



SAILING FOR THE DISABLED

Manx Registered Charity No. 1333

CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION, GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE.

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1. Prevention of abuse – Good Practice Guides

Good Practice Guide for Skippers

An allegation of abuse on a child or vulnerable adult is a very difficult situation to deal with. Abusers have great difficulty operating in a well-run organisation with good quality management and training to minimise the risk of abuse or an allegation of abuse occurring the following guidance is recommended:

- Whilst a child (under the age of 18 years) is on board the boat they must be accompanied by at least one parent, guardian or adult carer. That person will be responsible for the protection and welfare of the child at all times. With the consent of the parent or guardian the adult carer maybe assigned by the Crewmaster or Skipper from the charities adult Crew/Carer members. The skipper can over-ride any decision the responsible adult may make on the grounds that he/she is responsible for the safety of all persons on board the boat.
- Where any vulnerable adult is on board the boat it will be at the discretion of the skipper as to whether he/she requires that person to be accompanied by their own adult carer or have one assigned from the charities adult Crew/Carer members. That person will be responsible for the protection and welfare of the vulnerable person at all times. The skipper can over- ride any decision the responsible carer may make on the grounds that he/she is responsible for the safety of all persons on board the boat.
- When an unaccompanied vulnerable adult, who requires assistance with functions of a personal nature, is on board the boat, there must always be at least one carer of the same gender as the vulnerable person.
- When allocating sleeping arrangements young persons should not be expected to share with an adult other than a parent/guardian or family member.
- Vulnerable adults must only share cabins with people of the same gender and consideration as to the practicality and sensibility of them being allocated a single cabin should be given.
- As part of the pre sail briefing all on board should be advised that pictures or videos of persons may only be taken and published with the prior permission of the individual.

It will be at the skipper's discretion to follow the above guidance.

Good Practice Guide for Crew Carers

There are some common-sense guidelines that can be followed which will minimise the risk of abuse or an allegation of abuse occurring.

- Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children or vulnerable persons away from others
- Do not take a child or vulnerable person alone in a car on journeys, however short.
- If it is deemed essential by the Crewmaster or skipper to provide transport for the person; it is the policy of the charity to have at least two adults accompanying a child or group of children or vulnerable adult that is being transported to and from the boat by whatever means of transportation being used.
- Do not take a child or vulnerable person to your home.
- **Where any of these are unavoidable, ensure they only occur with the full knowledge and prior consent of the parent or guardian.**
- If you have to enter their cabin ensure that the door remains open or have another person with you.
- Do not allow images of children to be taken, or publish their images, without the knowledge and consent of their parents or guardian. Be sensitive to the risk, although it is probably slight in our charity, that images could be misused by a third party. Do not publish information, in print or on a website that might enable someone to contact the child.
- Any images taken of Community group individuals may only be used by the charity with the express permission of those responsible for the Community groups.
- The membership application form includes the member having the option to object to their images to be used this must be adhered to if any member objects. This wish is recorded on the membership form. It is good practice to ask all people on the sail if they are willing for images of them to be taken and viewed **by others**.

You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged

- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun
- Let allegations which a child or vulnerable adult makes go unchallenged or unrecorded; **always act**
- Do things of a personal nature that a child or vulnerable adult can do for themselves.

However, it may sometimes be necessary to do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable persons, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of their legal carers. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, and where practicable, their legal carers should be fully informed. In such situations, it is important to ensure all crew are sensitive to the child or vulnerable person and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

All persons carried on sails will be expected to be responsible for their own medication.

Except when the skipper considers the situation to be an emergency no medication or treatment required by a child or vulnerable adult member will be administered by any crew member without the prior consent of their legal carer. In the case of community groups, the responsibility for all medication of those in their care will be held by the carer or carers accompanying the group.

2. **What to do if abuse is suspected/alleged to have occurred**

What should I do if there are allegations of abuse?

See Annex C for action guide

Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, abuse can occur and does occur outside the family setting. Abuse has occurred within institutions and may occur in other settings.

Where there is an allegation of abuse there may be three types of investigation:

- Criminal investigation
- Child protection investigation
- Misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and social services investigation may well influence the misconduct investigation, but not necessarily.

It is important to understand that a member reporting a case of abuse, particularly by a colleague, may undergo a very high degree of stress, including feelings of guilt for having reported the matter. It is therefore important to ensure that appropriate counselling and support is available for that person in such a situation.

If I do something, might it make things worse?

Taking appropriate action if you are worried about abuse is never easy - it takes courage but it protects a vulnerable life.

You may be upset about what the person has said or you may worry about the consequences of your actions. Sometimes people worry about children being removed from their families as a result of abuse but in reality, this rarely happens. However, one thing is certain - you cannot ignore it. The effects of abuse on a child or vulnerable person can be devastating, especially if they are left unprotected or do not receive help to cope with the abuse. The most serious effect is that children and vulnerable people can and do die as a result of abuse.

3. Recording information

When recording information, it is important that you do not carry the process beyond gathering information about the allegation, into beginning an investigation. Unnecessary interviews with complainants could prejudice the integrity of evidence that may eventually have to be presented in court.

There are particular problems with regard to gaining information from children or adults with limited communication skills. Care should be taken that appropriate means are used to find out what the allegation is about without “leading” the person.

The environment for recording information needs to be considered carefully. Try and ensure that you are in sight of another adult, but that your conversation won’t be overheard. You also need to be careful about physical contact during an interview because it may not be what the client wants. The rule is to let the client initiate any actions and to remain positive and supportive throughout.

See Annex B for guidance on recording information

4. Recognising abuse

This section explains what abuse is, how to recognise it and what to do if you have concerns.

What is abuse?

Abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children and vulnerable adults are harmed, usually by adults, and often by people they know and trust. It refers to the damage done to a person’s physical or mental health. They can be abused within or outside their family, at school and in a sports or community environment.

Abuse can take many forms:

- **Physical abuse**
- **Neglect**
- **Sexual abuse**
- **Verbal and emotional abuse**
- **Bullying**
- **Cultural/identity**
- **Financial**
- **Domestic violence**
- **Modern slavery**
- **Discrimination**

It is not always easy to spot when children or vulnerable adults have been abused even for the most experienced carers. However, some of the more typical symptoms, which should trigger your suspicions would include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- Sexually explicit language or actions
- A sudden change in behaviour (e.g., becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper)
- The person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- A change observed over a long period of time (e.g., the child losing weight or becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt)
- A general distrust and avoidance of adults, especially with whom a close relationship would be expected
- An unreasonable reaction to normal physical contact
- Difficulty in making friends or abnormal restrictions on socialising with others.

However, it is important to note that if a child or vulnerable adult is displaying some or all of these signs, or behaving in a way which is worrying, this does not necessarily mean the person is being abused. Similarly, there may not be any signs, you may just feel something is wrong.

If you are worried, it is NOT your responsibility to decide if it is abuse BUT it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it.

5. What should I do if I have concerns?

If you have noticed a change in the person's behaviour, first talk to the parents or carers. It may be that something has happened, like a bereavement, which has caused the client to be unhappy. However, if your concerns are about sexual abuse or violence, talking to the parents or carers might put the person at greater risk. If your concerns remain, or you cannot talk to the parents/carers, consult the designated Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Coordinator. It is the responsibility of this person to make the decision to contact the police and/or social services duty officer.

6. Where can I get further help?

If you want to talk things through to gain some advice you can speak in confidence to the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Coordinator or you can phone the following 24 hour free telephone numbers. You do not have to give your name but it is helpful if you can.

NSPCC helpline:

0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk

Child Line:

0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

If you have had an allegation made against you, advice and support can be gained from the following sources:

Local Citizens' Advice Bureau:

Refer to Yellow Pages in the Isle of Man Telephone Directory section "Counselling and Advice"

Other useful telephone numbers:

Police: 631212 or in an emergency 999

Social Services Duty Officer: 686179 or out of hours via police.

All members of crew should be aware of the full content of this policy and are requested to read it. A copy of this policy will be available on board the boat and on the SFTD website www.sftd-iom.com

Good Practice Guide Handout for Crew

- Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children or vulnerable persons away from others.
- Do not take a child or vulnerable person alone in a car on journeys, however short.
- If it is deemed essential by the crewmaster or skipper to provide transport for the person; it is the policy of the charity to have two adults accompanying a child or group of children or vulnerable adult that is being transported to and from the boat by whatever means of transportation being used.
- Do not take a child or vulnerable person to your home.
- Where any of these are unavoidable, ensure they only occur with the full knowledge and prior consent of the parent or guardian.
- Do not photograph or video children, or publish their pictures, without the knowledge and consent of their parents. Be sensitive to the risk, although it is probably slight in our organisation, that images could be misused by a third party. Do not publish information, in print or on a website that might enable someone to contact the child.
- Any pictures taken of Community group individuals may only be used with the permission of those responsible for the Community groups.
- The membership application form includes the member having the option to object to their pictures to be used this must be adhered to if any member objects. This wish is recorded on the membership form. It is good practice to ask all people on the sail if they are willing for pictures or videos of them to be taken and viewed by others.
- When allocating sleeping arrangements young persons should not be expected to share with an adult other than a parent/guardian or family member. If you have to enter their cabin ensure that the door remains open or have another person with you.
- Vulnerable adults must only share cabins with people of the same gender and consideration as to the practicality and sensibility of them being allocated a single cabin should be given.

Annex A – continued

You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun
- Let allegations a child or vulnerable adult makes go unchallenged or unrecorded; always act
- Do things of a personal nature that a child or vulnerable adult can do for themselves.

However, it may sometimes be necessary to do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable persons, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the carers. In an emergency situation, which requires this type of help, carers should be fully informed. In such situations, it is important to ensure that all staff are sensitive to the child or vulnerable person and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

All persons carried on sails will be expected to be responsible for their own medication.

Except when the skipper considers the situation to be an emergency no medication or treatment required by a child or vulnerable adult member will be administered by any crew member without the prior consent of their legal carer. In the case of community groups, the responsibility for all medication of those in their care will be held by the carer or carers accompanying the group.

RECORDING INFORMATION

In cases of child or adult abuse the main aim is to keep calm and provide a positive, friendly attitude to encourage the person to talk.

- DO listen
- Do take notes
- Do tell the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer and make sure that, where necessary, all information is passed onto the police
- DON'T ask direct questions
- Don't try to stop the person telling you about their problem
- Don't make promises
- Don't allow anyone else outside the police or social services to interview or ask questions of the person
- Don't assume!

The complexity of child and adult protection issues means that there can never be a set of prescriptive questions. Don't try to get too much information, rather, let the person give you as much as they feel prepared to give. The adult listening should try to act as natural as possible throughout. Makes notes during the interview, but only those necessary; it might be possible to gain certain contact information from existing administrative records.

COMMON QUESTIONS that could be used in some situations.

THE DO's - open questions/statements

- Would you like to tell me what happened?
- Can you tell me where/when this happened?
- Would you like to tell me who was involved?
- Can you tell me what happened next?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me?
- Thank you for telling me this but you do realise I will have to do something about it

THE DO NOTs - leading/closed questions/comments

- Was it your father/coach/friend that did this to you?
- Are you sure that's what happened?
- Why did you let them do that to you?
- Why do you think this happened?
- I expect you must be very upset about this.
- This can be our little secret

Incident report form - You do not have to use this form but try to include these details in your report.

Try and keep the process friendly rather than a formal; you want the person to feel as comfortable as possible during this stressful process.

Interviewer's details

Name: Position:

Client's details

Name: Date of birth:

Address:
.....

Parents/Carers names:

Address:
.....

Record what was said and reported (use additional paper, as required)

Action taken by SFTD

POLICE: reported to which police station?

Officer reported to:

Date / time incident reported:

Details of of advice received:.....

SFTD: reported to Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer? YES

/NO Date / time incident

reported:.....

Details of advice received:.....

OTHER: contacted other organisations for advice? Date / time of call:.....

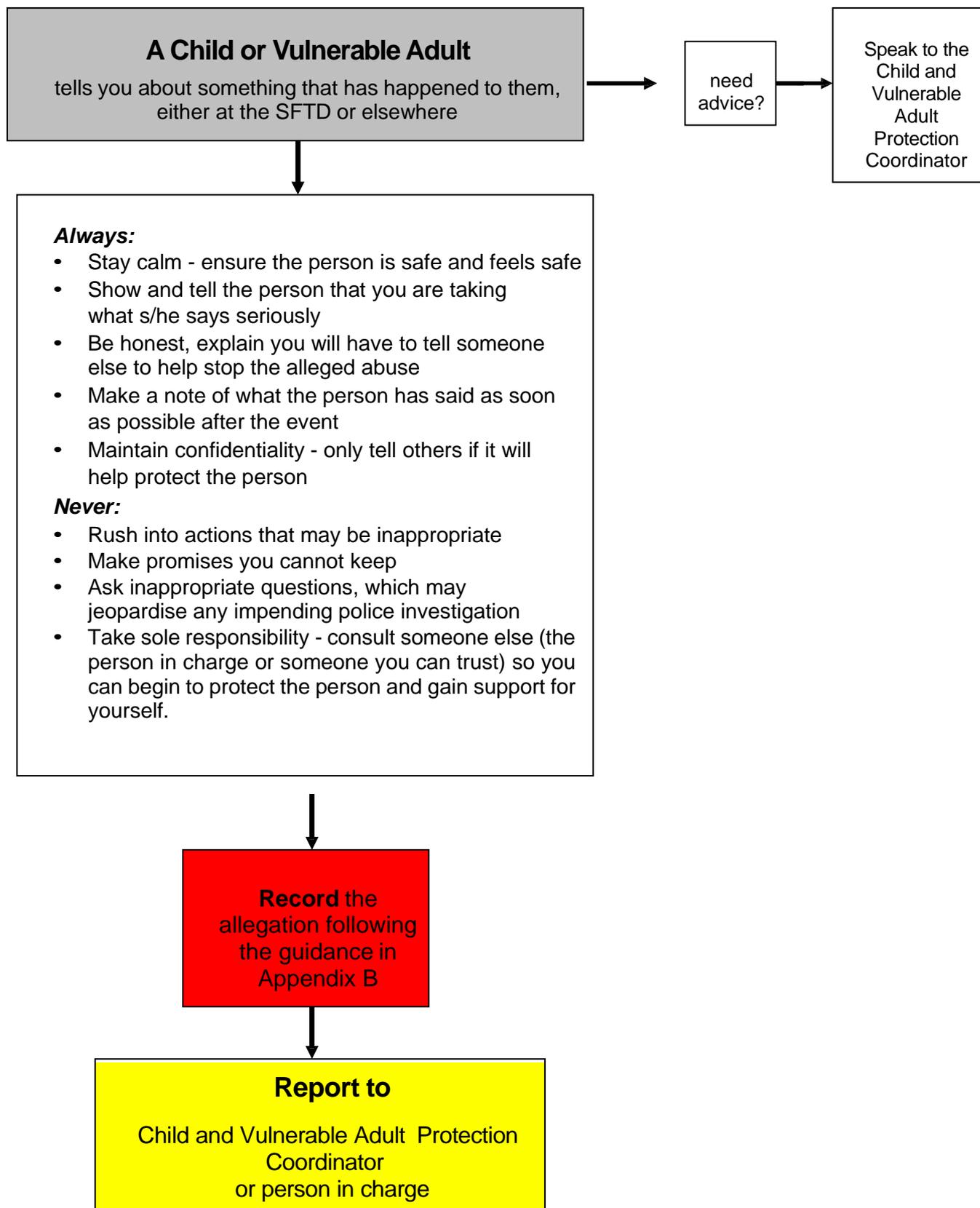
Which organisation(s):

Person advice received from:

Details of advice received:.....

Signed by interviewer, as above: Date:

Action pathway for reporter



Action pathway for SFTD

Annex C continued

