing with allegations of abuse can be stressful and Ivybridge Caring will offer their Volunteers as much support as possible during the process.

## Confidentiality

The confidentiality of the vulnerable adult should be respected wherever possible and their consent obtained to share information.

## Volunteer Training

Ivybridge Caring will ensure that all of its volunteers who have direct contact with vulnerable adults have relevant training in the recognition of abuse and understand how to alert a Trustee.