



Vulnerable Adult Policy

Bittern Meadow CIC provides services to a range of individuals and organisations and we recognise that some of our clients will be vulnerable adults. We also have a child protection policy, which should be referred to if applicable.

A person aged 18 or over, may be considered vulnerable if that person:

- receives personal care, or nursing, or support to live independently in their own home, or a care home
- receives any health or social services
- has a substantial learning or physical disability, or
- a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including addiction to alcohol or drugs, or
- A substantial reduction in physical or mental capacity due to advanced age or to illness.

This list is not exhaustive.

All staff members and volunteers of Bittern Meadow CIC can play an important part in promoting the safety and protection of vulnerable adults with whom the organisation works. The aim of this policy is to ensure that any vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm particularly while they are in receipt of services from Bittern Meadow CIC.

Recruitment, Selection & Training of Staff & Volunteers

- 1.1. Bittern Meadow CIC will ensure that its recruitment and selection procedures will take account of the need to protect vulnerable adults and young people. Two references will be taken up for all successful candidates prior to a formal offer of employment, and where appropriate referees will be asked to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with vulnerable adults and/or young people.
- 1.2. All successful applicants will be asked to agree to an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (previously CRB). Disclosures will be requested prior to the applicant taking up post.
- 1.3. Induction for new staff and volunteers will include information on all relevant policies and procedure, including the protection of vulnerable adults and young people, and on-going training will be provided if necessary.
- 1.4. All staff and volunteers will receive ongoing support and supervision.

Good Practice

- 1.5. All staff and volunteers should be familiar with and adhere to Bittern Meadow CIC's Policies and Procedures.
- 1.6. Support will be given to the worker who is working with the Service User through supervision and day-to-day contact

In welcoming, and working with, people who are vulnerable Bittern Meadow CIC will:

- Provide a friendly welcome for them and promote their general welfare, which must always be paramount.
- Recognise their rights as individuals and treat them with dignity and respect.
- Consistently apply fair and objective methods of selecting employees, volunteers and contractors. A thorough selection procedure for positions, both paid and unpaid, which could involve unsupervised access to any vulnerable groups is probably the most effective way of assessing a person's suitability, and may act as a deterrent to those with an increased potential to mistreat others
- Plan activities involving vulnerable people with care to minimise risks to their health and safety; Employees and volunteers **should**:

- Remember they are role models and provide an example for those they work with to follow
- Bear in mind that some actions, no matter how well-intentioned, may be easily misinterpreted and so leave all parties vulnerable
- Be alert to any potential harm or inappropriate behaviour by people who are vulnerable
- Respect individuals' rights to privacy
- Provide access for vulnerable people to discuss any concerns they may have
- Speak to their line manager if they have concerns about an individual's safety

Employees and volunteers **should not**:

- Arrange to see vulnerable people in circumstances unconnected with their work
- Be unnecessarily left alone for substantial periods of time with anyone who is vulnerable. Where one to-one work is necessary they should inform another staff member where they are going, with whom and for how long
- Permit abusive behaviour by others or engage in it themselves
- Show favouritism to, or become too closely associated with an individual. Nor should they get drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour (e.g. crushes)
- Allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching of a kind which could be misunderstood
- Promise to keep secrets
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Do anything which might undermine a good reputation for providing a safe environment
- Hesitate to share concerns on any of these matters with the appropriate representative

Reporting Procedure

- 1.7. Abuse of vulnerable adults can take many forms including physical, emotional, sexual and financial. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Bittern Meadow CIC, to decide whether abuse has definitely taken place. It is therefore vital that staff raise all cases of suspected or alleged abuse in line with the procedures identified in this policy. It is important to do this as there may already have been concerns expressed by other members of staff, other agencies or individuals and failure to report concerns may put a vulnerable adult at risk.
- 1.8. Any disclosure or suspicion of abuse should be reported to the staff member/volunteer's line manager or a Director as soon as possible.
- 1.9. The line manager, in consultation with the Director, will gather further information and details by interviewing the person making the report or the service user directly.
- 1.10. The Directors will then devise an appropriate plan of action. The exact nature of the action taken will be determined by the individual circumstances, but it may include the involvement of external authorities, such as Social Services, referral organisations and the Police.
- 1.11. All staff and volunteers (where appropriate) of Bittern Meadow CIC will be familiar with good practice guidelines on the immediate action to be taken following a report of abuse (see below).
- 1.12. If a disclosure of abuse is made by a service user, care should be taken to explain to them the procedure that will be followed and they should be told that Bittern Meadow CIC might not be able to maintain absolute confidentiality. This possibility should have been explained when the service user is initially seen in line with the confidentiality policy.

Procedure Guidelines

The following are guidelines on immediate action to be taken following a reporting of abuse by a vulnerable adult.

- React calmly so not to frighten or deter him/her.
- Re-assure him/her that you it was appropriate for them to have told you, and it the abuse is not their fault.
- Do not promise to keep it to yourself, at the earliest opportunity remind them of our confidentiality policy and explain what this means.
- Explain that you need to make sure that they will be safe and may have to pass on the information to somebody trusted to deal with it appropriately.
- Listen carefully to what they say and take them seriously.
- Allow them to tell you what happened in their own words.
- It is important to clarify what you have heard, and to establish the basic facts. However, avoid leading questions and do not ask them specific questions about explicit details.
- If possible, make brief notes during the initial disclosure, explaining to them why you are doing this. If not possible to do at the time, make notes as soon as possible afterwards. All notes should be dated and signed by the staff member or volunteer taking them. The information recorded should include:
 - The nature of the suspicion or allegation.
 - A description of any visible injury.
 - Dates and times and any other factual information.
 - The distinction between fact, opinion or hearsay.

This information must be passed on to the Directors immediately.

Policy Review

This policy was last reviewed on: 1st March 2021

Date of next review: 1st March 2023