



## Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy – July 2022

**Date of Policy: July 2022**

**Policy Approved By: BOT**

**Overall Responsibility for Policy:** Board of Trustees

**Person for the Responsibility for Implementation of the Policy:** Katie Eccles, Clinical Director

**Policy Applies to:** All Trustees, Staff, Contractors and Volunteers of COMPASS-Ghana

**Date of next review:** July 2023

**Cross Reference to other policies:**

### Introduction

1. Having policies and procedures to safeguard adults is a legal requirement under the Care Act 2014. Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It Means:

- a. Protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
- b. That **COMPASS-Ghana** should always promote the person's wellbeing in their safeguarding arrangements.
- c. Professionals should work with the adult to establish what being safe means to them and how that can be best achieved.
- d. Prevention is Key aspect to implementing an effective safeguarding agenda.

### Section One: Aim of this Policy

2. This policy outlines the practices and procedures for staff in **COMPASS-Ghana** to contribute to the prevention of abuse of vulnerable adults, to raise awareness and provide a clear framework for action when abuse is suspected.

3. The Policy is also designed to protect the vulnerable adult and the care giver by recognising the risks involved in lone working. The policy covers all staff and volunteers whose role involves regular contact with service users who may be considered vulnerable adults.

4. The aims of the **COMPASS-Ghana** Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults' policy are:

- a. To stop abuse or neglect wherever possible.
- b. To prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs.



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- c. To Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live.
- d. To promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned.
- e. To raise public, stakeholder and partner awareness so that communities and suppliers, alongside professionals, play their part in identifying and preventing abuse and neglect.
- f. To provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or wellbeing of an adult.

### Section Two: Safeguarding Policies

- 5. All safeguarding work with adults should be based on the following principles:
  - a. The empowerment of adults - underpins all safeguarding adults' work.
  - b. The focus of safeguarding adults should always be to identify and endeavour to meet the desired outcomes of the adult.
  - c. Every person has a right to live a life free from abuse, neglect and fear.
  - d. Safeguarding adults *is everyone's business and responsibility*.
  - e. **COMPASS-Ghana** has a zero tolerance to the abuse of adults, anywhere and with whom it operates or partners with.
  - f. All reports of abuse will be treated seriously.
  - g. Every person should be able to access information about how to gain safety from abuse, violence, and neglect.
- 6. **COMPASS-Ghana** embraces Six key behaviours in order to prevent abuse:
  - a. Empowerment —that People are supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent.
  - b. Prevention - It is better to take action before harm occurs.
  - c. Proportionality - The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
  - d. Protection Support and representation for those in greatest need.
  - e. Partnership — Partnership through local solutions with partners, stakeholders and services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
  - f. Accountability - Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

### Section Three: Definition of Vulnerable

- 7. Vulnerable: Vulnerable adults are defined (under the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Regulations 2002) as people aged 18 or over who are receiving any one the following services:



- a. Accommodation, nursing or personal care
- b. Medical care provided by the NHS or other independent agencies
- c. Social services
- d. Services provided for people with:
  - ✿ Learning difficulties or a physical disability
  - ✿ Physical or mental illness (temporary or chronic), including drug or alcohol addiction
  - ✿ Reduced physical or mental capacity
  - ✿ Those who are dependent on others or who need assistance to perform basic physical functions
  - ✿ Those who are severely impaired in their ability to communicate
  - ✿ Those who are unable to protect themselves from assault, abuse or neglect.

#### Section Four: Definition of Abuse

8. **Abuse:** Abuse can take many forms and is the harming of an individual, usually by someone who is in a position of power, trust or authority over that individual. Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other persons or person. Abuse can happen anywhere by anyone but is usually someone the vulnerable adult knows.

9. Abuse can be:

- ✿ Physical
- ✿ Psychological
- ✿ Sexual
- ✿ Neglect
- ✿ Discriminatory
- ✿ Organisational
- ✿ Financial

10. Abuse also includes: (note that exploitation is a common theme).

- ✿ Domestic abuse,
- ✿ Modern slavery,
- ✿ Organisational
- ✿ Self-neglect.

11. Examples of abuse are:

- ✿ Hitting, slapping, rough handling.
- ✿ Giving medication incorrectly.
- ✿ Deprivation of warmth, food, clothing health care etc.
- ✿ Any kind of sexual activity that the person has not consented to or cannot consent to.



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- ✿ Misuse or theft of money or property
- ✿ Shouting, swearing
- ✿ Neglect of medical or physical need
- ✿ Discrimination or harassment

12. The harm may be physical, psychological or emotional or it may be directed at exploiting the vulnerability of the victim in more subtle ways (for example, through denying access to people who can come to their aid, or through misuse or misappropriation of his or her financial resources). The threat or use of punishment is also a form of abuse - in many cases it is a criminal offence.

### Section Five: Rights and Responsibilities

13. **COMPASS-Ghana** has a responsibility:
- a. To ensure staff, contractors, partners and stakeholders are aware of and where reasonable and practical are adequately trained to implement the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy
  - b. To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected
  - c. To support, and where possible, secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to **COMPASS-Ghana's** services have full information regarding identified risk and vulnerability
  - d. To work with All Trustees, Staff, Contractors and Volunteers of **COMPASS-Ghana** to implement the policy
  - e. To cooperate with other agencies and the local authority in safeguarding investigations
  - f. To DBS check all volunteers and staff that have direct access to vulnerable adults
  - g. To carry out appropriate due diligence at the recruitment stage and at regular intervals (Annual Performance Reviews/Clinical Supervision, Training and staff days) that Staff, volunteers and partners remain suitable, competent and aware. If necessary, that Disclosure and Barring (DBS's) checks are carried out and reviewed (every three years)
  - h. To ensure that this policy is kept up to date
  - i. Any concerns raised will be recorded on the appropriate form and spreadsheet and notes kept on the database. All information will be kept confidential, and these concerns will be kept for as long as necessary.
14. **COMPASS-Ghana's** staff are:
- a. To be familiar with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and procedures and attend appropriate training
  - b. To take appropriate action in regard to the safeguarding of adults



- c. To take appropriate action to promote the principles and good practice within **COMPASS-Ghanas'** Policy.
- d. To declare any existing or subsequent convictions. Failure to do so will be regarded as gross misconduct and may lead to dismissal

15. **Vulnerable Adults:** In dealing with incidents of abuse or potential abuse, vulnerable adults have the following rights, which should be respected:

- a. Live without fear of abuse from their families, carers, professionals, volunteers or service users
- b. Be safe and receive adequate care and protection. This includes protection from all forms of violence including:
  - ☀ Physical Punishment
  - ☀ Intimidation
  - ☀ Belittling
  - ☀ Lack of Respect
  - ☀ Harassment
  - ☀ Sexual Assault
- c. Be involved in decision--making that affects them, and to be supported in making their own decisions about how they wish to proceed in the event of abuse, and in whom they wish to confide.

16. Their wishes should only be overridden if considered necessary in the interests of their own safety or the safety of others. Such a decision shall be justified, reasoned and reported and will involve the input of appropriate line management and be subject to review/audit by the senior management team.

### **Section Six: Statement of Staff Members' rights**

17. In dealing with incidents of abuse or potential abuse, staff members and volunteers have the following rights, which should be respected, to:
- a. Raise concern with their line manager or a working colleague who has been appropriately trained, if they feel vulnerable to allegations of abuse of a vulnerable adult
  - b. Full information about any allegation of abuse made against them and be kept informed at all stages of the process should **COMPASS-Ghana** take action
  - c. Report any incident or situation which they feel could result in an allegation of abuse against them or a colleague, ensuring that it is appropriately documented and secure



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- d. Support from managers and colleagues if an allegation of abuse involving a vulnerable adult is brought against them
- e. Request alternative working arrangements if the behaviour of a vulnerable adult causes concern, or during an investigation of alleged abuse
- f. Be accompanied by an independent advocate during interviews and meetings related to an allegation of abuse of a vulnerable adult.

### Section Seven: Support for those who report abuse

18. **COMPASS-Ghana** will ensure that anyone who makes a complaint, or expresses a concern regarding abuse of a vulnerable adult, whether they are a COMPASS-Ghana staff member, service user, carer or a member of the general public:

- a. Will be taken seriously
- b. That their comments will be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
- c. That they will be given protection from the risk of reprisals or intimidation
- d. Staff members will be given support and if necessary, afforded protection in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

### Section Eight: Implementing the policy

19. **COMPASS-Ghana** will take steps to implement its policy to protect vulnerable adults and will review the policy every 3 years to ensure that it reflects legal requirements and good practice developments. **COMPASS-Ghana** will ensure that:

#### a. **Recruitment of staff**

All applicants for employment are asked to declare unspent convictions. They are also told that if the role will involve contact with vulnerable adults, an Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (EDBS) check will be a condition of employment. When the work role involves contact with vulnerable adults, employment application forms will include a requirement to disclose any allegations or criminal action of abuse against a vulnerable adult. Failure to disclose information will be regarded as gross misconduct.

#### b. **Training**

During induction into **COMPASS-Ghana**, all appropriate staff will be made aware of our policies and procedures.

#### c. **Management and supervision**

It is the managers' responsibility to clarify with the worker/contractor their roles and responsibilities regarding their relationships with vulnerable adults with whom they may be in contact and any additional support or training needs they may have. Regular supervision for staff



will monitor the work and offer the opportunity to raise any issues. Direct lines of reporting will be made clear and updated immediately on a change of reporting personnel.

d. **Record keeping:**

Concerns raised about suspected abuse of a vulnerable adult, will be recorded and stored in accordance with privacy and Data Protection guidelines and similar best practice guidance, by the manager.

e. **Allegations and investigations**

All complaints, allegations or concerns should be made through the agreed **COMPASS-Ghana's** complaints policy.

20. Where an investigation, a complaint allegation is upheld against a staff member, **COMPASS-Ghana's** disciplinary procedures will apply.

21. If a criminal act against a vulnerable person is suspected, it may be necessary to involve the police in taking further actions. At this stage, both the vulnerable adult and the other party will be informed and made fully aware of their rights and any support available to them.

### Section Nine: Practical Guidance

21. If someone tells you, they are being or have been abused.

- ✿ Stay calm and listen
- ✿ Be objective
- ✿ Empathise
- ✿ Take them seriously and offer support. Keep them safe if necessary
- ✿ Make a written record of what you have been told, note the time and date.
- ✿ Preserve any evidence
- ✿ Immediately action by reporting the situation/concerns directly to line management or appropriate colleague
- ✿ If immediate risk of harm or danger to contact the appropriate service, taking note of para 14 below.

22. When a concern is reported to Adult Social Care (ASC) they will need the following information:

- ✿ Is there an immediate or future risk?
- ✿ What are the adult's views?
- ✿ Has consent been obtained?
- ✿ When and where did the incident take place?
- ✿ Who was involved?

23. What not to do:

- ✿ Do not promise to keep secrets
- ✿ Do not ask investigative questions or make judgmental comments



- ✿ Do not use leading questions
- ✿ Destroy any evidence
- ✿ Do not confront the alleged abuser
- ✿ Do not make decisions on your own

### Section Ten: Legal Framework

24. **COMPASS-Ghana** will ensure it complies with current legislation and best practice but will also ensure that this policy is made known and complied with in all areas where it operates or enables partners to operate.

25. The relevant UK legislation

- ✿ The Police Act 1997(Enhanced Criminal Record Certificates)
- ✿ Protection of Vulnerable Adults - Regulations 2002.

End

July 2022