|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  |
| **CAL-HR-P-0026** |
| **Protection of Vulnerable Groups Policy** |
|  |
|  |
|  |
| Issue Number: 01 |
| Issue Date: 28 Oct 2024 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Document Control | | | |
| Status: | Draft | Date: |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Approval / Acceptance | | |
|  | Author | Approved |
| Title: | Director |  |
| Company: | M2 Safety Consultants Ltd |  |
| Name: | Fraser Morrison |  |
| Signature: |  |  |
| Date: |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Revision History | | | | | |
| This document should be reviewed at least every 12 months to maintain its effectiveness.  Record the details of any changes made as a result of these reviews in the table below: | | | | | |
| Rev: | Date: | Reason for Review: | Nature of Changes: | Prepared by: | Checked by: |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

###### Contents

[2.0 PURPOSE 1](#_Toc181035192)

[3.0 THE POLICY IN OPERATION 1](#_Toc181035193)

[4.0 DEFINITIONS 1](#_Toc181035194)

[4.1 What is abuse? 1](#_Toc181035195)

[5.0 RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS 2](#_Toc181035196)

[6.0 REPORTING PROCEDURES 2](#_Toc181035197)

[7.0 EMPLOYEES/VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH VULNERABLE GROUPS 3](#_Toc181035198)

[8.0 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE 3](#_Toc181035199)

[9.0 RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING 4](#_Toc181035200)

[10.0 PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS SCHEME 4](#_Toc181035201)

###### 

# PURPOSE

1. will be referred to as ‘the company’ throughout.
2. The characteristics of abuse of vulnerable groups can take a number of forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s). Victims may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach with their worries.
3. There may be some situations where victims are unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this information to others. Members of staff have an important role to play in creating a positive and safe environment and recognising the possible signs of abuse or neglect.
4. This policy also applies to volunteers.

# THE POLICY IN OPERATION

1. The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of vulnerable groups by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all staff members are clear about their responsibilities.
2. The protection of vulnerable groups is governed by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.
3. All members of staff have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions that they might have concerning abuse of vulnerable groups.

# DEFINITIONS

1. The term “vulnerable groups” applies to both children and protected adults.
2. A protected adult is an individual aged 16 or over who is in receipt of one or more type of care, health or welfare service.
3. A child is defined as anyone under 18 years old.
4. An individual aged 16 or 17 in receipt of one or more type of care, will be protected under both categories.

## What is abuse?

1. Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take a number of forms:
   1. Physical abuse e.g. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, neglect or abandonment
   2. Sexual abuse e.g. involvement in any sexual activity, exploitation, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism
   3. Emotional/psychological abuse e.g. intimidation or humiliation
   4. Financial abuse e.g. theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money from pensions or savings etc.
   5. Neglect or acts of omission e.g. being left in wet or soiled clothing, or malnutrition
   6. Discriminatory abuse e.g. racial, sexual or religious harassment
   7. Personal exploitation – involves denying an individual his/her rights or forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will
   8. Violation of rights e.g. preventing an individual speaking his/her thoughts and opinions
   9. Institutional abuse e.g. failure to provide a choice of meals or failure to ensure privacy or dignity
   10. Non organic failure to thrive i.e. a child who isn’t reaching development milestones and genetic/medical reasons have been eliminated.

# RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

1. The vulnerable groups have the right to:
   1. be made aware of this policy
   2. to have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
   3. to receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
   4. to be involved in any process as appropriate
   5. to receive information about the outcome where appropriate

# REPORTING PROCEDURES

1. All those making a complaint, allegation, or expression of concern, whether
2. staff, service, users, carers or members of the public should be reassured that they:
   1. will be taken seriously
   2. their comments will usually be treated confidentially but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
   3. if service users, they will be given immediate protection from the risk of reprisals or intimidation
   4. if staff they will be given support and afforded protection.
   5. If an allegation is made to a member of staff or there is a suspicion of abuse, then the member of staff should inform their line manager as soon as possible.

# EMPLOYEES/VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH VULNERABLE GROUPS

1. Employees or volunteers working with vulnerable groups must NOT:-
   1. Harm a child or protected adult;
   2. Place a child or protected adult at risk of harm;
   3. Engage in inappropriate conduct involving pornography;
   4. Engage in inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature involving a child or protected adult;
   5. Give inappropriate medical treatment to a child or protected adult.
2. An employee who is found to have committed one of these acts will be guilty of Gross Misconduct and may be summarily dismissed.

# ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

1. Where an allegation of abuse is made, the allegation will be investigated thoroughly. This may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy.
2. Where an allegation of abuse is upheld, the employee may be summarily dismissed.
3. If an employee is dismissed or moved into an unregulated work position within the organisation for a reason connected to the mistreatment of vulnerable groups, the Company is under a duty to make a referral to Disclosure Scotland under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.
4. Referrals will also be made if:
   1. the Company was considering dismissal/moving to unregulated work, and before a decision could be reached, the employee left the organisation;
   2. the Company discovers information after the employee has left, that would have resulted in a dismissal/move into unregulated work had it been discovered whilst the employee was working.
5. Where appropriate, the Company may refer allegations of abuse to another Agency or
6. Disclosure Scotland and in doing so, consideration will be given to:
   1. The scale of the abuse
   2. The risk of harm to others
   3. The capacity of the victim to understand the issues of abuse and consent
7. In emergency situations (e.g. where there is the risk or occurrence or severe physical injury), where immediate action is needed to safeguard the health or safety of the individual or anyone else who may be at risk, the emergency services must be contacted.
8. Where a crime is taking place, has just occurred or is suspected, the police must be contacted immediately.

# RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

1. The organisation will ensure that all staff whose roles include working with vulnerable groups are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised in accordance with the “Employee and Volunteer Vetting Policy”.

# PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS SCHEME

1. As part of the procedure, most staff that have contact with vulnerable groups will require to be members of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme. This will depend on whether or not that individual is carrying out “Regulated Work”.

|  |
| --- |
| A close up of a logo  Description automatically generated |
| M2 Safety Consultants Ltd |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |