

Safeguarding Adults – Policy and Procedures

Introduction – Policy Objectives

Everyone who takes part in highland games is entitled to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment. To ensure this, the RSHGA is committed to establishing and implementing policies and procedures to ensure a safe highland games environment.

Observing best practises in highland games benefits everyone- the sport's governing bodies, events, athletes, officials, teachers, parents, carers and coaches. Most importantly, it ensures that adults at risk of abuse who choose to participate in highland games have a safe and fun experience. Our objective is to build a safer future in highland games for all adults at risk of abuse.

All adults at risk of abuse are entitled to a duty of care and protection. Abuse can occur anywhere; with over a thousand people participating and helping with highland games, there is a possibility that there are some individuals abusing their power over adults at risk of abuse.

The RSHGA is committed to devising, implementing and updating policies and procedures to promote best practice when working with adults at risk of abuse and to ensure that everyone in the sport understands and accepts their responsibilities to safeguard adults at risk of abuse from harm and abuse. This means taking action to report any concerns about their welfare. It is not the responsibility of the RSHGA to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, this is the domain of professionals who deal with adults at risk of abuse.

Policy Statement

RSHGA aim to provide (and to ensure the member events provide) a duty of care, to protect all adults at risk of abuse and safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, gender identity religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This document is based on the following principles:-

- Everyone has the right to live their life free from violence, fear and abuse.
- All adults have the right to be protected from harm and exploitation.
- All adults have the right to independence which involves a degree of risk.

A Shared Responsibility

Effective inter-agency working is crucial for the protection of adults from abuse. Effective information sharing, collaboration and understanding between agencies and professionals are key elements in adult protection. Although Social services are the lead agency in working with those who are vulnerable to abuse, protecting adults from harm is not the sole responsibility of any one agency.

Principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005

- There is a presumption of Capacity
- Individuals are supported to make their own decisions
- Individuals must retain the right to make eccentric or unwise decisions.
- Everything done for or on behalf of people without capacity must be done in their best interests
- Anything done for or on behalf of people without capacity should be the least restrictive to their basic rights and freedom.

Principles of Confidentiality

The right to privacy and dignity of any vulnerable adult will be respected at all times and protection of all confidential information is recognised as good practice. In every situation it will be assumed that a person can make their own decisions unless it is proven that they are unable to do so.

- The sharing of information must be strictly on a “need to know” basis as stipulated in the Data Protection Acts.
- Informed consent should be obtained as far as is possible
- No assurances of absolute confidentiality should be given and should not be confused with secrecy as this may hinder the safeguarding objective of making people safe.

Definitions

Vulnerable Adult

This policy and its accompanying procedures apply to people-

- Who are aged 18 years and over:
- Who are, or may be, in need of Community Care services because of learning or physical disability, older age or physical or mental illness
- Who are, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by others.

The aim of this policy is to ensure protection from, and the prevention of, the abuse of vulnerable adults. The phrase “vulnerable adult” recognises the high prevalence of abuse experienced by this group, but it should be recognised that this definition is contentious. Thus the term used has increasingly become known as ‘Safeguarding Adults at risk of abuse’.

Abuse

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

A consensus has emerged identifying the following main different forms of abuse:

- **physical abuse**, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions;

- **sexual abuse**, including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting;
- **psychological abuse**, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks;
- **financial or material abuse**, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits;
- **neglect and acts of omission** including 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 ; and
- **discriminatory abuse** including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as a result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

Risk Factors

There are certain factors and situations that place people at particular risk of being abused. The presence of one or more of these factors does not automatically imply abuse will result, but may increase the likelihood:

- Need for intimate personal care. Certain personal care needs may present more opportunity for abuse;
- Role reversal, for example, the adult child taking over parental role;
- Living in the same household as a known abuser
- Where there is a family history of abuse
- Where an adult is dependant on others, or others are dependant on them
- Inappropriate or dangerous physical or emotional environment;
- Where there is a change in the life style of a member of the household for example, unemployment, employment, illness
- A member of the household experiencing emotional or social isolation
- The existence of financial problems
- Difference in communication or a breakdown in communication.

Alerting

Everyone reading this document must regard himself or herself as an alerter.

Alerting or raising a concern about abuse means:

- Recognising signs of abuse/ongoing bad practice
- Responding to a disclosure
- Reporting a concern, allegation or disclosure
- Recording initial information
- Working strictly in accordance with anti-discriminatory practice.

As an alerter you are:

- Not being asked to verify or prove that information is true
- Required to log your concerns and report them to an appropriate person or organisation

Only the Police have the responsibility to establish whether a criminal offence has been committed.

Alerting Procedure

This procedure applies to any concern, allegation or disclosure in any setting.

In an emergency you must dial 999 for either the police or an ambulance

In all cases of concern, allegations or disclosure you should advise and assist the vulnerable adult to contact the Adult Social Care Services for the Local Authority where they live. *Social Care services details can be found on your area's County Council website.*

Do not undertake to keep any disclosure of abuse confidential. It is important to explain to the vulnerable adult before a disclosure that you may have to discuss the information given with a person in a more responsible position than yourself.

The welfare of the vulnerable adult is paramount.

Good Practice Guidelines

Recognising signs of adult abuse:

- Thinking about what you see and asking yourself if it is acceptable practice
- Working strictly in accordance with anti-oppressive practice
- Taking seriously what you are told
- Being alert to hints, signals, non-verbal communication that could indicate abuse

Responding to disclosure:

- Incidents of abuse or crimes may only come to light because the abused person themselves tells someone

- The person may not consider that they are being abused when they tell you what happened to them
- Disclosure may take place many years after the actual event
- Disclosure may take place when the person has left the setting in which they were abused
- Even if there is a delay the information must be taken seriously

If someone makes an allegation or discloses to you:

DO

- Stay calm and try not to show shock
- Listen carefully
- Be sympathetic

Tell the person that:

- They did the right thing in tell you
- You are treating the information seriously
- It was not their fault
- You may have to pass the information on to more responsible persons
- Inform the RSHGA Welfare Officer
- Write down what the person said to you as soon as possible

DO NOT

- Question the person about the incident
- Ask the person who, what, why, where when questions, this is the role of the police
- Promise to keep secrets
- Make promises that you cannot keep
- Contact the alleged abuser
- Be judgemental
- Gossip about the incident

When in doubt seek the advice of the RSHGA Welfare Officer

Reporting

- Record your concerns in writing making a note of the date, time your concerns and the circumstances surrounding them, as well as anything that has been said.
- Contact the RSHGA Welfare Officer and your local council adult protection team within social services or social care department or the local police.
- Be prepared to provide the following details:-
 - Your name, address, telephone number and your role
 - As many details about the vulnerable person as you can. You must not however disclose confidential information such as the person's diagnosis or gender orientation unless it is relevant to the situation.
 - What you have been told or observed about the person
 - What the vulnerable person has said in response to any suspicions or concerns you have had.
 - The action you have taken so far
 - When you make the referral, agree with the person you are making the referral to what the persons carers will be told, by whom and when.

Social care or the police will advise you on what to do next, including whether the carers should be involved. Social care will then take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate enquires are made.

RSHGA Welfare Officer email: welfareofficer@rshga.org

Further Information

Charitable Organisations

Mencap - <http://www.mencap.org.uk>

The Ann Craft Trust (protecting people with learning disabilities) - <http://www.anncrafttrust.org>

Action on Elder Abuse - <http://www.elderabuse.org.uk>

Womens Aid (Domestic violence) - <http://womensaid.org.uk>

Legislation and Guidance

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007

No Secrets- guidance on developing and implementing policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Code of Practice

Help for Victims

Victim Support - <http://www.victimsupport.org.uk>

Citizens Advice - <http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/index.htm>

Samaritans - <http://www.samaritans.org.uk>