

Safeguarding Policy

The work of AVP Britain (AVPB) is to support people to handle conflict, respond to violence constructively and build more positive relationships. We deliver workshops in the community and in prisons. Our priority groups are those we believe benefit most from AVP, being adults whose lives are affected by violence or abuse, this can include:

- People in the criminal justice system, at risk of offending, or who are ex-offenders.
- People who are affected by domestic abuse, as victims or perpetrators.
- People who are affected by violence or abuse which undermines their mental health.

Volunteers and paid staff work together to encourage the development of an ethos that embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights and dignity of all people (see AVP Britain's Equality and Diversity Policy).

AVPB aims to make its workshops as inclusive and welcoming as possible. However, we recognise that neglect and physical, sexual and emotional abuse exist and affect those in both receiving and perpetrator roles. Therefore AVPB must be vigilant in its endeavours to provide a safe environment for all.

Currently AVP Britain will not work directly with young people under 18 years. The only contexts in which work is done with children under 18 is in schools and with youth organisations, which will have their own safeguarding policies and procedures, which AVPB will follow. In its prison and community workshops, AVPB will be mindful of Child Protection procedures in relation to working with young adults in institutions or young adults with learning difficulties, who may be designated as needing Child Protection safeguards.

Policy Statement

AVP Britain is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its participants, staff and volunteers as it carries out its work.

AVP Britain particularly recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect vulnerable people from harm, abuse, exploitation or re-traumatisation.

AVP Britain acknowledges its duty to respond to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

Aims

We aim to appropriately safeguard the health and well-being of all our participants, staff and volunteers as well as partner organisation staff and volunteers. This means a) minimising risks of harm b) responding appropriately when issues arise c) continuing to monitor and improve our safeguarding arrangements.

We aim to embed safeguards into all of our governance, management and delivery of services. This policy therefore links with other AVP policies:

- Staff and Volunteer Recruitment Policies
- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Disciplinary and Grievance Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- IT and Data Protection Policy

Terms and Definitions

'Vulnerable Adults' - A formal definition is adults who need community care services because of mental or other disability, age or illness and who are, or may be, unable to take care of themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Based on many years of experience in delivering this work, AVPB works with a broader definition than the strictly legal one. We additionally define vulnerable adults as people whose background circumstances can mean that they have been subject to childhood or domestic violence and abuse (which may be an underlying factor to their offending, if they are offenders) and people whose lives are fragile due to the stress of poverty, armed combat in the forces, living with violence in the family and so on. In our work we meet a broad range of vulnerable people and sometimes, in our experience, violence and aggression can be their (inappropriate) way of protecting themselves.

Since we consider all the participants in our programmes (workshops and distance learning) to be potentially vulnerable, we take particular care to ensure the safeguarding of all, and feel we have an ethical obligation to select our staff and volunteers carefully. We therefore use the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), part of the Home Office, whose primary role is to help employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable individuals. In Scotland the 'Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme' (PVGS) of Disclosure Scotland has the same function.

Safeguarding Responsibilities

Formal Safeguarding responsibilities in the organisation are as follows:

- The Trustees are responsible for setting and reviewing the Safeguarding Policy and have overall responsibility for safeguarding in AVPB.
- Where appropriate, a member of staff is designated as the Safeguarding Officer and has responsibility for managing the procedures on a day to day basis including reporting, recording and acting as the point of contact for all safeguarding issues that may arise in the organisation. This person also has responsibility to keep abreast of any changes or developments, for example in policy, law or DBS processes.
- However, we believe that protection and safeguarding is a shared responsibility within AVPB. All staff and volunteers have a duty to report any concerns that may arise about a vulnerable adult. AVPB staff and volunteers are also expected to report concerns they may have regarding a volunteer/worker's (or partner organisation's staff) conduct towards participants or colleagues.

Trustees, Staff and volunteers are required to respond appropriately to the following:

- allegations of abuse, including those made against workers
- the signs of possible abuse
- the needs of victims of abuse

Training and Guidance

We will provide regular training and on-going guidance to AVPB trustees, staff and volunteers to ensure that they can carry out their responsibilities appropriately.

AVP Britain's Safeguarding Principles and Guidelines are disseminated to all volunteers and staff via:

- Dedicated Training Events for lead facilitators, Regional Co-ordinators and staff
- Inclusion in all 'Training for Facilitators' workshops
- Inclusion in the AVP Britain 'Volunteers Handbook'
- Rolling programme of workshops offered at the Annual Gathering
- Induction activities

Safeguarding procedures are embedded into - Recruitment Procedures; Induction Activities; Facilitator Training programmes; Participant Recruitment; Programme development; Partnership Agreements; Data Protection processes; Health and Safety Guidelines; IT procedures

*Approved by Trustees June 2018
Date for next review: June 2019*

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFEGUARDING IN AVP

Everyone in AVP, including all staff and volunteers, shares responsibility for ensuring that the wellbeing of participants, volunteers and staff is protected and promoted. Specific safeguarding responsibilities are divided as follows.

The Trustees are responsible for setting and periodically reviewing the Safeguarding Policy, and taking overall responsibility for safeguarding in AVPB.

The Trustees will designate a Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding Officer has the following core responsibilities:

- Manage the safeguarding scheme on a day-to-day basis
- Be a point of contact for coordinating safeguarding issues
- Propose improvements to our safeguarding policy and arrangements
- Keep a central, permanent record of safeguarding incidents
- Report safeguarding issues to the Operations Committee and, in serious cases, to the Trustees.
- Ensure that safeguarding incidents are reported when necessary to the police and other agencies where volunteers/staff have identified allegations or disclosures of a risk of serious harm to any individual(s).
- Keep up-to-date with policy developments and best practice in the sector

The Operations Committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation of our safeguarding scheme.

Safeguarding should be a standing item on Operations Committee agendas.

Regional Management Committees, supported by Regional Coordinators, are responsible for ensuring the requirements of our safeguarding arrangements are met in the local work programme. **Safeguarding should be a standing item on Regional Management Committee agendas.**

Facilitator teams, normally led by a Lead Facilitator, are responsible for ensuring the requirements of our safeguarding arrangements are met during workshops. **Safeguarding should be a standing item during teambuilding and end-of-workshop debriefing, and all safeguarding issues should be reported in the facilitators' workshop report and communicated directly to the Safeguarding Officer if an incident has occurred.**

PREPARING AND SHARING RISK ASSESSMENTS

The Regional Coordinator should complete a written risk assessment before any AVPB activity with participants, including each workshop. **The risk assessment should identify risks, agree the actions required to minimise them, and designate the person(s) responsible for carrying them out.** The Regional Coordinator should provide each workshop facilitator team with contact details of their local Safeguarding Adults Board, so they can contact them for advice in an emergency if the AVPB Safeguarding Officer is not available.

The Safeguarding Officer is responsible for providing a risk assessment pro-forma.

The risk assessment must be shared with the facilitator team before the workshop or other AVPB activity begins.

This policy should be shown to all AVP volunteers and staff at induction.

STAFF, VOLUNTEERS and PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

AVPB will ensure that all responsible personnel have guidance on their role in safeguarding.

RECRUITING

All staff and volunteers should provide the names and contact details of two referees. Friends and family members may not be referees. References may be taken up by email, phone or post and a record kept confidentially on the trainee's file. Referees should be asked whether they have any concerns about the candidate volunteer or staff member working with children or vulnerable adults. No new candidate volunteers and staff should be offered the opportunity to work with AVP until satisfactory references have been obtained.

Except where the law dictates otherwise, a history of previous convictions will not necessarily disqualify a volunteer from working with AVPB. (See AVP ex-offenders policy.)

All staff and volunteers are required to undergo DBS/PVG checks. These, and reference forms, are to be kept in secure files by the Safeguarding Officer for as long as required, bearing in mind the requirements set out in the GDPR.

When an issue is flagged in an individual's criminal record, the Safeguarding Officer will consult with the Safeguarding Panel, usually made up of two specifically trained Trustees, following the procedure outlined in the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy.

TRAINING

Ensure that all induction programmes carry a strong focus on safeguarding.

Plan and deliver training for key AVP people – staff, lead facilitators and co-ordinators to ensure minimising risk of harm and responding appropriately to issues when they arise.

AVPB should ensure that all staff and volunteers (including Regional Coordinators and facilitators) receive safeguarding training. Among those eligible for this training are all regional coordinators taking enquiries from the public, volunteers handling participants' personal details, and all workshop facilitators.

The Training for Facilitators workshop should include a component on safeguarding, to be delivered by facilitators who have received appropriate training in safeguarding.

The Training for Lead Facilitators workshop should include an extended component on safeguarding, to be delivered by facilitators who have received appropriate training in safeguarding.

A training workshop in safeguarding should be a standing option for volunteers and staff at AVP's National Gathering.

Periodic training in safeguarding should be part of the offer made to staff and volunteers for their ongoing development in this area.

The key safeguarding responsibilities of volunteers should be set out in the Volunteer Handbook.

PRE-WORKSHOP BRIEFING

It is in our literature that perpetrators and victims may be participants on the same workshop.

Any briefing should make clear that expectations should be realistic and that workshops are not a one-off cure for someone with problems with violence.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ITS LIMITS

Except where specified below, any disclosure – by any of AVP’s participants, volunteers or staff – made to an AVPB volunteer or staff member should be kept confidential and not disclosed more widely. There are two exceptions to this:

1. Where there is a legitimate need to share a disclosure more widely within AVPB, this may be done, **but the presumption should be towards not doing so unless necessary.**
2. Where a disclosure indicates that a person or persons may be at risk of serious harm, **there may be a legal requirement on AVPB to share the disclosure with the police and/or other agencies** (this is explained below)

When Regional Coordinator or facilitators introduce participants to the confidentiality of our service (e.g. at the beginning of the workshop), **the limits of confidentiality, set out above, should be made clear, albeit in such a way that strives to maintain participants’ confidence in the working confidentiality of our service.**

For example, one formulation might be: ‘Everything you say in this room will stay in this room. We would have to break this rule if we believed there was a serious risk of harm to someone, but otherwise everything that we do here is confidential within this group of people. It’s up to you to think about what you choose to say and do here.’

CONTRACTING WITH PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Where AVPB arranges with a partner organisation for that organisation to refer participants to our workshops or host our workshops for their clients:

1. The partner organisation must commit to AVP rules of workshop participation. This to be stated in any pre-workshop information given to participants.
2. AVPB must ensure that it is able to abide by the partner organisation’s guidance on safeguarding before the partnership proceeds, and to follow such guidance during the life of the partnership.
3. Partner organisations must commit to inform participants fully of the nature of AVP’s workshops and the rules of participation. Persistent failure to do so may lead AVPB to terminate the partnership.

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