



## Vulnerable Adults Protocol

### **POLICY**

Barrow AFC, Barrow AFC Community and Barrow AFC Performance Centre are committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use our service are not exploited or abused and that working practices minimise the risks of such abuse. If abuse is reported, or staff feel concerned about a situation of potential abuse, the following policy and procedure should be implemented.

Staff will be aware of and guard against possible discrimination because of assumptions about class, gender, sexuality, race, disability, religion and age.

### **Definition**

The term vulnerable adults refers to people of 18 and over *"who are or maybe in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness or lack of opportunity; and who is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation"*.

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances." **Care and support statutory guidance, Department of Health, 11th March 2016**

Adult protection concerns the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons.

Abuse can include: verbal, physical, financial/material, sexual, psychological, discriminatory, emotional abuse and neglect. Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetrated by anybody.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### **Awareness**

All staff and volunteers involved in the provision of the service have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a vulnerable adult. Not all concerns relate to abuse and there may well be another explanation.

It is important while being vigilant to keep an open mind. If at all possible staff should discuss their concerns discretely and in confidence with the Manager and seek help through supervision, if they are concerned about a client or member of staff.

#### **Further Action**

- Having raised the issue with the Manager the staff member / volunteer should make a confidential personal note of the circumstances and if appropriate check whether there were any witnesses present.
- The vulnerable adult should be informed that the staff member will be discussing the matter with the Manager.
- If the person who says they are being abused asks the staff member to do nothing at all, they should inform them that whilst respecting this, the staff member must share the information with the Manager.



- staff / volunteers do not carry out an investigation. This must be left to the relevant agencies. You should also inform them that the information might be passed to the appropriate agencies
- If physical and/or sexual abuse/assault is reported the vulnerable adult and/or their representative should be asked to report it to the police and offered support to do so.
- The Manager will treat the matter as top priority and inform the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- The Manager will seek advice urgently. This may involve discussing the situation with Social Services or with the Police. Social Services will instigate an assessment of the person's needs under Community Care legislation.
- The Manager will keep the Chair of the Board of Trustees informed, of all action taken to date.
- The Manager will keep the vulnerable adult informed at all times as to action being taken.

### **Support for Staff**

The member of staff reporting incidents of suspected or potential abuse may find that the vulnerable adult is very upset or angry. The Manager will offer support as appropriate. Other support, for example, may include counselling provided by an outside body if required or by request.

### **Suspected abuse by an employee / volunteer**

Suspected abuse by an employee / volunteer, where a member of staff is suspected of abuse the following action should be taken;

- The Manager should interview the member of staff or client with a witness or representative of their choice present.
- The Manager should make arrangements for interviewing the suspected victim; this should be done with a staff member, Trustee and a representative of the victim present
- The purpose of the meeting is not to investigate but to establish whether there are grounds for the allegation.
- The procedure outlined under **Further Action** should then be followed.

### **Confidentiality**

- Confidentiality is crucial to all our work and relationships should be strictly adhered to, except that the welfare of vulnerable adults is paramount and takes precedence over it.
- Staff / volunteers should not keep concerns relating to potential abuse of a vulnerable adult to themselves but should report to the BAFC Safeguarding Team. .
- Confidentiality may **NOT** be maintained if the withholding of information or evidence will prejudice the welfare of the adult.