



Supporting Luton's Black and Minority Ethnic
Lesbian Gay Bisexual & Transgender Community

VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY



LOTTERY FUNDED

BME PROUD

VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Introduction

This policy outlines a code of behavior that BME PROUD expects its staff, members and volunteers to abide by when in contact with vulnerable adults whilst acting on behalf of BME PROUD.

All members of staff, members and volunteers are liable to find themselves in contact with members of the general public, and therefore representing BME PROUD, and it is important that they should:

1. unflinchingly be courteous and patient;
2. deal fairly with them in all their dealings;
3. refrain from inappropriate behaviour, and
4. reliably pass on any messages given to them in either direction.

This is good business practice and helps BME PROUD earn a good reputation.

There are some people who are especially vulnerable, and in such cases staff must take extra care in the ways described in this policy.

Definitions

There is no legal definition of the term 'vulnerable adult'. The definition adopted by BME PROUD is as follows:

A vulnerable adult is a person over the age of eighteen who is in, or may be in need of, community care services because of mental or other disability, age, illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against harm or exploitation.

BME PROUD may be in contact with vulnerable adults as staff, members, volunteers, service users; or as customers. For this reason personnel may be required to undergo a Criminal Records Check (CRB).

Code of Behaviour, In contrast with children, it may not be obvious if a customer / service user is a vulnerable adult, or that there is a vulnerable adult present at meetings or events. For this reason the following Code of Behaviour should be deemed to be the normal standard of behaviour for all BME PROUD personnel.

Code of Behaviour

When working with vulnerable adults, where practicable, BME PROUD personnel should:

- ensure that they are always in the company of another appropriately checked adult, or at least that there is one such on site;

- whilst they treat all people with dignity and respect, display good and appropriate behaviour as described above;
- understand the difference between friendliness and familiarity;
- recognise that some vulnerable adults may make inappropriate decisions, and be more susceptible to suggestions;
- recognise that vulnerable adults may be adversely affected by usual modes of speech, language and action, and feel bullied or hurt;
- bear in mind that someone else might misinterpret their actions, no matter how well intentioned;
- be aware that any physical contact may be misinterpreted and so must be avoided where possible;
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations and / or suspicions of abuse;
- record any allegations a vulnerable adult makes;
- ensure that whenever relevant the persons who are normally responsible for the vulnerable adult (care workers, parents, guardians, etc) are informed if there are any problems, difficulties in understanding, or risk of inappropriate decisions.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour

- Distressing a person by shouting at them or calling them derogatory names;
- Slapping a person;
- Allowing, or engaging in inappropriate touching of any kind;
- Engaging in sexually suggestive behaviour within a person's sight or hearing or making suggestive remarks to or within earshot of a vulnerable adult;
- Persuading someone to making a commitment to an action that is inappropriate.

What to do if a vulnerable adult is abusive or violent

Following such an incident it is important that the following steps are taken:

- Ensure the safety of all those involved in the incident;
- Gain appropriate first aid or medical attention for anyone that is injured;
- Once the person is calm, provide an opportunity for the person to reflect on the incident if this is appropriate;
- Undertake a formal de-briefing with other adults involved or affected by the incident;

- Once the situation is calm, responsible persons / carers / agencies should be made aware of the incident;
- The incident itself must be formally recorded.

Compliance

BME PROUD takes its responsibilities in this area very seriously and expects its staff, members and volunteers to comply with this policy in all respects.

Failure to comply may lead to disciplinary proceedings for staff or severance of membership for members and volunteers.

Adopted by Management Committee Oct 2009