

# **Telford Buddhist Priory**

## **Vulnerable adult protection policy and guidelines**

Telford Buddhist Priory  
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Registered charity no: 1088942

### **Introduction**

In preparing our Vulnerable Adult Protection 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 vulnerable groups including children issues in charities
- The Department for Health's policy, No secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse
- 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 Telford Buddhist Priory, either at the priory itself or any offsite activity arranged by us, of the measures we have in place, to protect both vulnerable adults and those who engage with them, as part of our congregation.

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

### **Our context and values**

Telford Buddhist Priory is a charitable trust, which exists to both develop people's knowledge of the Buddhist religion and provide a place of refuge for people wishing to train in Buddhism. Currently, we do not run any activity or perform any function that is primarily for any of the vulnerable groups, listed below.

It is not usual (though we do not exclude this possibility) for us to perform 'regulated activity' as described in The Department for Health's statement on 'Regulated activity (adults) – the definition of 'regulated activity' (adults) as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and updated 10<sup>th</sup> September 2012. However, from time to time, adults who may be considered to be vulnerable visit us and very occasionally stay overnight, for the purpose of spiritual retreat. Additionally, as part of our

Practice, congregation members, including those who may be termed vulnerable, may seek spiritual advice from our resident priest or one of our lay ministers. It is possible in these circumstances that statements made or questions asked, by the vulnerable adult take the form of a disclosure of abuse.

Ensuring the sexual, physical and psychological safety of vulnerable adults involved in the activities and services we provide, is an expression of the wisdom and compassion taught by the Buddha and the trustees recognise their responsibility to ensure the welfare of adults who may be vulnerable, and are committed to their protection (See also our Child protection policy). This policy and the guidance within it, aims to mitigate, as far as is possible, any potential harm and suffering to vulnerable members of our congregation, who seek refuge here and take part in any of our activities.

**Karen Richards is our Safeguarding officer.**

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Telephone: **08437130068**

### **Who is a 'vulnerable adult'?**

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is, or may be, unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

A vulnerable adult may be a person who:

- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Is physically frail or has a chronic illness
- Has a mental illness or dementia
- Has a learning disability
- Is old and frail
- Misuses drugs and/or alcohol
- Has social or emotional problems
- Exhibits challenging behaviour

Whether or not a person is vulnerable in these cases will vary according to circumstances. Additionally, a person who does not fit any of the above categories may from time to time find themselves vulnerable or at risk in certain situations. Each case must be judged on its own merits.

### **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 behavior, 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:

- Telford Buddhist Priory volunteers
- Other participants in Telford Buddhist Priory activities
- Those involved in partner organisations
- 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 employee or volunteer's primary responsibility is to protect the vulnerable adult if they are at risk.
- Each employee or volunteer 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 Chair and Safeguarding officer of the Telford 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

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, and a risk assessment indicates that referral would be in their best interests
- Others may be at risk
- A crime has been committed

## **Telford Buddhist Priory**

**Chair's name**

Rev D.H.S. Kennaway

**Safeguarding officer's name**

Karen Richards

**Date**

Reviewed 2nd January 2019

*This document is to be read in conjunction with Telford Buddhist Priory's Child protection policy and Child protection code of conduct.*

*Published 2017 by the trustees of Telford Buddhist Priory*