

Abingdon Good Neighbour Scheme

Safeguarding Policy

1. General principles

The Abingdon Good Neighbour Scheme (AGNS) recognises its legal and moral duty to create and maintain the safest possible environment when our volunteers are working with neighbours, including vulnerable adults. This policy aims:

- 1 To ensure that all volunteers working with vulnerable adults understand and accept responsibility for the safety of vulnerable adults in their care.
- 2 To ensure that the vulnerable adults' welfare is of paramount importance, regardless of age, gender, ability or race.
- 3 To respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse or mistreatment, and to ensure confidential information is restricted to the appropriate people.

2. What is a vulnerable adult?

Vulnerable adults are people who because of mental or other disability, age, or illness, may be less able to protect themselves against harm or exploitation. Everyone receiving help from the AGNS should be assumed to be vulnerable.

3. Recruitment

- 1 All volunteers must have a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check before they can start volunteering.
- 2 The disclosure should be of the "ENHANCED" type, and include a check of the "DBS Vulnerable Adults Barred List".
- 3 The disclosures do not include a check of the DBS Children's Barred List, and are therefore not suitable for unsupervised work with children.
- 4 A prospective volunteer without a DBS check can accompany a checked volunteer to visit a client to learn about the Scheme, but must be supervised at all times.
- 5 If any adverse information is revealed by the DBS check, the prospective volunteer must not be approved without the approval of the Committee. The Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders must be followed.
- 6 The New Volunteer Coordinator must interview every prospective volunteer.
- 7 All volunteers must be over 18.
- 8 An AGNS photo-ID card must not be issued to anyone who does not have an approved DBS check.
- 9 The New Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for keeping secure paper or electronic copies of the result of every DBS check.
- 10 All new volunteers should be given the opportunity to visit a client with an experienced volunteer.
- 11 All new volunteers should be given a copy of the Volunteer Handbook

4. Risk Assessment

Most of the services provided by the AGNS take place in the client's home, and often with only the client and a single volunteer present. All these activities therefore present a risk of abuse, or for the volunteer to be accused of abuse.

5. Risk mitigation factors

- 1 Everyone working for the AGNS is a volunteer. Anyone who is unhappy with their role, or who develops an antipathy to the clients, has no monetary incentive to continue working for the Scheme.
- 2 AGNS does not usually make use of any third parties, such as cleaning contractors, drivers etc.
- 3 Special activities such as trips involving more than one client are very infrequent. If they take place then a special-purpose risk assessment must be made, although this does not need to be documented unless the risks are considered to be particularly high.
- 4 Two members of the Committee visit each new client together and carry out an assessment of the environment and the person. (Occasionally the assessment is carried out by a single member of the Committee in the presence of a staff member of a referring organisation.)

6. Designated person

- 1 The designated person responsible for the day-to-day operational aspects of safeguarding vulnerable adults is the New Volunteer Coordinator.
- 2 At the time of signing this person is: Michael Kovari.

7. Complaints and incidents

- 1 The role of the Safeguarding panel is taken by the Committee.
- 2 Any member of the AGNS who suspects that a volunteer has abused a client or *any* vulnerable person, or that a client has abused a volunteer or there is a risk that they will do so, or who is aware of any accusation of abuse, must immediately report this to the duty coordinator.
- 3 If the duty coordinator or any other committee member receives such notification, they must immediately report it to the Chairman and Secretary.
- 4 The duty coordinator must also document this event using the "Accidents and Incidents" folder of the AGNS email account, and on paper.
- 5 The duty coordinator should encourage the person making the report to submit a written description of the incident.
- 6 The Chairman is responsible for ensuring that the report is fully and promptly investigated, and that appropriate action is taken.
- 7 To ensure that investigations are complete and thorough, confidential information may be shared with other individuals and bodies, such as Police, Social Services, doctors and relatives when necessary.

8. Protecting clients

Any member of the AGNS who suspects that a client or any vulnerable member of a client's household is being abused or is at risk of abuse, must immediately report this to the duty coordinator.

9. Document control

Date on which this policy was last modified: 16/3/2017

Date on which this policy was last reviewed: 16/3/2017

Signed and dated by Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer: signed by Alan Keymer
16/3/2017