

# **CA England & Wales**

## **Policy for the protection of vulnerable adults at risk**

Policy Published: March 2025

Policy Owner: Chair, Charity Trustees Committee. CA England & Wales

# Purpose

CAUK has a legal and moral responsibility to provide a duty of care to all vulnerable members through implementing procedures to safeguard their well-being and protect them from harm. The policy demonstrates our belief that “safeguarding is the responsibility of every member”. This embodies the unity within our fellowship and creates a safe place for all our members.

As a fellowship we believe that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions but none of us are above the law and our members must be protected from exploitation and abuse so if the issue is within the law then our traditions apply and if the issue is outside the law then we need to contact outside agencies.

The policy should be read in conjunction with CAUK policy on Bullying and Harassment and the CAUK documents, Our Common Welfare Statement, the Code of Conduct and the Area Service Manual. These documents are available for download from the CAUK website.

The safeguarding vulnerable adults policy is for safeguarding vulnerable adults only and not applicable to safeguarding children. If you have any concerns regarding children, please contact your local authority Multi agency safeguarding hub, you can do this anonymously. If a child is in immediate danger, contact the police.

It should be noted that CA England & Wales is the charitable and trading name of the fellowship known as CAUK. The policy is to be used by all members of the CAUK fellowship at Group, District and Area level meetings (including online platforms). For ease of reference the name “CAUK” is used throughout this document.

To support the implementation of the policy an email address has been set up to facilitate correspondence for any queries or issues raised: [safeguarding@cauk.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@cauk.org.uk)

# 1. The broad definition of a vulnerable adult at risk is:

The definition of a vulnerable adult at risk has been taken from the Charity Commission guidance entitled “Safeguarding and Protecting People for Charities and Trustees”.

[Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-protecting-people-for-charities-and-trustees)

Safeguarding duties for vulnerable adults at risk apply to any charity working with anyone aged 18 or over who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

A vulnerable adult at risk of abuse **may**:

- have an illness affecting their mental or physical health.
- have a learning disability.
- suffer from drug or alcohol problems.
- be frail.

## 2. All vulnerable adults at risk have a right to protection from harm and CAUK will ensure that:

- a. All vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- b. All suspicion and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- c. All members have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns to CAUK's Safeguarding Advisor, who sits on CAUK Charity Trustees Committee.
- d. CAUK has a responsibility to share information on a 'need to know' basis so that effective decisions can be made, and appropriate preventative action taken.

## 3. Definitions and indicators of abuse:

- a. **Physical Abuse** – includes hitting, slapping, pushing, undue restraint or inappropriate sanctions.  
**Possible indicators include:** multiple bruising, which is not consistent with the explanation given; cowering and flinching.
- b. **Sexual Abuse** – includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not, or could not, consent and/or was pressured into consenting. **Possible indicators include:** unexplained and uncharacteristic changes in behaviour; excessive washing; deliberate self-harm.
- c. **Psychological Abuse** – includes threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.  
**Possible indicators include:** anxiety, confusion or general resignation; loss of confidence; excessive or inappropriate craving for attention.
- d. **Financial Abuse** – includes theft, fraud, pressure around wills, property or inheritance, misuse or misappropriation of benefits.  
**Possible indicators include:** unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills; sudden withdrawal of money from accounts; personal possessions going missing.
- e. **Neglect and/or Acts of Omission** – includes failure to access medical

care or services, failure to take prescribed medication, poor nutrition or lack of heating.

**Possible indicators include:** poor hygiene and cleanliness; repeated infections; reluctant contact with health and social care agencies.

- Whilst not classified as an individual category of abuse, racial and homophobic motivated abuse is a serious crime, it can take any of the above forms and needs to be noted.
- Domestic Abuse, including coercive control, is a serious crime and victims of domestic abuse may also be vulnerable adults within the meaning of the Adult Protection procedures.

#### 4. Prevention of Abuse:

- a. Wherever possible, abuse must be prevented. Creating 'safe care' or support for vulnerable adults at risk involves a holistic approach, which is centred upon the needs of the specific individual.
- b. Members are encouraged to be alert and to feel confident about reporting abuse. Anyone making confidential disclosures or 'whistle-blowing' will always be supported and protected.
- c. Members are asked to become knowledgeable about signs and causes of abuse. (As described above in Section 3).
- d. A good balance is maintained between confidentiality and positive information sharing where there is concern of abuse and the involvement of other agencies.

#### 5. Code of Conduct:

Members of CAUK must never:

- a. Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse anybody.
- b. Develop non-consensual physical or sexual relationships with anybody.
- c. Develop relationships with anybody, which could in any way be deemed inappropriate or exploitative.
- d. Act in ways that may be abusive or place anyone at risk of abuse.
- e. Use language, make suggestions, or offer advice, which is

inappropriate, offensive, or abusive.

- f. Behave in an inappropriate or sexually provocative manner.
- g. Condone or participate in the behaviour of vulnerable adults at risk, which is in any way illegal, abusive or unsafe.
- h. Intentionally act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, or degrade anybody.
- i. Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular people to the exclusion of others.

## 6. Members' Responsibilities:

- a. Be aware of situations, which may present risks.
- b. Plan and organise CA Meetings so as to minimise risks.
- c. Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues of concern to be discussed.
- d. Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between members so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged.
- e. Empower vulnerable adults at risk – discuss their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what to do if there is a problem.
- f. Understand and utilise the safeguarding policies of other organisations when undertaking Hospitals & Institutions and Public Information service visits.

## 7. How CA England & Wales will support members

CAUK will meet its commitment to protect vulnerable adults from abuse through the following means:

- 1) CULTURE: CAUK's culture is based on three main pillars
  - a. Being Values Led<sup>2</sup>: As part of their personal addiction recovery process, all CAUK Members strive to adopt the following principles in all their affairs. The following list is by no means all-encompassing, but these are twelve essential principles of the C.A. program of recovery:

- i. **HONESTY** Honesty is the ability to differentiate the true from the false. Becoming honest takes a willingness to change our perception. Getting honest is essential to sobriety and is a key element of making a beginning in our new way of life. In C.A., we are encouraged to be honest, open-minded and willing.
- ii. **HOPE** We find hope in the other recovering addicts who have come before us. Their stories tell us what it was like, what happened and what it is like today. Hope can be found in laughter, a hug, or the sparkle in someone's eye. When we realise C.A. offers a way out, hope opens the door to truly connecting with our Higher Power.
- iii. **FAITH** Faith is a belief or trust in something. In C.A., it is suggested that we find a Higher Power of our own understanding. Faith is both a practice and a journey as we discover and develop our relationship with our Higher Power. For some, faith is hope with a track record, and thus many C.A. members choose to place their faith in the group until they are able to develop a relationship with their own Higher Power. Gradually, as a result of attending meetings and working the 12 Steps, we acquire an abundance of faith.
- iv. **COURAGE** Courage is the willingness to walk through our fears. It takes courage to walk through the doors of a C.A. meeting and ask for help. It takes courage to ask someone to sponsor us. With direction from that sponsor, we look at ourselves and our history to examine the causes, effects, and consequences of our actions. We develop the courage to change and to take the actions necessary to effect that change.
- v. **INTEGRITY** Integrity results from using the principles of C.A. to guide our motives, intentions and actions. We strive to have our actions mirror our intentions. Working the Steps of Cocaine Anonymous helps us to build character. We demonstrate integrity when we are authentic, truthful and real.
- vi. **WILLINGNESS** Willingness is the key that opens the door to sobriety. We need willingness to let go of our old ideas. We surrender and become open to our Higher Power's will for us. We become willing to go to any lengths to stay sober and to grow in our recovery.
- vii. **HUMILITY** Humility comes from understanding where our disease has taken us. We learn that we are not special or unique. We are finally able to see the truth about our addiction and our inability to stop using on our own. We make an effort to set aside all the things we think we know in order to become open to the sunlight of the spirit. Becoming humble is an opportunity for complete surrender to our Higher Power. We learn further humility by being of service to

others.

- viii. **LOVE**In the beginning, others love us until we can love ourselves. As we work the Steps and our spirits heal, we become able to receive love. We begin showing love to others and to ourselves. The spirit of love reveals our true self, which is no longer hidden by the veil of addiction.
  - ix. **FORGIVENESS**As we work the Steps, we develop the willingness to forgive ourselves and others. Through taking our own inventory, we discover our own part in situations and become more understanding toward others. Praying for those we resent and for the willingness to forgive sets us free. Forgiveness brings peace of mind and serenity.
  - x. **DISCIPLINE**Discipline is a new concept to many of us when we first get sober. With direction from our sponsor, we learn good recovery habits. We go to meetings regularly, read literature, work the Steps and get involved in service work. We develop a habit of checking our motives and looking at our actions on a regular basis. This is the beginning of what will become a way of life. These behaviors enhance our experience in sobriety.
  - xi. **AWARENESS**Through regular inventory, we remain aware of our own motives, intentions and behaviors. Through prayer and meditation, we strive to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him. As we continuously seek spiritual growth, our awareness also grows.
  - xii. **SERVICE** Service provides an opportunity to get out of ourselves and think of others. Being of service is a good way to share our experience, strength, and hope while enhancing our lives and the lives of others. It also helps us become useful members of society. Working with others for a greater good builds friendships, unity, and helps keep us sober. Service is how we give back what was so freely given to us and express our gratitude to Cocaine Anonymous. Honesty, Hope, Faith, Courage, Integrity, Willingness, Humility. Love. Forgiveness. Discipline, Awareness, and Service to Others
- b. Modelling ethical behaviour: Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern. Trusted servants are elected by members of CAUK's Groups, or their representatives, and they are chosen based on their ability to role model the spiritual principles outlined above as far as reasonably practicable.
  - c. A commitment by the CAUK Charity Trustees Committee to use the CAUK service structure to inform all members of the policy and procedures as far as reasonably practicable; The contents of the Area Service Manual is to be used to inform new GSRs and Committee members as they rotate into service positions.
  - d. A commitment by the Area Service Committee; the Charity Trustees Committee; every Group Committee and every Service Committee

that associates with CAUK to the safe selection and vetting of Trustees and members elected for service positions, in accordance with CA's World Service Manual and the 12 Principles of CA.

- e. Continuous Improvement: Each Group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the addict who still suffers. Members pass their experience of recovery and of working the twelve steps of Cocaine Anonymous onto other members and are supported in doing so by ever more experienced members. Local Groups are represented at and supported by Districts and CAUK's Area Service Committee, which is in turn supported by C.A.'s World Service Conference & World Service Trustees (the guardians of Cocaine Anonymous' worldwide practice, traditions, and principles). At every stage knowledge and experience is refined, shared, and passed on as far as reasonably practicable to do so.

- 2) EDUCATION: We will ensure that all members are aware, as far as it is reasonably practicable to do so, of the issues of the protection of vulnerable adults at risk, the problem of abuse of vulnerable adults and the risks. Information on safeguarding and the process for reporting concerns will be included in the CAUK Area Service Manual and the Guidance Notes that some Districts provide to New GSRs.

CAUK's Charity Trustees are committed to comply with Charity Governance Code for charities. The Trustee acting as the Safeguarding Lead will undergo training in Safeguarding as a condition of serving in this role. It is expected that a minimum of one other Trustee will also undergo Safeguarding Training.

CAUK Charity Trustees will attend CAUK District Meetings and GSR Assemblies as necessary to hold Safeguarding and Bullying and Harassment workshops; and provide refresher sessions to CAUK Members via the AGM.

- 3) PREVENTION: We will ensure, through awareness and role modelling good practice, that all members minimise the risk to vulnerable adults.
- 4) REPORTING: We will ensure that all members are clear about what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of vulnerable adults including reporting to outside agencies. Please refer to the "Guidelines for members who feel an adult is at risk" which are set out below.
- 5) RESPONDING: We will ensure that action is taken to support and protect vulnerable adults where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

## 8. Confidentiality:

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only.

Information will be stored in a secure place with limited access by designated people, in line with data protection best practice.

## Guidelines for members who feel an adult is at risk:

1. If you feel that a fellow CA member is at risk, discuss this immediately with the Group Service Representative (GSR) or another Group Committee member. Do not worry about erring on the side of caution. It is better to be safe than sorry.
2. Should it be decided that a discussion is required, this conversation should take place in private and with another trusted member present. It may be that you are able to undertake the conversation yourself. However, if it is felt that you may be at risk, please refer to CAUK's Safeguarding Lead (part of the Charity Trustees Committee) for support.
3. Bear in mind you are about to have a conversation of a highly sensitive nature. Be clear about what you are going to say, and any possible course of action you may undertake **before** speaking to the person in question.
4. Explain to the person that you have concerns about their welfare. It is extremely important that you make sure they understand the confidentiality rules before you begin the conversation.
5. Discuss your concerns about their welfare. Do not judge, and do not assume that you know what is best. Respect their opinions and choices. Remember, they have the basic human right to live their life as they choose.
6. It is good practice to discuss possible options with the person with regard to other services they can access that may be able to help.
7. If possible, try to discover if the member is accessing any drug or mental health service, and get the appropriate details. Ask the person's permission to let their key worker know that you are concerned for their welfare. Also ask their permission to report the gist of the conversation to the Group Committee.
8. If permission has been given, report the gist of the conversation to the Group Committee who can decide whether the matter is closed, or to seek advice from CAUK's Safeguarding Lead.
9. If you feel the circumstances warrant the breaching of the person's confidentiality, you must inform them of this before taking action. This is likely to be in severe cases that may warrant a phone call to the police.
10. **If there is a complaint:** A meeting will be arranged between the person

and a Charity Trustee of CAUK, to try to resolve any remaining issues. The meeting maybe either Face to Face or held online as appropriate.

11. In any circumstances where it has been necessary to make a report to an outside agency, the GSR/service committee member should include this in a written report to CAUK's Safeguarding Lead. None of us are above the law, if the issue is within the law then our traditions apply and if the issue is outside the law then contact outside agencies.

## Whistle Blowing procedure.

Any member witnessing an incident or with suspicions that abuse is happening to a vulnerable adult at risk, should report the incident immediately to CAUK Safeguarding Lead. All reports will be treated in confidence and anonymously.

## Policy Review and Update

The policy has been approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees (CAUK's Charity Trustees Committee); which has committed to review the policy annually or as and when legislation changes.

Approved by the CAUK's Charity Trustees Committee on September 2024