

## HOPE HOUSING, TRAINING & SUPPORT LTD

### Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy (POVA)

The purpose of this policy is to help prevent the exploitation or abuse of the vulnerable adults who use our service. The following pages explain what is considered to be abuse or exploitation and how staff, volunteers or service users can report any incidents.

#### Aim

Hope Housing recognises that many of those using our support services may be vulnerable to abuse because their life experiences may affect their ability to take care of themselves and protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

Our aim is to ensure that the right of all our service users to be protected from abuse is safeguarded.

We also safeguard our service users through our recruitment policy and code of conduct, which addresses the issues of Criminal Record Bureau checks, prevention of personal benefit, professional boundaries and confidentiality. Staff receive training on these issues at induction and in their ongoing personal training plan. Each member of staff is provided with a Code of Conduct.

We inform all service users of our policy and procedures on protection of vulnerable adults (POVA) through verbal advice in their interviews with staff, at regular house meetings and in written information on their personal welcome pack.

#### Definition

**Abuse may take any of the following forms:**

**Physical abuse** – including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint, or inappropriate sanctions, also self-inflicted injury.

**Psychological abuse** – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact or communication, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

**Sexual abuse** – including unwanted sexual attention, rape and sexual assault, contact or non-contact sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting.

**Financial or material 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, unusual bank account activity.

**Discriminatory abuse** – including that based on a person's ethnic origin, religion, language, age, sexuality, gender, disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment including bullying and harassment.

**Neglect or acts of omission** – including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

#### Procedure

##### What to do first

If you believe a client is being abused, or you believe you are being abused yourself, the first thing to do is to talk to your key-worker. If you feel your key-worker is abusing you, please go to their line manager.

Please be aware that in an abuse situation, although we will try to keep your confidentiality, it may not be possible. Confidentiality does not apply in situations where there is risk of harm to yourself or someone else. However, this does not mean that information will be freely available; people will only be informed as necessary.

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## Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy (POVA)

### What will happen

Initially, the following information will be collected:

- Who has been abused / is suspected of being abused?
- By whom?
- What is the nature of the abuse?
- Where did it take place? (If known)
- When did it take place? (If known)
- Are there any witnesses?
- Who has raised it?
- Time and date of form completion.
- Name of person completing the form.

### Police involvement

If the matter is a criminal matter (for example physical or sexual abuse), the police will be informed straight away.

It's possible that an allegation may not appear to be a criminal matter at this stage, and that only as evidence comes to light does the seriousness of abuse become clear (for example financial abuse may not be apparent initially and only come to light during an investigation). It is possible to call the police at any stage of an investigation.

### Recording and monitoring

Any allegation or incident of abuse will be recorded in a confidential incident file, and investigated by the appropriate member of staff. Any serious allegation requiring reporting to Social Services or the Police will also be notified to the Contracts Officer of the Supporting People Team (or other Social or Health agency with whom Hope Housing has a contract to provide the service to the service user affected).

It may be necessary to record steps that need to be taken to protect and support a service user in the event of an allegation by another service user or a member of staff. These steps will depend upon the nature and severity of the allegation. This procedure applies to service users and all staff,

volunteers, agency workers, consultants, contractors employed by Hope Housing. If the abuse concerns a member of staff, this will be reported to the director who will investigate all reported incidents.

### Review

This procedure and its implementation will be reviewed every six months to ensure it is operating properly and is effective in preventing incident & expected abuse.

### How to raise your concerns: (For staff, volunteers or service users).

(a) If you have a concern about incident & expected abuse, please raise it with your manager first. This may be done orally or in writing.

(b) If for whatever reason, you feel unable to raise the matter with your manager, please raise your concerns with the following:

### Your Service User Involvement Officer:

Fenton Findley 07990661577 or  
Bournemouth Social Services  
9 Madeira Road, Bournemouth  
Tel 01202 458000

or

BADSUF  
Flat 1, 29 Alma Road  
Winton  
Bournemouth BH9 1AB