

# Blyth Kayak Club

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## Vulnerable Adults Policy



*This Policy defines the arrangements and procedures in place within the Blyth Kayak Club that ensures the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse. This Policy is designed to conform to the requirements of the Guidance Document "No Secrets" (Department of Health, 2000).*

### **POLICY PRINCIPLES:**

It is the Policy at Blyth Kayak Club to develop and implement procedures and strategies which are designed to protect vulnerable adults from abuse. These strategies will:

- Identify who is at risk;
- Define what is meant by abuse, and identify the types of abuse that can occur;
- Promote staff awareness of the common indicators associated with each type of abuse;
- Specify the procedures to be followed in the event of alleged or suspected abuse

### **ABUSE OF VULNERABLE ADULTS – INDICATORS & MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:**

#### **Definitions of Abuse:**

- Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. For vulnerable adults this will focus upon others who have influence over them
- These violations may be intentional or unintentional
- These violations may be a single act, or a repetition of acts over a period of time

#### **Definitions of a Vulnerable Adult:**

- Someone 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 protect himself / herself from significant harm or exploitation.
- This will apply to persons aged 18 and over

#### **Categories of Abuse:**

**For the purpose of this Policy, abuse is classified into the following 8 categories:**

- Physical – Can include hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking;
- Institutional / Social – Can include inappropriate restraints, miss-use of medication;
- Sexual – Can include rape, sexual assault, sexual acts to which the person has not consented;
- Psychological / Emotional – Can include humiliation, threats, harassment, coercion, blaming;
- Sectarian – Can include verbal abuse, inappropriate songs and betteries etc;
- Neglect (other than self-neglect) – Can include withholding necessities of life, care needs;
- Discrimination – Can include racism, sexism, slurs, discrimination based upon disabilities etc.

#### **Symptoms / Indicators of Abuse:**

Members will receive appropriate training in the detection of abuse through symptoms, indicators and behaviours. These indicators are summarised as follows:

#### **Physical Abuse:**

- Bruises
- Injuries inconsistent with explanations offered

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- Clusters of injuries
- Burns and scalds – Particularly cigarette burns
- Weight loss
- Dehydration
- Nervous / fearful watchfulness; fear of physical contact

### **Institutional / Social Abuse:**

- Over-medication (used for social control)
- Under-medication
- Inappropriate restraint

### **Sexual Abuse:**

- Scratching / soreness / pain / unexplained rashes in the genital areas
- Strained / bloodstained underclothes
- Bruises on inner thighs and buttocks
- Discomfort when sitting or walking
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy when unable to consent

### **Psychological / Emotional Abuse:**

- Unwarranted fear of people and places
- Bed-wetting when incontinence has not been initially diagnosed
- Distrust in people
- Depression
- Emotional withdrawal
- High level of anxiety

### **Sectarian Abuse:**

- Inappropriate flags, emblems or symbols
- Distrust / fearfulness of Ministers of Religion
- Slurs and offensive remarks regarding religious beliefs
- Emotional withdrawal

### **Financial Abuse:**

- Sudden loss of cash or earnings
- Inability to afford basic service when the person is known to have financial means
- Theft of personal property
- Missing personal property (jewellery, cash etc)
- Power of Attorney obtained illegally
- Third party cashing benefits which do not appear to benefit client
- Fraud involving wills, property and other assets

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### Neglect

- Unauthorised withdrawal of basic services
- Persistent weight loss / emaciation / malnutrition
- Untreated bedsores, ulcers and other skin conditions
- Poor personal care
- Inadequate / inappropriate bedding, clothing
- Third party cashing benefits which do not appear to benefit client

### Discrimination

- Evidence of racism
- Evidence of sexism
- Evidence of ageism
- Slurs and offensive remarks regarding ethnic origin, religion, culture, sex and age
- Discriminatory practices based upon the person's disabilities

### Action to be taken in the event of alleged / suspected abuse:

The welfare officer is designated as the key contact person within the Blyth Kayak Club with direct responsibility for investigating any alleged or suspected incidences of abuse. Any staff member with concerns regarding possible abuse of a vulnerable adult will report the matter directly to the welfare officer in accordance with the Whistle Blowing policy.

Reporting such matters will take into account the balance which needs to be maintained for the confidentiality of the client's affairs and the duty of care to report suspected abuse.

The welfare officer will assess the allegations / suspicions and decide upon the appropriate action to be taken:

If the incident is considered to be very minor, then the welfare officer can deal with the situation directly.

If the incident is of a more serious nature the welfare officer will contact the Local Authority and if necessary the police, according to the individual circumstances.

In all cases, the welfare officer is responsible for maintaining complete records of the allegations made, including dates, times and persons involved, and action taken. This action may be of two types:

- **Corrective Action** - Action to be taken against perpetrators involved in confirmed incidents of abuse, and the discreet and sensitive handling of the abused person;
- **Preventive Action** – Strategies to be implemented with the objective of halting further abuse