

## **Petersfield and District Beekeeping Association**

### **Vulnerable Adults and Child Policy**

The Petersfield and District Beekeeping Association ("PDBKA") is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, engaged in all or any activities or events held and supervised by PDKA.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of volunteers and trustees working on behalf of PDBKA in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults, children and young people from abuse.

All adults, children and young people have the right to be safe from harm and should be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To explain the responsibilities PDBKA and its, volunteers and trustees have in respect of vulnerable adults, children and young people protection.
- To provide volunteers and trustees with an overview of vulnerable adult, children and young people protection
- To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where vulnerable adults, children and young people protection issues arise.

### **Context**

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults, children and young people. To this end it is the responsibility of all volunteers and trustees to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect and to pass on any concerns they may have to a responsible person or to notify the appropriate authorities.

### **Adults**

For the purpose of this document 'adult' means a person aged 18 years or over.

Some adults are less able to protect themselves than others, and some have difficulty making their wishes and feelings known. This may make them vulnerable to abuse and they may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

For purposes of ensuring consistent and widely understood terminology, these policies and procedures will use the phrase 'Vulnerable Adults' to identify those eligible for interventions within the procedures.

### **Children and Young People**

For the purpose of this document a 'child' is defined as a child or young person under the age of 18 (The Children's Act 1989)

All children and young people have the right to protection from all forms of abuse including exploitation, neglect, physical and mental abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

### **The role of volunteers and trustees**

All volunteers and trustees working on behalf of PDBKA have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults, children and young people.

Volunteers and trustees may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults, children and young people who are at risk. This policy will enable volunteers and trustees to make informed and confident responses to specific adult, children and young people protection issues.

### **What is Adult abuse**

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

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual

transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

Adult abuse shall include but may not necessarily be restricted to following definitions:-

- **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 medical needs where needed or the withholding of any medication, and to ensure whilst under the supervision and care of PDBKA that the person has adequate protective clothing when working with bees or at any other at risk event.
- **Discriminatory abuse-** including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

### What is Child Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006)

The safeguarding of children and young adults shall include but not be restricted to the following definitions of abuse:

- **Physical Abuse-** this may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.
- **Emotional Abuse-** this is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. It may involve bullying, causing children to feel frightened or in danger.
- **Sexual Abuse-** this type of abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Examples of physical contact include penetrative acts (rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts kissing, fondling, masturbation. It may include non-contact activities including the encouragement of children to act or behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect-** this is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and or psychological needs and ensure that the child wears appropriate protective clothing when working with bees, likely to result in the serious impairment to the child's health and development. It can include failing to provide, adequate supervision of any activities of PDBKA or failing to provide medical help when needed.

### Procedure in the event of a disclosure

It is important that vulnerable adults and children and young persons are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a vulnerable adult and children and young persons has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult and children and young persons.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information. This should include the reason or observation of the initial cause for concern.

If the complainant is a child, questions should be kept to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged and leading questions should be avoided. The use of leading questions can cause problems for the subsequent investigation and any court proceedings.

This should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

### **Responding to an allegation**

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Vulnerable Adult and Child Protection Officer on that working day where possible.

The nominated Protection Officer shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local social services duty social worker. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 24 hours.

### **Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse**

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

#### **DO**

- Stay calm
- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen carefully to what is said by the victim
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

#### **DONT**

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

### **In the case of a Child**

- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others
  - do not promise to keep secrets.
- Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace.

- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing what was said, using the child's own words as soon as possible – note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional protection agencies, following a referral from the designated Vulnerable Adult and Child Protection Officer.

## **Confidentiality**

Vulnerable Adult and Child protection raises issues of confidentiality which should be clearly understood by all.

Volunteers and trustees have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults and children with professionals, particularly investigative agencies and social services.

Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

All personal information regarding a vulnerable adult will be kept confidential. In the case of a child all personal information regarding a child will be kept confidential except when; it is suspected that a child under 18 years is the victim of abuse. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only record details required in an initial contact form.

If an adult or child confides to a volunteer or trustee and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the volunteer or trustee tells the adult or child sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.

Within that context, the adult or child should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent should be obtained from the adult or child before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult or child is the priority.

Where a disclosure has been made, the Protection Officer should let the adult or child know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.

The Protection Officer should assure the adult or child that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The adults' or child's involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

Child Protection issues are highly sensitive and volunteers or trustees who receive information about children or their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts. All child protection records should be kept secure.

## **The role of key individual agencies**

### **Social Services**

The Department of Health's recent 'No secrets' guidance document requires that authorities develop a local framework within which all responsible agencies work together to ensure a coherent policy for the protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse.

All local authorities have a Safeguarding Board, which oversees multi-agency work aimed at protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults. It is normal practice for the board to comprise of people from partner organisations who have the ability to influence decision making and resource allocation within their organisation.

The Children's Act 1989 gives Local Authority Social Services the primary responsibility for the care and protection of abused children and children at risk of abuse. It is their statutory duty to ensure that there is an investigation in cases of suspected abuse or significant harm; to take any appropriate action to protect children and to promote the welfare of children.

Social Services also convene Child Protection conferences and manage the Child Protection Register.

### **The Police**

The Police play a vital role in Safeguarding Adults with cases involving alleged criminal acts. It becomes the responsibility of the police to investigate allegations of crime by preserving and gathering evidence. Where a crime is identified, the police will be the lead agency and they will direct investigations in line with legal and other procedural protocols.

The overriding concern of the Police in child protection is the welfare of the child. Their general duties are to investigate crimes as well as a duty to prevent offences being committed and to protect those at risk of harm. The Children's Act 1989 permits the Police to take a child into police protection; where there is reasonable cause to believe that he/she would otherwise be at risk of significant harm.

Police and Social Services will work jointly where it is likely that criminal proceedings will be brought against the perpetrator of the abuse.

### **NSPCC**

The NSPCC pursues its objective of identifying and preventing child abuse through consultation and cooperation with Social Services. They are identified as an 'authorised person' under the Children Act 1989. NSPCC runs national Child Protection Helplines.

Child Protection Officers of the NSPCC are required to initiate procedures that ensure their own appropriate response to any complaint or request for help on all matters concerning children.

### **Role of designated protection officer**

The role of the designated officer is to deal with all instances involving adult or child protection matters that arise within PDBKA. They will respond to all protection concerns and enquiries. A protection officer shall be appointed by the trustees each year

### **Training**

Training will be provided, as appropriate, to ensure that volunteers and trustees are aware of these procedures. Any appropriate specialist training will be provided for the protection officer as may be required.

### **Complaints procedure**

PDBKA has a complaints procedure available to all volunteers and trustees.

### **Use of photographic/video equipment**

Written consent must be obtained from a parent or guardian to take and use images of children and should be obtained prior to the taking of photographs and or video footage. Parents or guardians should be made aware of when, where and how the images will or may be used to enable them to give their informed consent. Any use of photographic/video images shall not be used or permitted for use in any manner whatsoever except where previously advised to the parent or guardian.