



SECTION 7

Phab Child & Adult at Risk Protection Policy & Good Practice Procedures

Definition of a Child

Anyone under the age of 18.

Definition of a Vulnerable Adult/Adult at Risk

- Someone aged 18 years and over who may be unable to take care of or protect themselves because they have a physical or mental health problem, disability or are elderly.
Waltham Forest Adult Protection Unit
- Vulnerable adults are those who are not able to defend themselves, protect themselves, or get help for themselves when injured or emotionally abused. A person may be vulnerable because of a physical condition or illness (such as weakness in an older adult or physical disability) or a mental or emotional condition.
WebMD
- A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may be because they have a mental health problem, a disability, a sensory impairment, are old and frail, or have some form of illness.
Northamptonshire County Council

Phab is committed to all aspects of good practice that protect children and vulnerable adults from harm.

Staff and volunteers in Phab and those affiliated clubs and projects will accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues, contained in the associated guidelines, that may cause harm to children or vulnerable adults.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and adults at risk by:

- Stating that the welfare of children/adults at risk is paramount.
- Adopting child protection/adult at risk guidelines through a code of practice for staff, volunteers and members.
- Sharing relevant information about child protection and good practice with children/vulnerable adults, parents/guardians and volunteers.
- Sharing relevant information about concerns with agencies that need to know, and involving parents/guardians and children/vulnerable adults where appropriate.
- Investigating and responding to all suspicions and allegations of abuse.
- Following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Phab child/adult at risk protection policies and guidelines are there to be acted upon to protect volunteers as well as children and vulnerable adults.
- Child/ vulnerable adult abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Although it is a sensitive and a difficult issue, child/vulnerable adult abuse has occurred and does occur within institutions and may occur within other settings.
- Phab is committed to reviewing its policy and good practice guidelines at regular intervals.

Definitions of Abuse

Emotional Abuse

Persistent lack of love and affection, where a child/vulnerable adult may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted, may make the child/vulnerable adult nervous or withdrawn. Emotional abuse may also occur if there is constant overprotection, or there is neglect, physical or sexual abuse.

Psychological/Mental Abuse

This type of abuse is similar to emotional abuse and can be in the form of threats, intimidation, harassment, stopping a child/vulnerable adult from seeing friends and family or invasion of privacy.

Neglect

Occurs when the child/vulnerable adult's basic needs such as food, warmth, and adequate clothing are not provided, as well as a failure or refusal to give love, affection and attention. It can also occur when there is inadequate supervision or the child/vulnerable adult is left alone.

Physical Abuse

Where adults physically hurt or injure children/vulnerable adults by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, and biting or use excessive force when trying to restrain a child/vulnerable adult, or by giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs etc.

Sexual Abuse

Some adults - both male and female - may seek to satisfy their own sexual needs by abusing girls, boys and vulnerable adults. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children/vulnerable adults pornographic material is also a form of sexual abuse.

Financial Abuse

This includes: fraud; stealing; pressuring a child/vulnerable adult to part with money, benefits, possessions or property.
Abuse may involve/occur in one or more of the above.

Consequences of Abuse

Abuse in all forms can affect a person at any age. The effects are so damaging that, if not tackled, they can affect an individual for the rest of their life. For example, an adult who has been abused as a child may find it difficult or impossible to maintain a stable trusting relationship, become involved with drugs or prostitution, attempt suicide or even go on to be an abuser themselves.

The effects on disabled children/vulnerable adults may have an increased impact on their lives, as these groups already suffer from many additional disadvantages.

There have been a number of studies which have shown that disabled children are at an increased risk of abuse through various factors, such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and an inability to protect themselves or they may have difficulty communicating the fact that abuse has occurred.

Children from ethnic minorities, who may experience racial discrimination, could be doubly at risk.

Evidence of Abuse

Evidence that a child/vulnerable adult may be being abused could include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if sustained on part of a body not normally prone to such injuries.

- A situation in which the explanation for an injury seems inconsistent or unlikely.
- The child/vulnerable adult describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends.
- Not socialising with their peers.
- Displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Loss of weight for no apparent reason.
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more indicators is not proof that abuse is taking place.

Listening to the Child/Vulnerable Adult

If a child/vulnerable adult says or indicates that he/she is being abused or has been abused, the person receiving this information should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child/vulnerable adult.
- Tell the child/vulnerable adult she/he is not to blame and that it is right to tell.
- Take what the child/vulnerable adult says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child/vulnerable adult who has an impairment is implying.
- Keep questions to a minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Give time to listen to the child/vulnerable adult without prompting. Ask open questions, see the Volunteer Guidelines for examples of different types of questions.
- Reassure the child/vulnerable adult, but do not make promises of confidentiality that may not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible.

It may occur that a child/vulnerable adult wishes to have a third party friend or parent/guardian/carer present before they will offer any information. This is perfectly acceptable and should be encouraged. However, great care must be taken not to let the other person speak for the child/vulnerable adult especially where that person is the child's/vulnerable adult's parent/guardian or carer.

Responding to Suspicions or Allegations

Before commencing any action, unless the child/vulnerable adult is in immediate danger of further abuse, we recommend that you:

- Contact Matthew Joyce (Phab Safeguarding Officer) through Phab Head Office at Summit House on 020 8667 9443 and follow Phab's Safeguarding Procedures using the relevant forms provided on the Phab website.
- If no one is immediately available, do not delay taking further action.
- If there is immediate risk or danger, contact Police or Social Services.
- Agree that any third party (guardian/parents or carer) will tell no one else what has been said.
- Agree that any third party can act only as a supporter.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working within the Phab network in a voluntary or paid capacity, or others working within Phab clubs and projects to decide whether or not child/vulnerable adult abuse is taking place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children in order that the appropriate agencies can make inquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child/vulnerable adult.

The Social Services Department has a statutory duty under The Children's Act 1989 to ensure the welfare of a child/vulnerable adult. When a child protection referral is made its staff has a legal duty to investigate. This may involve talking to the child/vulnerable adult and family/guardian or carer and gathering information from other people who know the child/vulnerable adult. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police.

What do you do if you have concerns?

There is usually a commitment with parents and carers where there are concerns about a child/vulnerable adult. Therefore in most situations, it would be important to talk to parents/guardians or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child/vulnerable adult seems withdrawn he/she may have experienced bereavement in a family.

However, there are circumstances in which a child/vulnerable adult may be placed at a greater risk if such concerns were shared (e.g. where a parent/guardian or carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In these circumstances, or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported either to Social Services or to Phab Head Office, who will in turn contact Social Services.

If you contact Social Services direct it is important that you also inform Phab, Summit House, Wandle Road, Croydon CR0 1DF. Tel: 020 8667 9443

The Social Services Department, together with the Phab staff where appropriate, will decide how and when parents/guardians or carers will be informed.

Records and information

Information passed on to Social Services or the Police, must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity of making detailed records. Information should include the following:

1. The nature of the allegation.
2. A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
3. The child/vulnerable adult's account, if given, of what happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.

Reporting the matter to the police or Social Services Department should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information.

Wherever possible, referrals telephoned to the Child Protection Unit should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. A record should be made of the name and designation of the Social Services member of staff or police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of any call, in case any follow up is needed.

Please also complete the Incident Form attached to this section, PRIOR to contacting Social Services or the Police.

Complaints against Staff/Volunteers

This includes anyone working with children/vulnerable adults in a paid or voluntary capacity in Phab clubs or another Phab Club/Project member.

The Phab leader or another responsible person (if the complaint is against the leader) may be informed of situations where they are unsure about whether the allegation constitutes abuse or not, and are therefore not sure what action to take.

There may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice rather than abuse, but those volunteers who have been informed of the allegation of poor practice should consult Phab staff and gain advice from Social Services. This is because it may be just one of a series of other instances which together cause concern.

It is acknowledged that feelings generated by the discovery that a member of staff or volunteer is, or may be, abusing a child/vulnerable adult, will raise concerns among other staff or volunteers. This includes the difficulties inherent in reporting such matters. However, it is important that where there is concern for the welfare of a child/vulnerable adult due to reported abuse or harassment action should be immediate.

Phab assures all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child/vulnerable adult.

Where there is a complaint of abuse against a volunteer/member of staff, there may be 3 types of investigation:

1. A disciplinary or misconduct investigation
2. A child/vulnerable adult protection investigation
3. A criminal investigation

The result of the police and Social Services investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Referring Allegations

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice the Phab leader/club committee should deal with it as a misconduct issue as opposed to child abuse. An example is where a leader has requested a volunteer to assist moving a member of the club/project without appropriate training.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the person in charge, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be referred to Phab England staff who will decide how to deal with the allegation.

Any allegation/suspicion that a child/vulnerable adult has been abused, either by a member of staff or a volunteer, should be reported to the Phab leader or a responsible volunteer/staff member. He/she will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child/vulnerable adult in question and any other child/vulnerable adult who may be at risk. They will follow the procedures as set out in the guidelines. All enquiries should be made in confidence.

The club leader/responsible person will refer the allegation to the Social Services Department/NSPCC who may involve the police.

The parents/guardians of the child/vulnerable adult will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Services Department.

The club leader should also notify Phab England staff, who will offer support.

Good Practice

All children/vulnerable adults have a right to be safe and be treated with dignity and respect. False allegations of abuse are rare but the following basic guidelines will help safeguard children/vulnerable adults, staff, volunteers and Phab.

Recruitment and Selection of Staff/Volunteers

Anyone may have the potential to abuse children/vulnerable adults in some way; it is therefore important that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children/vulnerable adults. It is essential the same procedures be used consistently whether for staff or volunteers.

Phab Standards

All existing and new Phab clubs/projects are required by law to have all staff and volunteers checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service. DBS checking is not optional. Further information is at the end of this section.

All Phab clubs/projects must submit a list of all volunteers and a list of children in their care to Phab Head Office. If new volunteers or children join, Phab must be informed.

All Phab clubs/projects undertaking holidays, including overnight trips with children and/or vulnerable adults, must inform staff and volunteers of Phab's Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Safeguarding policy procedures and follow these guidelines.

If Phab becomes aware or is informed of information from a reputable source (e.g. Police, NSPCC, Social Services etc.) that an individual is not suitable to attend a Phab club, Phab has the right to stop the individual from attending any further Phab clubs/projects or associated events.

Phab club leaders/management committees must inform parents and volunteers of Phab's child/adult at risk protection policy/procedures.

Phab regional staff will be able to provide advice on child/vulnerable adult protection to clubs/projects and will undertake inspections of Phab clubs/projects to check compliance and understanding.

Phab's complaints procedure is in The Background Work section and should be made available to Phab volunteers, staff and members.

The Phab club leader/management committee must report all incidents to Phab's insurers, where the club/project is covered by the Phab insurance policy.

Please note that these standards may change in light of Government legislation (if clubs/projects have their own child/adult at risk protection policy, they must accept and adopt these standards).

Good Practice in the Care of Children/Adults at Risk

Promoting good practice can reduce the possibility of potentially abusive situations and help to protect staff/volunteers. The following are more specific examples of care which should be taken when working within Phab:

- Always be publicly open when working with children/vulnerable adults. Avoid situations where a volunteer and an individual child/vulnerable adult are working completely unobserved. E.g. if assistance is required when toileting, 2 helpers should be present.
- If any form of physical manual support is required two members of staff should always be present. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when a child/vulnerable adult is constantly moving. Some parents/guardians are becoming increasingly sensitive about physical manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Where a mixed group of boys & girls are on holiday or participating in a trip, male & female volunteers/members of staff should accompany them.

As a general rule it makes sense for staff/volunteers not to:

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children/vulnerable adults.
- Take children/vulnerable adults alone on car journeys, however short. Sometimes it is required, but you will need parental consent for young people under the age of 18.
- Take children/vulnerable adults to their home where they will be alone.
- If the case arises where situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of the Phab club/project leader or the child's parents/guardians. You should never:
 - Engage in rough, physical, sexually provocative games or horseplay.
 - Share a room with a child alone.
 - Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
 - Use or allow the use of inappropriate language.
 - Make sexually suggestive comments to a child/vulnerable adult, even in fun.
 - Allow allegations made by a child/vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
 - Do things of a personal nature for children/vulnerable adults they can do for themselves.

It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children/vulnerable adults, particularly if they are young or have

impairments. These tasks should only be carried out with the full consent of parents and the children/vulnerable adult's involved. There is a need to be responsive to the child's/vulnerable adult's reactions - if an individual is fully dependent upon you, talk with him/her about what you are doing, give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in assisting with any dressing or undressing, or where there is physical contact or lifting or assisting a child to carry out a particular activity.

Parents/guardians or carers should be informed of any incident that involves a child/vulnerable adult:

- Being accidentally hurt
- Who seems distressed in any manner
- Who appears to be sexually aroused by your actions or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Any such incident should also be reported to another colleague as soon as possible and a brief written note made of it.

DBS Certificates

Every volunteer in a Phab club or on a Phab project is required to have a DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) certificate.

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) merged to create the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Enhanced Disclosure

This is the highest level of check available to anyone involved in regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in charge of children or vulnerable adults. All Phab volunteers and staff are checked at this level. Once processed, a DBS Certificate will be sent out to the applicant. The applicant must show their club leader or supervisor this certificate.

The DBS Update Service

The update service lets applicants keep their DBS certificates up to date online and allows employers to check a certificate online: <https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>

Any questions or requests for DBS forms should be sent to Matthew Joyce at Phab.
Email: matthew.joyce@phab.org.uk

Further information on the DBS is available on the Home Office website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

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