

# Safeguarding

Enactus UK is committed to ensuring the health, safety, welfare and development of all participants and personnel that are part of the programme. You can find our safeguarding policy here: <https://enactusuk.org/safeguarding-policy>.

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## Introduction

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone, not just the people who are directly involved in working with vulnerable adults. Safeguarding an individual means that they are protected from harm using appropriate measures. In terms of vulnerable adults, this is likely to mean checking for signs of abuse, such as that which is physical, emotional, sexual or financial. It also means ensuring that individuals are treated in a dignified and respectful manner, which enables them to retain independence and control over their own lives. Safeguarding, in its most fundamental form, is important because it stops individuals from being harmed, abused, neglected or exploited.

## Duty of Care

A duty of care is a moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of others. This means that any organisation which provides care and support to vulnerable adults must put the interests of the people who use those services first. A further priority of the organisation is ensuring that individuals who are in their care are kept safe from harm, with prevention being preferable, in order to stop someone being harmed rather than reacting to it once it has already happened.

## Key Points

### Vulnerable adults

A vulnerable adult is classed as an individual who is aged 18 years or over and who, for any reason, is unable to take care of themselves or to protect themselves against any form of harm, abuse or exploitation.

### Who is vulnerable?

An adult will be considered as vulnerable due to one or more factors which affect their ability to care for themselves and to protect themselves against harm and exploitation.

### Duty of care

A duty of care is a moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of others.

### Safeguarding Adults Boards

All local authorities have a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) in line with the requirements of the Care Act 2014.

### Protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect people or groups of people who have one or more 'protected characteristics'.

# Disclosures and How to Respond to Them

## Verbal disclosures -

Most disclosures will take place verbally when volunteers are speaking with individuals and this can be in any circumstance at all.

## Why abuse may not be disclosed:

- Threats from the abuser: some abusers will subject the individual to threats of harm or threats of harm to others if they tell someone what is happening. This may be enough to keep the individual from disclosing information if they genuinely believe that the abuser will hurt them or someone else.
- Concerns about not being believed: some individuals will not disclose abuse because they fear that no one will believe what is happening. This may be particularly pertinent for individuals whose abuser is a person in power or who is someone who is well liked and respected.
- Inability to communicate that abuse is taking place: individuals who have illnesses or disabilities that affect their ability to communicate such as dementia or learning disabilities may not be physically able to speak about what is happening to them.
- They may not realise that abuse is taking place: adults who have learning disabilities particularly may not actually realise that they are being abused, as the abuser may have told them that what is happening is ok and that 'everyone does it'. Older individuals may not realise that they are being financially abused if the abuser is able to do this in a way that keeps them from checking their money and possessions.
- Embarrassment or shame: some individuals will be ashamed that they are being abused and have been powerless to do anything to make it stop. They may fear being judged by others about why the abuse has taken place and the shame of this may stop them from asking for help.
- Fear that other people will find out: individuals may fear that if they tell someone about the abuse that other people will find out and that 'everyone will know' about it, if they don't understand that such information would only be shared with those people who are directly involved with their ongoing safety, care and support.
- No one has ever asked them: some individuals may not disclose abuse because the right time has never come about or simply that no one has ever asked them about it. Those who are reluctant to make a disclosure may want the signs of abuse to be picked up but are unwilling to start a discussion about it by themselves.

## Responding to disclosures -

When working with vulnerable adults, there is a high possibility that, at some point, a volunteer will need to respond to a disclosure of abuse. In order to ensure that there is a positive outcome to the disclosure, volunteers need to ensure that they do the following:

- Work within policies and procedures
- Listen with empathy and be non-judgemental when the disclosure is being made
- Give reassurance to the individual
- Work within appropriate realms of confidentiality
- Report, record and refer the disclosure to the appropriate person
- Ensure any evidence is preserved.

**If you have any questions, concerns or need any support on safeguarding at any time please reach out to the Enactus UK Safeguarding Lead - Amy Brereton, [abrereton@enactus.org](mailto:abrereton@enactus.org).**

## Safeguarding Do's and Dont's:

### Do:



- Ensure you have read and understood the [Enactus UK Safeguarding Policy](#)
- Seek appropriate advice and support immediately.
- Make a record of any disclosures that are made.
- Discuss the students concerns with a designated person as soon as possible.
- Undertake relevant safeguarding training (optional).

### Dont:



- Find yourself in a position where you are alone one-on-one with a student.
- Share your personal contact details with a student.
- Investigate or seek to prove or disprove disclosures of abuse.
- Do nothing!
- Assume someone else knows or will act.
- Attempt to resolve matters yourself.
- Confront any suspected abuser.