

Safeguarding Procedures



Introduction

These procedures will enable staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific adult and child protection issues and should be read in conjunction with the RMBF Safeguarding Policy.

All staff, volunteers and Trustees working on behalf of RMBF have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of adults at risk (see Section 1 below) and children, and these procedures must be followed in the event of either of the following:

- An applicant or beneficiary making a disclosure of abuse
- Suspicion by a member of staff or volunteer that a vulnerable adult and/or child has been or is being abused

RMBF staff do not meet applicants or beneficiaries. All communications are by email, phone or post.

RMBF volunteer Coach Mentors usually provide Coach Mentoring sessions to RMBF beneficiaries remotely via Zoom, Skype or telephone. Occasionally, they will meet them face to face either in a café or at the home of the beneficiary.

RMBF volunteer PhoneFriends do not meet beneficiaries and only talk on the phone at pre-arranged times.

For the purpose of these procedures 'Safeguarding' means the safeguarding of both children and adults at risk, and where the document uses the term adult it should where appropriate be taken to include reference to the term "child" or children".

Please note one important difference between safeguarding adults and safeguarding children is an adult's right to self-determination. Adults may choose not to act to protect themselves. It is only in extreme circumstances that the law intervenes. Often, this will only happen when an adult is assessed as lacking capacity in that area (please see below The Mental Capacity Act 2015), or where the concerns may extend to children, such as when they are living in the same household.

This can make the matter of safeguarding adults even more complex. It is not solely focused on creating an appropriate process and system to safeguard. It also needs to consider the importance of creating a culture that embraces the autonomy of the adults themselves, informing and consulting them on all decisions affecting them.

Categories of abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery

- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect

1. Definition of an adult at risk

Adult at risk is anyone aged 18 or over who:

Has needs for care and support (irrespective of whether the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect

(Section 42, Care Act 2014)

2. Safeguarding Children

The RMBF helps applicants with young families. Staff and volunteers should also be aware of their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to report any concerns. The following procedures will therefore also apply if a member of staff or volunteer has concerns about a child. Should such an incident arise the following will apply:

3. The Mental Capacity Act 2005

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides procedures to protect and support people who do not have the ability to make decisions for themselves. It also provides guidance to support people who need to make decisions on behalf of someone else.

The Act covers important decisions relating to an individual's property, financial affairs, health and social care. It also applies to everyday decisions, such as personal care, what to wear and what to eat. It also allows us to plan ahead for a time when we are unable to make these decisions for ourselves.

From time to time, we all have problems making decisions; the Mental Capacity Act is about more than that. It is there for situations where someone is unable to decide because of the way their brain works. This could be due to illness, brain injury, learning disability, mental health problems, or the effects of drugs or alcohol

People who cannot decide for themselves, are said to 'lack capacity'. In law, a person is said to lack capacity if they cannot do one or more of the following things:

- Understand the information given to them
- Retain that information long enough to be able to decide
- Weigh up the information available to decide
- Communicate their decision.

Someone may have capacity to make some decisions and not others. If they do lack mental capacity to make a particular decision, then it must be made in their 'best interests', considering the person's wishes, feelings, beliefs and values.

4. Procedures for staff/volunteers raising concerns

If they believe that an adult is at immediate risk of harm or abuse, they will take immediate and reasonable steps to protect the adult. This could include contacting the emergency services on 999 if the person is considered to be in imminent danger. However, such situations are very rare. In most circumstances staff or volunteers will raise a concern following the process below.

- Any safeguarding concerns should be reported directly and without delay to the RMBF Safeguarding Officers (either the Head of Volunteering or Head of Casework or in their absence to the CEO).
- Immediately after raising a concern, they will write a detailed account of what they have seen, observed and/or heard. Social Care Services or the police may wish to speak to the alerter at some point.

Accurate and prompt recording is fundamental to effective safeguarding. All have a responsibility to ensure concerns are recorded appropriately. This requires the alerter to make a written record within 48 hours of raising any concerns. Please use the RMBF Safeguarding Incident Report Form, which can be downloaded from the website or is available from the RMBF Safeguarding Officers.

5. Responding to disclosure

Adults at risk are more likely to disclose details of abuse to someone they trust and with whom they feel safe. Listening and taking seriously what the vulnerable adult is saying, you are already helping the situation. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately.

Actions to be taken by the person being disclosed to:-

- React calmly so as not to frighten the person concerned
- Take what the person says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is being said by a person who has a speech impairment or differences in language
- Avoid asking direct questions other than those seeking to clarify your understanding of what the person has said. Clarifying ambiguous details is important as the person may be subsequently interviewed formally by the police or social care services and this may help to avoid them having to repeat their account. However, inappropriate and excessive questioning at an early stage may also impede the conduct of a subsequent criminal investigation
- Reassure the adult at risk but do not make promises of confidentiality which will not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments

- Explain to them that you will have to share your concerns with the RMBF Safeguarding Officers who have the authority to act
- When applicable tell them they were not to blame and that they were right to tell

Immediately record in writing on the RMBF Safeguarding Incident Report Form all the details of which you are aware and what was said using the vulnerable adult's own words.

6. Support for volunteer/staff member

It is important to remember that the alerter is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional adult protection agencies, following a referral from the RMBF Safeguarding Officers

Dealing with safeguarding issues can be distressing. Staff members will be supported in the process by their line manager (or other appropriate manager) and be given the opportunity to talk through their feelings. Similarly, volunteers should be offered this support by the Head of Volunteering and beneficiaries, by the Head of Casework.

7. Confidentiality with adults at risk

It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed other than the disclosures referred to above, as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the vulnerable adult, their family and any vulnerable adult protection investigations that may follow as well as potentially giving rise to legal consequences.

Where an adult at risk expresses a wish for concerns not to be reported to the relevant authorities then this should be respected wherever possible. However, decisions about whether to respect the persons' wishes must have regard to the level of risk to the individual and/or others and their capacity to understand the decision in questions and to make decisions relating to it. In some circumstances the persons' wishes may be overridden in favour of consideration of safety for the person and other vulnerable adults and these decisions will be taken by the designated person.

8. Roles and safeguarding responsibilities at the RMBF

Role	Safeguarding Responsibility
CEO	Communicate strategy for creating a safe organisation and motivate staff and volunteers to implement it. Share the organisation's strategy on safeguarding with Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers. Ensure that the board understand the importance of safeguarding.
Designated Safeguarding Officers – Head of Volunteering & Head of Casework	Develop and implement the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures ensuring staff, volunteers and trustees complete training and adhere to these policy and procedures. Responsible for making disclosures as required.

Lead Safeguarding Trustee	Champion safeguarding throughout the organisation and support CEO and Designated Safeguarding Leads in implementing safeguarding policy and procedures.
Board of Trustees	Responsible for ensuring there are measures in place to protect the people who come into contact with the charity from harm. Provide strategic direction, guidance and oversight to create a safe organisation.

9. Responding appropriately to a disclosure/allegation of abuse – key points to consider

Please DO	Please DON'T
<p>Make sure the individual is safe so long as staff member/volunteer is not putting themselves at risk</p> <p>Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them</p> <p>Listen</p> <p>Offer support and reassurance</p> <p>Ascertain and establish the basic facts only</p> <p>Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them</p> <p>Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed</p> <p>Take all necessary precautions to preserve evidence</p> <p>Follow correct procedures as set out in this document</p> <p>Always inform the HoV. You cannot keep this information secret, even if you're asked to</p> <p>Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to the HoV for support and guidance</p> <p>Explain the procedures to the individual making the allegation</p>	<p>Confront the alleged abuser</p> <p>Be judgmental or voice your own opinion</p> <p>Be dismissive of the concern</p> <p>Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts</p> <p>Disturb or destroy possible evidence</p> <p>Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation or inform anyone other than the relevant RMBF staff</p> <p>Ask leading questions</p> <p>Assume information</p> <p>Make promises</p> <p>Ignore the allegation</p> <p>Elaborate in your notes</p> <p>Panic</p>

10. Guide for dealing with concerns relating to Adult at risk/Child abuse

