



SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

POLICY BACKGROUND

True Access (TA) is a non-profit organisation (Community Interest Company) providing safe, fun and exciting activities and events that include day trips, party nights, weekend getaways and social club events - to mild and moderately disabled adults aged eighteen years old and over. Specifically, we cater for those with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, partial visual or speech impairments and/or other health conditions that significantly affect our clients' quality of life.

TA works in partnership with parents/carers, sports coaches, teachers and therapists to promote family involvement in activities.

As we recognise our responsibility to comply with and promote best practice, any staff member introduced to direct regular work with vulnerable people, that is more than incidental or fleeting, will have a Disclosure and Barring (DBS) check before starting work with a group. All directors, seasonal workers, paid workers or volunteers (hereafter referred to as staff) are all required to have DBS checks.

This policy applies to all staff and has been written using the legal and social care framework detailed in the following:

- Protecting adults at risk: London multi-agency policy and procedures to safeguard adults from abuse” 2014 – Pan London Adult Safeguarding.
- The Care Act 2014

DEFINITIONS

Abuse

Abuse is defined as ‘a violation of an individual’s human and civil right by any other person or persons’

A Vulnerable Adult is defined as a person aged 18 or over who is or who may have a physical, learning, or sensory impairment, a mental health problem, a serious illness or may be an older person.

True Access’ Commitment

Abuse is unacceptable in all circumstances.

The best defence against abuse is the strength of values incorporated in TA’s culture and the practical application of the mechanisms and procedures described in this document to protect vulnerable adults.

TA believes that all users are entitled to be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, race, gender or ability.

Safety is embedded within good sound practice and the growing ability of users to protect themselves, make their views known and be listened to. All users should feel safe, secure and feel able to raise any possible concerns at all times.

POLICY STATEMENT

TA is committed to safeguarding, protecting and promoting the welfare of all of its users.

TA seeks to ensure that there is a positive environment for all its members to learn and have fun, and works with the Richmond Adult Social Services to implement best practice in the safeguarding of young people and adults at risk.

TA recognises that users within these safeguarded groups face the risk of abuse. It is the duty of TA to prevent abuse and to take effective action when abuse is suspected or disclosed at an activity or training event.

TA also recognises that safeguarding incidents could happen anywhere and at any time and be perpetrated by a range of individuals including trustees, volunteers, service providers, partner organisations, other users and external people including family, friends, carers and key-workers.

TA recognises it has a duty of care, moral and legal obligations to ensure that all young adults involved in the activities it organises have protection from harm and have the opportunity to learn and experience TA services in a safe and supportive environment. We believe that:

- The welfare of the vulnerable adult is paramount
- All vulnerable adults have the right to protection from abuse
- To create a safe environment, we will recruit both staff and volunteers safely, provide ongoing supervision and ensure references are checked and DBS checks completed where applicable
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse must be properly investigated. Staff not adhering to policy and procedure will be subject to formal disciplinary procedures.
- Staff will receive an induction mandatory training to ensure that they are up to date and compliant with all relevant legislation and policies.

We want to make sure that users of our services and their parents/carers have the confidence to know what to do and who to contact should they have concerns. TA will ensure:

- Staff are carefully selected and trained in issues of protection
- All staff are aware of the policy and procedures for the protection of young and vulnerable adults
- All allegations and suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Information is available to users, parents, carers and/ or any other interested parties about TA procedures regarding the safety of vulnerable adults whilst at an event organised by TA and how to report concerns.
- A risk assessment is completed for all venues used by TA and partner organisations and is available to those delivering the sessions so that they can incorporate it in their health and safety responsibility for their users. **For risk assessment please refer to [Appendix 3] within the safeguarding policy**
- There is a designated safeguarding person
- The safeguarding staff member and director refresh safeguarding training annually
- All staff receive basic vulnerable adult protection and safeguarding training every 3 years. This includes directors.
- All staff must have read and understood the vulnerable adults policy and procedures and are familiar with their responsibility within it.
- The safeguarding vulnerable adults protection policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the safeguarding lead and director, and are in line with PAN London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

All staff play a crucial role in helping to identify vulnerable adults at risk of or experiencing any kind of abuse including, physical, sexual, financial, emotional and psychological, modern day slavery, cuckooing, manipulation, neglect by acts of omission, as well as self-neglect and hoarding concerns. Please refer to appendix 1 for indicators of identifying possible abuse or/and neglect at an early stage.

TA work in accordance with The London Safeguarding Adults Board - SAB working in-line with the London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
<https://londonadass.org.uk/safeguarding/>

For vulnerable adults

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames adult social services access team on:
Tel 020 8891 7971 - Text 07800 00 2439 ‘ Email adultsocialservices@richmond.gov.uk

Out of hours contact for adults and safeguarding issues please contact the emergency duty team at Richmond Social Services on Tel 020 8744 2442

***ALWAYS PHONE 999 IF THE VULNERABLE ADULT IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER ***

PREVENTION

TA employs various strategies to help control the risk of abuse and target the causes and opportunities for abuse and neglect. These include:

- Communication with the disabled community about the nature of abuse and safeguarding activity
- Embedding the principles of safeguarding into directors’ expectations and professional practice
- Awareness training for all TA’s directors, volunteers and staff
- Agreeing user/activity risk assessments with our partner organisations/staff delivering activities prior to the start of programmes
- By keeping up to date with legislation in respect of Safeguarding of Adults through the Richmond adult social services duty team.

Targeted Prevention

Prevention strategies are specifically targeted at anyone working with young adults at risk at an event organised by TA. This is because research shows that a significant number of abuse incidents involve professionals, carers and service managers as well as fellow users.

Targeted Prevention Strategies include:

- Employee and Volunteer Recruitment

- a DBS Disclosure will be obtained for all new and existing directors, paid staff and volunteers who come into contact with a vulnerable adult in activities organised by TA
- TA will ensure that any partner organisation's contract/agency staff or volunteers have undergone the necessary checks and have been made aware of this policy as part of project planning.
- Carry out identity and employment history checks on all appointments to TA's workforce before an appointment is made.
- References prior to starting with TA are required.

- Staff and Volunteer Training and Induction.

- On joining TA and when necessary thereafter, volunteers and trustees are provided with training regarding policy and procedures and how to address the possibility of abuse appropriate to the roles and responsibilities as defined in TA's safeguarding policy.
- At least two senior staff will attend Level 2 classroom based training, and an annual refresher
- All other staff, including volunteers completing basic level 1 online.
- All staff to have ongoing supervision and to keep a record of learning and up to date training log

- Staff and Volunteer Supervision and Support.

- Those working with any user who may be known to be at risk of abuse or neglect receive role specific training and regular supervision.

Safe Practice

Safe working practice ensures that users are safe and that all staff and trustees:

- are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
- work in an open and transparent way subject to data protection law;
- work with other colleagues and service provider and partner organisation staff where possible in situations open to question;
- discuss and/or refer to the Richmond learning disability services any incident which may give rise to concern. This includes any allegation or disciplinary notice regarding the conduct of staff
- record any incidents or decisions made;
- apply the same professional standards regardless of gender, race, sexuality or ability;
- are aware of the need for confidentiality;
- are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

TA's directors will ensure that:

- TA has a safeguarding policy in place and the policy is made available to Service Providers, partner organisations and parents/carers/key-workers on request;
- There are safe recruitment procedures and that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with adults at risk;
- Appropriately trained safeguarding staff and volunteers are in place;
- TA has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against fellow users, staff and volunteers that comply with guidance from the SAB and locally agreed inter-agency procedures
- There is an ethos whereby all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to safeguarding, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner;
- A Director is nominated to be responsible for safeguarding who will provide an overview and scrutiny and take action in the event of allegations of abuse being made against any trustee, staff or volunteer
- Where services or activities are provided in partnership with TA by another organisation, a 'Service Provider'- the service provider concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding and liaises with TA's nominated Director on these matters where appropriate;
- The policy is reviewed annually

TA's Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer will:

- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise on matters of user safety and safeguarding during all activities.
- Liaise with the board to inform them of any issues and ongoing investigations and ensure there is always cover for the role of Safeguarding Officers.
- Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the Richmond ASC- **020 8547 5008 from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, or 020 8770 5000 out of hours.**
- Ensure that all staff have access to and understand the TA's Safeguarding Policy;
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers have safeguarding training as part of their induction training;
- Ensure parents, carers, guardians or named responsible adults are made aware of the policy which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made and the role of TA and/or Service Provider /partner organisation in this to avoid conflict later
- Recognise how to identify signs of abuse and when it is appropriate to make a referral [Appendix 1];
- Represent TA at the sub-committees SAB (Safeguarding Adults Board) as required and have a working knowledge of how to operate and conduct an adult safeguarding section 42 enquiry process and be able to attend and contribute to safeguarding planning and outcome meetings.
- Keep detailed, accurate and secure written records and/or concerns;

- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses annually via Richmond Social Services.

All staff/volunteers and service providers will:

- Work in an open environment, where possible avoiding private and unobserved situations;
- Treat all users fairly with dignity and respect;
- Not share personal information with members such as personal e-mail addresses, social media and/ or personal mobile with members
- Do not take photographs of vulnerable adults on your mobile phone or personal camera unless consent/ permission is agreed by all parties.
- Complete an incident form to keep a written record of any injury or incident (including verbal attacks) along with any steps taken;
- Fully comply with TA's safeguarding policy and procedures, including the reporting of any injury or incident to the Lead Safeguarding Officer;
- Attend appropriate training and be alert and vigilant to indicators of abuse [Appendix 1];
- Report all concerns or possible indicators of abuse to the Lead Safeguarding Officer.

It is the responsibility of all staff and service providers to be alert to possible indicators of abuse and to raise concerns to TA's Safeguarding Officer. Staff and volunteers and service providers may become aware of the possibility that abuse has occurred by witnessing an act, receiving a verbal report from a user or another member of staff or volunteers or by suspicions raised by indicators listed in the guidelines within this policy.

For risk assessment please refer to [Appendix 3] within the safeguarding policy

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information about abuse must never be withheld intentionally as failure to disclose may have an influence on the future safety of an individual.

Disclosures and concerns should not be treated as confidential. Users who have made a disclosure should be informed of the next steps that will be taken and should be assured discretion.

Capacity must always be presumed unless reason to believe otherwise, If a user lacks the capacity to consent (as described in Mental Capacity Act 2005), TA's volunteers or service provider's staff and volunteers will report the alleged abuse immediately to the Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer, in order to act in the best interests of the individual.

All incident reports, safeguarding documents and any confidential information about the user must be recording appropriately on the forms provided.

All confidential information must be stored away on a locked computer or/and hard copy put in individuals file which should be kept in a locked cabinet.

Any confidential information found must be reported immediately.

True Access take data breach seriously. Please refer to our Data Protection Policy.

Winnie Danmole, Managing Director, will revise and review this policy regularly.

Revised; July 2020

Review date: July 2021

Signature: Winnie Danmole

Date: 1st July 2020

APPENDIX I RECOGNISING ABUSE

Abuse is difficult to assess; many situations may involve a combination of abusive elements. The following indicators are for **guidance** only, they do not list all types of abuse and they do not necessarily mean that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered:

Physical Signs of Abuse:

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them;
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc;
- Injuries which have not received medical attention;
- Neglect - under-nourishment, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming;
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains;
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc. which do not have an accidental explanation;
- Cuts, scratches, substance abuse.

Emotional Signs of Abuse:

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a user withdraws or becomes clingy. Also, depression/ aggression, extreme anxiety;
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness;
- Obsessions or phobias;
- Attention-seeking behaviour;
- Persistent tiredness;
- Running away, stealing, telling lies.

Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse:

- Any allegations made by a young and/or vulnerable adult concerning sexual abuse;
- User with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age inappropriate sexual play;
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing;
- A user who shares details of inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home;
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations;
- Eating disorders, anorexia, bulimia.

Indicators of Possible Neglect:

- Squalid, unhygienic or dangerous home conditions
- Failure to attend to a vulnerable adult health or developmental needs
- Young and/or vulnerable adult appears persistently undersized or underweight
- Young and/or vulnerable adult stays frozen in one position for an unnaturally long time.
- Young and/or vulnerable adult continually appears tired or lacking in energy.
- Injuries are suffered due to lack of supervision

Indicators of Possible Organised Abuse:

- Unknown adults seeking to contact with young and/or vulnerable adults by electronic means, such as by mobile phone or via the internet
- Young and/or vulnerable adult speaking of being offered drugs and/or alcohol and enticing them to participate in social situations that are inappropriate and/or asking them not to talk about this with anyone.

Financial or material signs of Abuse in Vulnerable Adults:

- Unexplained or sudden inability to pay for goods
- Unexplained or sudden withdrawal of money from accounts
- Disparity between assets and satisfactory living conditions
- Extraordinary interest by family members and other people in the vulnerable person's assets

APPENDIX II STEPS TO RESPOND TO DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

Guidance on how to respond to a person disclosing abuse **DO:**

- Do treat any allegations seriously and act at all times towards the vulnerable adult as if you believe what they are saying.
- Do tell them they are right to tell you.
- Do reassure them that they are not to blame.
- Do tell them what you are doing, when, and who you have to tell, and keep them up to date with what is happening.
- Do take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse – tell your nominated person immediately.
- Do write down everything said and what was done.

DON'T:

- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Don't interrogate the vulnerable adult – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to police officers or social workers, who have experience in this.
- Don't cast doubt on what the young person or vulnerable adult has told you, don't interrupt them or change the subject.
- Don't say anything that makes the young and/or vulnerable adult feel responsible for the abuse.
- Don't do nothing – make sure you tell your nominated Safeguarding person immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to contact for further advice.

APPENDIX III RISK ASSESSMENT

It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding person to ensure all members have risk assessment and there are updated and reviewed annually or as required. Individual risk assessments will include information such as;

- Emergency contact details – NOK (next of kin), contact person/s, GP, Social Worker etc
- Travelling alone, what form of public transport is usually taken and if necessary, who is collecting and picking up the member
- Health, diagnosis, disability and medical history, current medication and administration

Trips, Outings, Activities and Events

It is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure;

- Staff - member ratio at all times, 1 staff to 4 members - if in the event of an insufficient staff to member ratio, there are to ensue all members are in a safe location, then contact the on-call duty person who will provide guidance.
- Each venue has been risk assessed taking into consideration, capacity, lighting, access, suitability, first aid and safety/meeting point.
- Each member is aware of what do in a case they get lost, this includes,
 - A mandatory requirement for the True Access wrist bands to be worn at all times unless otherwise advised
 - Meeting point/point of safety, who to approach for help if possible

What to do if a member is lost

- Stay calm, do not panic
- Ensure the other members are safe and reassured
- Head straight to the meeting/safety point, if they cannot be seen nearby
- If they have a mobile, call them.
- Alert security/workers
- Check around area, toilets, nearby shops, attractions
- Contact the duty person to report the missing person
- If all options are exhausted contact parents and police

Incidents, Accidents and Injury

- In the case of serious incident/injury contact EMERGENCY SERVICES 999
- Ensure a small first aid kit is carried with a staff/volunteers for any trips or outings
- Ensure a first aid kit is accessible at venues
- Ensure the member is safe
- Seek medical assistance as required
- Alert duty worker and complete incident report after the incident on the same day as soon as possible after the incident has occurred
- For more detailed information and guidance please refer to Health and Safety policy