

**NORTHDALE HORTICULTURE**

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**THE ABUSE OF CLIENTS**

**Introduction**

This document outlines Northdale Horticulture's policy on safeguarding the welfare of its Service Users and other vulnerable people which staff and volunteers may come into contact with. It is broken down into several different areas, the role of staff being clearly identified in each area. This policy gives both general and specific advice about identifying and reporting possible abuse. This document should read in conjunction with Northdale Horticulture's Safeguarding Vulnerable People Policy.

The term 'abuse' includes physical, emotional, sexual, financial, neglect, discriminatory behaviour and exploitation. It can be deliberate, random, multiple or happen only once.

Abusers could be other service users, staff, volunteers, relatives, carers, friends or strangers.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

There are three distinct roles within adult protection and it is important that these roles are understood otherwise the result can be confusion, loss of evidence, and continuation of abuse. They are:

* Alerting
* Investigating
* Managing.

Each member of Staff and Volunteer is a potential Alerter. As an Alerter you are not being asked to verify or prove that the information is true, you are being asked to log your concerns and report them to the Designated Senior Person. It is very important that Alerting is done through the proper channels as it will enable a proper assessment or investigation to be carried out.

Northdale Horticulture has no responsibilities for Investigating or Managing cases of abuse and the Charity’s involvement usually ends once the case has been notified to the appropriate authorities.

**To ensure that an allegation of abuse is fully and properly investigated Northdale Horticulture has adopted North Yorkshire County Council's Inter-agency Safeguarding Adults procedure which should be read and understood in conjunction with this document.** [NYSAB-SUMMARY-Joint-MA-Safeguarding-Adults-Policy-Procedures-Final-Approved-April-2018.pdf (safeguardingadults.co.uk)](https://safeguardingadults.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/NYSAB-SUMMARY-Joint-MA-Safeguarding-Adults-Policy-Procedures-Final-Approved-April-2018.pdf)

**Designated Senior Person**

The Designated Senior Person for Northdale Horticulture is the Service Manager or, in his/her absence, the Operational Manager.

**Procedure**

**Minimise Situations Where Abuse of Service Users May Occur**

Minimising the situations where a single member of staff or volunteer is in the company of a single Service User is a simple way of ensuring that the opportunities for abuse or accusations of abuse can be greatly reduced; this is especially important in opposite sex situations. The following should always be considered when working or volunteering on site:

* Sometimes it is appropriate for a staff member to be alone with a Service User, i.e. if they are discussing confidential or private matters. If it is necessary to have one member of staff and one client alone the member of staff must make sure they can be easily observed and that another staff member is told of the meeting
* Plan activities so that they involve more than one other person being present, or at least within hearing and/or sight of others. Remember that some actions could be misinterpreted by others, no matter how well intentioned
* Make sure Service Users are encouraged to express their opinions, particularly about things they do not like.
* Act with caution when dealing with allegations of abuse or bullying
* Do not play physical contact games with Service Users or use inappropriate language.
* Do not make suggestive remarks or gestures
* Do not permit abusive behaviour from Service Users

For staff or volunteers supporting service users in a Breathing Space leisure activity it is more likely that there may be opportunities to be 1:1 with a service user. A volunteer on the Gig Buddies project will be supporting their buddy on their own and is considered a Lone Worker (see separate policy). The following should be considered:

* If providing support 1:1 ensure that as far as possible this is in a public space so that you are within hearing or site of others
* Be aware of the risk management document for that particular activity
* Make sure Service Users are encouraged to express their opinions, particularly about things they do not like.
* Act with caution when dealing with allegations of abuse or bullying
* Do not play physical contact games with Service Users or use inappropriate language.
* Do not make suggestive remarks or gestures
* Do not permit abusive behaviour from Service Users

**Recognising Abuse**

Abuse of any kind is not easily identifiable and you are not expected to be experts in this field. Any member of staff or volunteer who has concerns about a Service User or other member of staff should discuss them with the Designated Senior Person.

**Possible Indications That a Person is Being Abused**

These lists are not exhaustive.

* Injuries:
* Suspicious or unexplained injuries, particularly on parts of the body where injuries do not often occur, possibly burns, cuts or bruising and an attempt to hide these
* Inconsistent explanations of injuries.
* Behaviour:
* Changes in behaviour without explanation, such as outbursts of temper or becoming nervous or withdrawn
* Descriptions of abusive acts, particularly if the Service User is involved
* Inappropriate sexual awareness
* Difficulty making friends
* Lack of self-interest such as becoming unkempt or unclean
* Sudden distrust of people, especially those who have shared a close relationship with the client
* Fear or avoidance of certain people, places or activities
* Self-harm
* Psychosomatic disorders, e.g. stomach pains
* Depression
* Change in eating habits such as lack of appetite, comfort eating or sudden weight loss.
* Third Party:
* Concern from a third party for a Service User
* A third party restricting the Service User from socialising with others

**What to do if You Suspect a Service User is Being Abused**

* Immediately tell the Designated Senior Person
* Record the facts as you know them
* If at all possible ensure that a situation which could cause further concern does not arise
* Preserve evidence following an incident
* Collate and record initial information.

**What to do if You Receive an Allegation About Yourself or Another Person**

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* Immediately tell the Designated Senior Person
* Record the facts as you know them and give a copy to the Designated Senior Person
* Try to ensure that no-one is placed in a situation which could cause further compromise
* In the event that the allegation is about the Designated Senior Person the Chairperson is to be immediately informed, who will decide who will manage the incident.

**What to do If a Service User Discloses Abuse to You by Someone Else**

* Stay calm and try not to show shock
* Listen carefully rather than question
* Be sympathetic
* Tell the Service User that:
  + You are treating the allegation seriously
  + They are right to tell you
  + They should not blame themselves
  + You must discuss this with an appropriate manager.
* Record in writing what you have been told as soon as possible
* Report to the Service Manager, Operational Manager or Chairperson as soon as possible
* Keep the Service User informed of your actions
* Do not repeat the allegation to anyone else other than the Designated Senior Person
* Don't press the person for more details
* Don't be judgemental, i.e. "why didn't you run away?"
* Don't ask for details about the abuse
* Don't make the Service User repeat the story.

**Recording Information**

It is important to record the facts as they are given to you without interpretation. Make a note of any specific incidents, e.g. dates, times, injuries, witnesses, evidence such as bruising, and use their own words wherever possible. Information to record about the client includes:

* Name
* Age
* Address and telephone number
* Parent, guardian or carer's name
* The date the allegation was brought to your attention
* Anything that has prompted concern
* Behavioural or physical indications of abuse
* Who has been contacted
* The identity of the alleged abuser
* If there is concern for another Service User.

You should also include your own name, position within the organisation and relationship with the Service User. Details of any previous concerns should also be noted.

**Procedure for the Designated Senior Person to Follow**

The Designated Senior Person should take action as follows as soon as possible, preferably as soon as the abuse is reported:

* Contact the Duty Care Manager, Social Services Department, North Yorkshire County Council to discuss the allegation and follow their advice, including whether or not to contact the Police
* Ensuring that all details given are clear, accurate and correct
* Ensure that the Chairperson is made aware of the incident
* Ensure that knowledge of the incident is not disseminated or discussed with anyone who does not “need to know”
* Prepare and maintain a Confidential file.

**Useful Telephone Numbers**

Duty Care Manager, Social Services Dept, North Yorkshire County Council - **0845 034 9417**

**Related Policies and Procedures**

Code of Conduct

Safeguarding Vulnerable People

Lone Working

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**Note: If the allegation of abuse is substantive and/or involves allegations of a physical or sexual nature both the member of staff and the Service User will be suspended from the service until the allegation has been fully investigated.**