

Versus Arthritis Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy Control

1.1 Approval

Author / Policy Lead	Aileen Stamate - Safeguarding Manager		
Live Version No.	5		
Policy Sponsor	John Fanning Interim Director of Corporate Service Planning and Operations	Sponsor Approved Date:	15/12/2021
Organisational Governance Approval Level Required	Tier 1 – Trustees	Approval Date:	1/12/2021
Effective Start Date:	22/12/2021	Next Review Date:	9/1/2023

1.2 Review History: record of reviews (irrespective of changes made)

Reviewer Name	Reviewer Role	Review Date
Lorna Stagg	Governance Manager	06/18
Ruth Smith	Safeguarding Lead	03/19
Ruth Smith	Safeguarding Lead	11/20
Aileen Stamate	Safeguarding Manager	11/21
Stuart Miller	Head of Governance & Assurance	12/21

1.3 Version History: record of policy versions and changes made

Version No.	Description of change	Date of Issue
1	First Version	27/11/16
2	Review	11/6/18
3	Updated Version	3/3/19
4	Revised versions update National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021	9/12/20
5	Review	12/21

For generic questions or concerns relating to this or any other policies at Versus Arthritis email policies@versusarthritis.org.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding. The policy forms the foundations upon which our supporting guidance and procedures are based.
- 2.2 Versus Arthritis' (VA) Safeguarding Policy outlines the charity's commitment to creating a safe environment for everyone who uses our services and to managing our business in a way which minimises the risk of abuse occurring to ensure the safety of people that we have contact with; and the adequate provision of support to those who work on our behalf with adults at risk, children and young people.

Scope

- 2.3 This policy sets out the collective and individual expectation for our Versus Arthritis community to comply with legislation, codes of conduct and behaviours required for everyone working whether paid or unpaid for the charity. As such, it applies to all employees, trustees, volunteers, sessional workers and anyone else who may work for VA.

Key Definitions

- 2.4 Safeguarding applies to adults at risk and to children and young people.
- 2.5 It means:
- protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
 - protecting children and young people from maltreatment; preventing impairment of health or development; ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable them to have the best outcomes.

Please Note: Terminology across the UK varies. You may have also heard the term 'vulnerable adults' used, however, for the policy we are using the phrase 'adult at risk'.

3. Rationale

- 3.1 Versus Arthritis treat all safeguarding allegations or concerns reported seriously. We will implement and follow the processes set out in our safeguarding procedures.
- 3.2 This policy should be read alongside our safeguarding procedures which explain what action is required of trustees, employees, volunteers, managers and others if there are concerns that an adult at risk, a child or young person is being harmed or is at risk of harm.

Objectives

3.3 The **aims** for the Safeguarding Policy and procedures are:

- To promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children / young people and adults at risk who use any of our services (includes in person and online / digital / social media, etc.), attend VA events or activities or to whom we otherwise owe a duty of care.
- To ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and has access to appropriate learning opportunities to enhance their knowledge of safeguarding – both identification of abuse and the reporting processes, should there be a cause for concern.
- To ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of concerns being identified, and to ensure support is provided to the person who raises or discloses the concern.
- To ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- To ensure that appropriate people are employed by Versus Arthritis.
- To protect and empower people who lack capacity.

If you are concerned that a child, young person, or adult at risk is at risk of or is experiencing abuse or neglect then follow the process set out in the [safeguarding procedure](#).

Principles

3.4 Versus Arthritis understands:

- That all children, young people and adults at risk have the right to equality of protection against any form of harm or abuse regardless of their age, disability (physical or mental), gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity status, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.
- That some people are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, their communication needs or other issues.
- That working together and effective information sharing with children, young people, their parents, or guardians, carers, and other relevant agencies, is essential in promoting their welfare.
- That for safeguarding children, the welfare of the child is paramount and overrides all other considerations.

- That to effectively safeguard ‘adults at risk’ we must work with them in partnership applying the six key principles that underpin all adult safeguarding work. We must respect an individual’s wishes, feelings, and rights, including the right to make unwise decisions and to assume they have mental capacity.
- That working in partnership with adults at risk, their partners, families, carers, and relevant agencies, and sharing safeguarding information where appropriate is vital for promoting their welfare and wellbeing.
- We recognise the need to respond to all types of abuse and harm including physical, emotional, sexual and domestic abuse, neglect, online abuse, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, bullying, harassment and cyberbullying, radicalisation, trafficking, grooming and harmful sexual behaviour.¹

3.5 We will seek to keep people safe on a charity-wide basis by:

- Compliance with all relevant safeguarding legislation, Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance. And to ensure that prevention of harm is practiced in our content and online work; and that appropriate policies and procedures are in place, which are followed by all.
- These will include a clear system of referring and reporting to relevant agencies as soon as concerns are suspected or identified.²
- By recruiting employees and volunteers who work with service users according to Safer Recruitment principals, including obtaining relevant criminal record checks and references to deter unsuitable applicants and keep our services users safe.
- Promoting an open and positive culture and ensure all involved feel able to report concerns, confident that they will be heard and responded to.
- Provision of adequate safeguarding policies, procedures, and measures to protect people, including providing clarity as to how incidents and allegations will be handled should they arise.
- Training needs and development, providing training where appropriate. In other words, whilst this policy and related training will apply to all staff of Versus Arthritis (to cover recruitment, training and responsibilities), certain more highly specialised training and awareness will be required for those employees and volunteers engaged in activities that we may anticipate carry particular risks of a safeguarding nature (for example in a face to face or online / digital / social media context).
- Appointment of Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Ensuring that everyone who works with or has responsibility for the delivery of services to children and adults is familiar with and confident about their individual responsibilities in dealing with any potential or actual allegations.

¹ You can find more information on the categories of abuse in the [safeguarding procedure](#).

² [Guidance on handling safeguarding allegations in a charity | Office for Civil Society \(culture.gov.uk\)](#)

- Minimising the risk of abuse by discrimination by ensuring all workplace practices are sensitive to individual, gender and cultural needs or any other practice which may stigmatise or disadvantage the individual or customer group.

Context

- 3.6 There is legislation and statutory guidance which provide the legal framework within which we work. This safeguarding policy complies with all relevant legislation, policy and guidance which seeks to protect children and adults.

You should read this policy alongside our other organisational policies, guidance, and procedures.

- 3.7 **Safeguarding children** and promoting the welfare of children is defined by the NSPCC³ as the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. It means:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding children and child protection guidance and legislation applies to anyone under the age of 18 in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. For example we will be guided by: [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672227/Working-Together-to-Safeguard-Children-2018.pdf) as amended from time to time.

In Scotland, the definition of a child varies in different legal contexts, but statutory guidance which supports the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, includes all children and young people up to the age of 18.⁴ The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator is the regulatory body for charities in Scotland and publishes guidance for trustees of charities that includes child protection and extends to safeguarding vulnerable beneficiaries, meaning children under 18 and vulnerable (protected) adults over 16 years.

- 3.8 ⁵**Safeguarding adults** means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. The issue here for VA to address is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action, making safeguarding personal.

An **adult at risk** is:

- 18 years and over, or 16 years and over in Scotland.⁶

³ [Safeguarding children and child protection | NSPCC Learning](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/learning-and-development/learning-and-development-for-children/learning-and-development-for-children-2018/)

⁴ [National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-for-child-protection-in-scotland-2021/pages/1-introduction-and-what-is-child-protection-in-scotland.aspx)

⁵ [Care and support statutory guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672227/Care-and-support-statutory-guidance-2018.pdf)

⁶ [Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/11/section/1)

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- ⁷as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.
- Terminology across the UK varies. You may have also heard the term 'vulnerable adults' used, however, for the policy we are using the phrase 'adult at risk'.

4. Making it Happen

- 4.1 For detailed guidance accompanying this policy, please refer to the [overarching safeguarding procedures](#) where specific roles and their responsibilities for safeguarding are outlined.
- 4.2 All Versus Arthritis employees, trustees and volunteers have a part to play in keeping children, young people, and adults at risk safe; and must:
- Be aware of Versus Arthritis' safeguarding policy and procedures and their personal responsibilities in relation to it.
 - Undertake any safeguarding training which is mandatory for their specific role.
 - Understand how to share all concerns appropriately
 - Act within Versus Arthritis' safer working practice procedures
- 4.3 The Director of Finance and Corporate Services (acting here as Operational Safeguarding Lead) is responsible for ensuring that information relating to this, and associated policies is communicated across the organisation and with key stakeholders. This policy will be reviewed annually or in the event of relevant changes in legislation and/or government guidance by the Safeguarding Manager.

An annual safeguarding report will be presented to the Board of Trustees (typically at its May/June meeting).

Any feedback relating to the safeguarding policy or procedures should be sent to safeguarding@versusarthritis.org

5. Related VA Policies and Statements

All policies can be found on the Policy Directory at [Our Organisational Policies - Policies - All Items \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

- Modern Slavery Statement
- Procurement Policy
- Serious Incident Policy
- [Values & Behaviours VA Statement](#)
- Whistleblowing Policy

⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/part/1/crossheading/safeguarding-adults-at-risk-of-abuse-or-neglect>