

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory

Safeguarding Adults Policy and Guidelines

Introduction

In preparing our Safeguarding Adults Policy and Guidelines, we have considered the advice and guidance in the following documents:

- The Department for Health's Statement of Government Policy on Adult Safeguarding (16 May 2011; Gateway reference 16072)
- The Charity Commission for England and Wales' Policy Paper: Strategy for dealing with safeguarding issues in charities
- The Care Act 2014 – statutory guidance, available online at:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/introduction/enacted>
- The Department for Health's statement: Regulated activity (adults) - The definition of 'regulated activity' (adults) as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 from 10th September 2012.

The purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to inform people who take part in the activities and services provided by Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory of the measures we have in place to protect both vulnerable adults and those in our organisation who engage with them. This document relates both to activities at the priory itself and to any off-site activity arranged by us.

It sets out

- practices and procedures contributing to the prevention of abuse of vulnerable adults or those who may be at risk in certain situations
- a course of action to be followed if abuse is suspected.

This document is to be read in conjunction with Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory's Safeguarding Children Policy and Child Protection Code of Conduct.

Our context and values

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory is a registered charity whose aims include teaching meditation and Buddhist practice and providing a place of refuge for people wishing to train in Buddhism. We do not currently run any activity or perform any function that is primarily for any of the vulnerable groups listed below, and we have no plans to do so in the foreseeable future.

From time to time however, adults who may be considered to be vulnerable may visit us. Additionally, congregation members, including those who might be considered vulnerable, may seek spiritual advice from the prior. It is possible that in these circumstances statements may be made by the vulnerable adult, or questions asked by them, which take the form of a disclosure of abuse.

Like all organisations, Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory has a duty to safeguard any vulnerable adults with whom we have contact. We take this responsibility very seriously and are committed to the safeguarding of all who come to the priory. Ensuring the physical, psychological and sexual safety of vulnerable adults involved in the activities and services we provide is an expression of the wisdom and compassion taught by the Buddha.

The trustees recognise their responsibility to ensure the welfare of vulnerable adults, and are committed to their protection. (See also our Safeguarding Children Policy.)

Practical Steps related to Safeguarding

We do not engage in any “regulated activity” for adults as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (SVGA), as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (PoFA).

The priory’s Safeguarding Officer is: Chris Loukes
email: safeguarding.nzbp@gmail.com

What areas does this policy cover?

Definitions:

We use the most recent definition from The Care Act of 2014 which makes provisions for adults with care and support needs. **This policy applies to those aged 18 or over who have need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.** The Care Act of 2014 now identifies 'Adults at risk or with care needs' rather than labelling individual adults as permanently vulnerable. At any point in time any adult may have care needs and be unable to protect themselves. We recognise that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act of 2006, and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 are also relevant as they specify on which occasions helping an adult with care needs become a regulated activity. “The definition of regulated activity for adults from 10th September 2012 will identify the activities provided to any adult which, if any adult requires them, will mean that the adult will be considered vulnerable at that particular time.” Those involved in a regulated activity may need to be vetted by the Disclosure and Barring Service set up by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act.

These ‘activities’ include personal care and making certain kinds of decisions on such things as finances. Full details are on the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216900/Regulated-Activity-Adults-Dec-2012.pdf

Therefore, people aged eighteen or over who visit Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory may need safeguarding even if they are not in need of community care services. Any adult may temporarily be ‘vulnerable’ if whilst visiting the temple they need personal care, such as help with going to the toilet and eating. We also recognise that many people who are generally emotionally and psychologically stable in most aspects of their lives may on occasion find themselves vulnerable or at risk. This may be because of illness, relationship breakdown or bereavement, or because their practice of meditation or Buddhism has made them more sensitive and self-aware, particularly if they are new to Buddhism. We will take great care to avoid exploiting such vulnerability.

Mental capacity

According to the Mental Capacity Act of 2005, ‘capacity’ refers to the ability to make a decision at a particular time, for example when under considerable stress. The starting assumption must always be that a person has the capacity to make a decision unless it can be established that they lack capacity. This affects our policy on safeguarding vulnerable adults especially regarding decisions on passing on reports of abuse to other agencies such as the police and social services (see p. 6).

What is ‘abuse’?

Abuse is the harming of a person usually by someone who is in a position of power, trust or authority over them, or who may be perceived by that person to be in a position of power, trust or authority over them. The harm may be physical, psychological or emotional, or it may exploit the vulnerability of the victim in more subtle ways.

Types of abuse

Physical

- bodily assaults resulting in injuries e.g. hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions
- bodily impairment e.g. malnutrition, dehydration, failure to thrive
- medical/healthcare maltreatment

Sexual

- rape, incest, acts of indecency, sexual assault
- sexual harassment or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting
- sexual abuse might also include exposure to pornographic materials, being made to witness sexual acts; also sexual harassment, with or without physical contact

Psychological/emotional

- threats of harm, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, enforced isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks
- humiliation
- bullying, shouting or swearing

Abuse through neglect

- ignoring medical or physical care needs
- failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services
- the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

Financial or material

- theft, fraud
- exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions
- the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

Discriminatory

- language which is racist, sexist, or based on a person’s disability, gender or sexual orientation, etc

Signs of abuse

Physical

NB Ageing processes can cause changes which are hard to distinguish from some aspects of physical assault e.g. skin bruising can occur due to blood vessels becoming fragile.

- a history of unexplained falls or minor injuries
- bruising in well-protected areas, or clustered from repeated striking
- finger marks

- burns of unusual location or type
- injuries found at different states of healing
- injury shape similar to an object
- injuries to head/face/scalp
- history of moving from doctor to doctor, or between social care agencies; reluctance to seek help
- accounts which vary with time or are inconsistent with physical evidence
- weight loss due to malnutrition; or rapid weight gain
- ulcers, bed sores and being left in wet clothing
- drowsiness due to too much medication; or lack of medication causing recurring crises/hospital admissions

Sexual

- disclosure or partial disclosure (use of phrases such as 'It's a secret')
- medical problems, e.g. genital infections, pregnancy, difficulty walking or sitting
- disturbed behaviour e.g. depression, sudden withdrawal from activities, loss of previous skills, sleeplessness or nightmares, self-injury, showing fear or aggression to one particular person, inappropriately seductive behaviour, loss of appetite or difficulty in keeping food down
- unusual circumstances, such as, for example, two service-users found in a toilet/bathroom area, one of them distressed

Signs of psychological or emotional vulnerability

- isolation
- unkempt, unwashed appearance; smell
- over meticulousness
- inappropriate dress
- withdrawnness, agitation, anxiety; not wanting to be touched
- change in appetite
- insomnia or need for excessive sleep
- tearfulness
- unexplained paranoia; excessive fears
- low self-esteem
- confusion

Signs of neglect

- poor physical condition
- clothing in poor condition
- inadequate diet
- untreated injuries or medical problems
- failure to be given prescribed medication
- poor personal hygiene

Signs of financial or material vulnerability

- unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills
- unexplained or sudden withdrawal of money from accounts
- disparity between assets and satisfactory living conditions
- unusual level of interest by family members and other people in the vulnerable person's financial assets

Signs of discrimination

- lack of respect shown to an individual
- substandard service offered to an individual
- exclusion from rights afforded to others, such as health, education, criminal justice

Other signs of abuse

- controlling relationships
- inappropriate use of restraint
- sensory deprivation e.g. spectacles or hearing aid
- denial of visitors or phone calls
- failure to ensure privacy or personal dignity
- lack of personal clothing or possessions

People who may abuse

Abuse may happen anywhere and may be carried out by anyone, eg:

- Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory congregation
- Other participants in Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory activities
- Those involved in other organisations that we work with
- Informal carers, family, friends, neighbours.

Reporting abuse

- All allegations or suspicions are to be treated seriously. No abuse is acceptable.
- Some abuse may be a criminal offence and should be reported to the police as soon as possible.
- The primary responsibility of the person who suspects abuse is to protect the vulnerable adult if they are at risk.
- The person who suspects abuse has a duty to take action.

What to do if a vulnerable adult reports abuse to you

Do

- Stay calm.
- Listen patiently.
- Reassure the person they are doing the right thing by telling you.
- Clarify issues of confidentiality early on. Make it clear that you will have to discuss their concerns with others.
- Explain what you are going to do.
- Write a factual account of what you have seen and heard, immediately.

Do not

- Appear shocked, horrified, disgusted or angry.
- Press the individual for details.
- Make comments or judgments other than to show concern.
- Promise to keep secrets.
- Confront the abuser.
- Risk contaminating the evidence.

What to do next

When deciding whether to refer the matter to others (e.g. to the Prior and Safeguarding Officer of Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory, police or social services) consider the following:

- the wishes of the vulnerable adult and their right to self-determination
- the mental capacity of the vulnerable adult
- known indicators of abuse
- definitions of abuse
- level of risk to the individual
- the seriousness of the abuse
- the effect of the abuse on the individual
- level of risk to others
- the effect of the abuse on others
- whether a criminal offence has been committed
- whether other statutory obligations have been breached
- the **need** for others to know
- the ability of others (eg police, social services) to make a positive contribution to the situation.

If you are worried about a vulnerable adult, you can report a concern to Norfolk County Council's Adult Social Services as follows:

- Telephone: 0344 800 8020
- Online: <https://adultsocialcare.norfolk.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/safeguarding#assess>

Confidentiality and Mental Capacity

The charity is required, under the Data Protection Act 2018, to maintain confidentiality of all visitors. When safeguarding vulnerable adults, there may be a need to disclose confidential information to someone from another organisation, such as the police, adult social services or mental health team. The charity will only do this when the law allows, and when disclosure will help a vulnerable adult in need, or prevent a crime.

If confidential information is to be shared, this will be done where possible with the person's agreement. If this is not given, assessment of their best interests may still justify disclosure, and issues involving a wider or public interest may justify overriding their views. Where the vulnerable adult lacks mental capacity, the charity may undertake consultation with another on their behalf (in accordance with the guidelines in the Mental Capacity Act 2015).

Any information shared will be on a "need to know" basis, i.e. only information that is directly relevant to safeguarding a vulnerable adult and only the minimum necessary to achieve the objective of protection of vulnerable adults.

Where a vulnerable adult expresses a wish for concerns not to be pursued, this should be respected wherever possible. However, decisions about whether to respect their wishes must have regard to the level of risk to the individual and others, and their capacity to understand the decision in question. In some circumstances the vulnerable adult's wishes may be overridden in favour of considerations of safety.

The consent of the vulnerable adult must be obtained except where:

- the vulnerable adult lacks the mental capacity to make a decision (in accordance with the guidelines in the Mental Capacity Act 2015), and a risk assessment indicates that referral would be in their best interests
- others may be at risk
- a crime has been committed.

Complaints and whistle-blowing procedures

- You can talk about your concern to the Prior, who is required to follow the procedures described above.
- Anyone can email the priory via our contact page with their concern and we will follow the procedures described above: <https://norwichzen.org.uk/contact-us/>
- The Safeguarding Officer **Chris Loukes** is available by emailing: safeguarding.nzbp@gmail.com
- Please also see the priory's Complaints Policy.
- It is recognized that some people may find it difficult to pass on information to either the Prior or a member of the local Lay Sangha, and so we also have volunteer contacts from our wider congregation and non-resident monks. If anyone wishes to raise concerns about ethical issues or misconduct (including issues involving vulnerable adults), their details are publicly available on the OBC website: <https://obcon.org/about-us/our-ethical-intentions-and-resolving-a-concern/contact-for-ethical-concern-united-kingdom> and their names and contact details are as follows:

Rev. Master Elinore Agnew
Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey
Tel: 01434 345204

Rev. Master Roland Watson
Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey
Tel: 01434 345204

Neil Rothwell
OBC Lay Minister
Tel: 0843 713 0076

Mo Henderson
OBC Lay Minister
033 296 84 87 59



Responsibility for the Policy

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the board of trustees. The trustees may have recourse to creating and consulting a group outside of the body of trustees for independent advice.

Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on:
Amended on:

Last reviewed: