

Safeguarding Adults Policy Version 1.6



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Introduction:

Opora believes in protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of Opora in working together in promoting the adult's welfare and safeguarding them from abuse and neglect. Employees, trustees and volunteers are made aware of how this policy can be accessed.

Definitions:

Opora uses The Care Act 2014 definition of an adult at risk of abuse for the purposes of our policy

Where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there)

1. has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
2. is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
3. as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Key Principles of Adult Safeguarding:

In the safeguarding of adults, Opora is guided by the six key principles set out in The Care Act 2014 and Making Safeguarding Personal. Opora aims to demonstrate and promote these six principles in our work:

- **Empowerment** – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Recognising the signs of abuse:

Employees, trustees and volunteers are well-placed to identify abuse. The adult may say or do things that let you know something is wrong. It may come in the form of a disclosure, complaint, or an expression of concern. Everyone within the organisation should understand what to do, and where to go to get help, support and advice.

Types of Abuse:

The Care Act 2014 defines the following ten areas of abuse. Some boroughs also include self-neglect as an additional category. These are not exhaustive but are a guide to behaviour that may lead to a safeguarding enquiry. This includes:

- **Physical abuse** - Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **Domestic violence/ Domestic abuse** - This could be any of the indicators of abuse relating to physical, psychological/emotional, sexual or financial but by a person with whom you have a close family or intimate relationship such as a partner, child, parent.

Online Abuse - Including cyberbullying, online harassment, online scams, online grooming, exploitation through digital platforms, identity theft, coercive behaviour, inappropriate online relationships and the sharing of harmful or inappropriate content.

Sexual abuse - Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography. Witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

- **Psychological or emotional abuse** - Including threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** - Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse of misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Modern slavery** - Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and those who coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
- **Discriminatory abuse** - Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment because you are, or are perceived to be different due to race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- **Organisational or institutional abuse** - Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to long-term ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes or practices within an organisation.
- **Neglect or acts of omission** - Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or

educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

- **Self-neglect** - This covers a wide range of behavior, neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. There is a difference between what constitutes a safeguarding incident that requires a statutory response and an incident that is rooted in concern for someone's general wellbeing.

Radicalisation to Terrorism:

The Government through its PREVENT programme has highlighted how some adults may be vulnerable to exploitation and radicalisation and involvement in terrorism. Signs and indicators of radicalisation may include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters.
- Articulating support for violent extremist causes or leaders.
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element.
- Possessing violent extremist literature.
- Using extremist narratives to explain personal disadvantage.
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues.
- Joining extremist organisations.
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour.

Reporting Concerns:

Any employee, trustee or volunteer who becomes aware that an adult is or is at risk of being abused or radicalised must raise the matter immediately with their supervisor /or with the organisation's designated safeguarding person.

Early sharing of information is the key to providing an effective response where there are emerging concerns.

To ensure effective safeguarding arrangements no one should assume that someone else will do it.

Opora will

- Inform the adult of the action we propose to take
- Recommend and signpost appropriate organisations for the adult to contact
- Seek their agreement for any referral should they wish Opora to do so

- Ensure that they are kept informed about what will happen next, so they can be reassured about what to expect.
- Endeavour to ensure that they are safe and supported before proceeding with any other action.
- Inform the adult if OPORA is planning to seek advice from or report concerns to an external agency.

In most situations there will not be an immediate threat and the decision about protecting the person with safeguarding needs will be taken in consultation with themselves and through referral to the relevant Adult Social Care department.

If the adult requires immediate protection from harm, contact the emergency services.

Safe Recruitment & Selection:

Opora is committed to safe employment and safe recruitment practices that reduce the risk of harm to adults with care and support needs from people unsuitable to work with them.

Opora has policies and procedures that cover the recruitment of all Trustees, employees and volunteers. If you would like to get in touch to discuss these, please email help@opora.uk.

Social Media:

All employees and volunteers should be aware of Opora social media policy and procedures and the code of conduct for behaviour towards the people we support. Opora recognises that:

- The online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however it can also present risks and challenges
- We have a duty to ensure that all people involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online
- Working in partnership with organisational partners and beneficiaries is essential in promoting people's welfare and in helping people to be responsible in their approach to online safety
- All people, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

Safeguarding Online

As a substantial amount of Opora's charitable activities occur online, Opora makes sure that:

- All social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least 2 members

- of staff will have access to each account and password
- The account will be monitored by at least two designated members of staff or volunteers in order to provide transparency, who will have been appointed by the organisations committee
- The designated staff managing our online presence will seek advice from our designated safeguarding lead to advise on safeguarding requirements
- Designated staff will remove inappropriate posts by anyone who has posting rights, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected
- We'll make sure people are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about something that's happened online
- Any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims and tone as an organisation
- Video conferencing sessions will be password protected in order to maintain people's privacy and prevent exposure to inappropriate or harmful content by third parties
- Online services delivered by OPORA, including webinars, support groups, messaging platforms, email support and video calls, will be conducted in accordance with this safeguarding policy.

Responding to Online Safeguarding Concerns

Any safeguarding concern identified through webinars, online support groups, email, social media, messaging platforms, video calls or other online services must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff and volunteers must:

- Remain alert to disclosures of abuse, exploitation, trafficking, domestic abuse, self-harm, suicidal ideation, radicalisation, or other safeguarding concerns.
- Avoid promising confidentiality and explain that safeguarding concerns may need to be shared with appropriate individuals or authorities.
- Record safeguarding concerns accurately and in accordance with OPORA's safeguarding procedures.
- Preserve relevant evidence where appropriate and lawful.
- Follow OPORA's safeguarding reporting procedures and escalate concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.
- Contact emergency services where there is an immediate risk of harm.

Is there a Person in a Position of Trust Involved?

In any instance of safeguarding, consideration must be given as to whether an allegation has been made against a person in a position of trust (PiPoT) and who may be a risk to others. This can be anyone from a formal employee or volunteer, to an informal carer.

Training and Awareness:

Opora will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to its Trustees, Employees, Volunteers and any relevant persons linked to the organisation who requires it (e.g. contractors).

For all employees who are working or volunteering with adults at risk this requires them as a minimum to have awareness training that enables them to:

- Understand what safeguarding is and their role in Safeguarding Adults.
- Recognise an adult potential in need of safeguarding and take action.
- Understand how to report a safeguarding Alert.
- Understand dignity and respect when working with individuals.
- Have knowledge of the Safeguarding Adults Policy.

Mental Capacity:

The Mental Capacity Act Mental is about whether an individual has the capacity to make a specific decision at a specific time and if they are unable because they lack capacity as a result a mental disorder of the mind. This includes not being able to

- Understand information given to them about a particular decision
- Retain that information long enough to be able to make the decision
- Weigh up the information available to make the decision
- Communicate their decision. Refer to the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice>. Opora will need to involve an advocate if the person lacks capacity to make decisions about a safeguarding concern.

Support and guidance will be sought from the appropriate council adult social care service should anyone have concerns regarding an adult's capacity.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing:

Opora expects all employees, volunteers and trustees to maintain confidentiality.

Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection. You can find our Privacy Policy in the footer of our website here: opora.uk.

However, information should be shared with the Local Authority if an adult is deemed to be at risk of harm or they pose a risk of harm to another. **You should contact the police if they are in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed.**

Recording and Record Keeping:

A written record must be kept about any concern regarding an adult with safeguarding needs. This must include details of the person involved, the nature of the concern and the actions taken, decision made and why they were made.

All records must be signed and dated. All records must be securely and confidentially stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Whistleblowing:

Opora is committed to ensuring that employees and volunteers who in good faith whistle-blow in the public interest, will be protected from reprisals and victimisation.

Complaints:

If you would like to register a complaint, please refer to our official complaints policy which you can find in the footer of our website here: opora.uk.

Important Contacts:

Designated Trustee for Safeguarding

Name: Damon Shipe (Trustee)

Secondary Safeguarding Contact

Name: Yegor Lanovenko (Chair)

Tertiary Safeguarding Contact

Name: Hanna Khyzha (Head of Operations)

Email address: Help@opora.uk

Police

Emergency – 999

Non-emergency – 101

Appendix 1 – Practical Guide

Safeguarding OPORA Practical Guide

1. Адміністратори чатів OPORA за замовчуванням вважають всіх учасників чатів людьми, які відносяться до вразливої групи. У всіх випадках потрібно дотримуватися дружжелюбного тону і пам'ятати, що ми відповідаємо не лише тій людині, хто ставить запитання - а для усіх присутніх в чаті, кому потрібна допомога, тому що дехто соромиться задавати питання (не вміє, наприклад, коректно сформулювати) і боїться бути «осоромленим» адміном через свою так би мовити неграмотність. Основна мета - створити Safe place для кожної людини у нашій ком'юніті.
2. Для того, щоб визначити категорію людей, яким додатково потрібна увага та допомога необхідно виконати наступні дії:

Поставити додаткові запитання та визначити, чи відноситься людина (яка задає питання) до вразливої категорії або її питання піддається потенційному ризику з боку сторонніх осіб (ймовірних шахраїв) в чаті , а саме:

- Діти (до 18 років);
- Пенсіонери;
- Люди з інвалідністю;
- «Крик душі» - емоційні, тривожні повідомлення
- Люди з психічними проблемами
- Жертви насилля
- Жертви війни (ПТСР, свідок війни тощо)

2.1. Якщо відповідь “ТАК” (тобто запитання у чаті поставила людина з категорій , зазначених вище), ваші дії:

- 1) видалити таке повідомлення;
- 2) відмітити людину через позначку @, щоб звернути її увагу на те, що відповідь стосується саме її;
- 3) попросити написати нам на Help@opora.uk та детально описати ситуацію: *“Шановиний/шановна @... ми отримали ваше повідомлення. Це питання потребує розширеної відповіді. Надішліть, будь ласка, своє*

питання на нашу електронну пошту Help@opora.uk описавши

детальніше ситуацію, а ми якнайшвидше (в порядку черговості) надамо Вам відповідь. Дякуємо за звернення.”

(!) Це робиться з метою, мінімізувати можливість контакту з шахраями, отримати більше інформації щодо ситуації, яка склалася та надати більш розгорнуту відповідь, яка допоможе вразливій категорії вирішити своє питання/проблему.

3. Sensitive або чутливі теми

Коли ми приймаємо рішення про видалення повідомлення з чату, необхідно також звернути увагу на тему запитання. Наприклад, якщо пенсіонер питає як відкрити Pension credit - то це загальне питання, яке ми залишаємо. Але якщо обставини людини склалися так, що їй ніде жити або вона є жертвою аб'юзу чи насилля, то застосовуємо правило про Vulnerable group (див. П.2).

Наприклад, повідомлення про пошук спонсора, також будуть відноситися до цієї групи “Sensitive або чутливі теми”, але питання видаляти не потрібно. Обов'язково напишіть відповідь людині, надавши їй інформацію щодо пошуку спонсорів та потенційний ризик натрапити шахраїв шаблонною відповіддю:

“Дякуємо за звернення. З актуальною інформацією стосовно пошуку спонсорів Ви можете ознайомитися у нашому блозі: <https://bit.ly/3U5FWgR>. Застерігаємо, щоб не стати жертвою шахрайства, не реагуйте на пропозиції невідомих вам людей в Telegram або Facebook, які нібито хочуть Вам “допомогти” зі спонсором за гроші.

Практика показує, що ставши жертвою таких “помічників за гроші” людина лишається обманутою - без спонсора та без візи. Ось приклади реальних історій: ПРИКЛАД 1: <https://t.me/oporaukchat/91462> ПРИКЛАД 2 <https://t.me/oporaukchat/99260> Пам'ятайте, що команда OPORA ніколи не пише учасникам чату у приватні повідомлення. “

(!) Видаляємо, лише тоді коли це стосується Vulnerable group (див. П.2)., наприклад, дитина задає запитання про пошук спонсорів.

4. Complexity (коли важко зрозуміти суть питання із написаного)

Якщо ви бачите, що питання не зрозуміле/не чітке (вам не вистачає

додаткової інформації) або через відсутність важливих деталей може трактуватись по-різному (можливо дати декілька різних відповідей залежно від ситуації) необхідно обов'язково:

1. поставити уточнюючі запитання людині (follow-up questions), щоб комплексно зрозуміти запитання та ситуацію, у якій знаходиться людина;
2. якщо вам достатньо необхідної інформації — надайте відповідь згідно із запитом людини.
3. якщо потрібно більше персональної інформації, або ви виявили, що людина відноситься до Vulnerable group — адміністратор чату самостійно приймає рішення, чи є необхідність переводити розмову на Help@opora.uk.

Safeguarding OPORA Practical Guide

OPORA chat administrators default to considering all chat participants as individuals belonging to vulnerable groups. In all cases, it's essential to maintain a friendly tone and remember that we are responsible not only to the person asking the question but to all present in the chat who may need assistance. Some individuals may feel hesitant to ask questions (for example, due to inability to articulate them correctly) and fear being "shamed" by admins due to perceived incompetence. The primary goal is to create a safe space for every individual in our community.

To determine the category of people who may require additional attention and assistance, the following steps should be taken:

Ask additional questions to determine if the person (asking the question) belongs to a vulnerable category or if their question is potentially at risk from third parties (potential scammers) in the chat, namely:

- Children (under 18 years old)
- Seniors
- People with disabilities
- "Cry for help" - emotional, distressing messages
- People with mental health issues
- Victims of violence
- Victims of war (PTSD, war witnesses, etc.)

2.1. If the answer is "YES" (meaning the question in the chat was posed by a person from the categories mentioned above), your actions should be:

- 1) Delete such a message.
- 2) Tag the person using the @ symbol to draw their attention to the fact that the response concerns them specifically.
- 3) Ask them to write to us at Help@opora.uk and describe the situation in detail: "Dear @... we received your message. This question requires a more detailed response. Please send your question to our email Help@opora.uk, describing the situation in more detail, and we will provide you with a response as soon as possible (in order of priority). Thank you for reaching out."

(!) This is done to minimise the possibility of contact with scammers, obtain more information about the situation, and provide a more comprehensive response to help the vulnerable category address their question/problem.

3. Sensitive or Vulnerable Topics

When deciding to remove a message from the chat, it's also essential to consider the topic of the question. For example, if a senior asks how to open Pension credit, it's a general question that we leave untouched. However, if someone's circumstances have led them to be homeless or they are a victim of abuse or violence, we apply the rule regarding Vulnerable groups (see Section 2).

For instance, messages about finding a sponsor also fall under this category of "Sensitive or Vulnerable Topics," but the question should not be deleted. It's essential to respond to the individual, providing them with information on finding sponsors and warning them about the potential risk of encountering scammers with a standardized response:

"Thank you for reaching out. For up-to-date information on finding sponsors, you can refer to our blog: [link]. We advise against responding to offers from strangers on Telegram or Facebook who claim to 'help' you find a sponsor for money. Experience shows that becoming a victim of such 'money helpers' leaves individuals deceived – without a sponsor and without a visa. Here are examples of real stories: [EXAMPLE 1: link] [EXAMPLE 2: link] Remember that the OPORA team never contacts chat participants via private messages."

(!) We delete only when it concerns a Vulnerable group (see Section 2), for example,

if a child asks a question about finding sponsors.

4. Complexity (when the essence of the question is difficult to understand from what is written)

If you see that the question is unclear or vague (you lack additional information) or due to the absence of important details, it can be interpreted differently (perhaps giving several different answers depending on the situation), it's necessary to:

1. Ask clarifying questions to the individual (follow-up questions) to comprehensively understand the question and the individual's situation.
2. If you have enough necessary information, provide an answer according to the individual's request.
3. If more personal information is needed or if you find that the individual belongs to a Vulnerable group, the chat administrator autonomously decides whether there is a need to transfer the conversation to Help@opora.uk.