Safeguarding Adults Policy (England)

VoiceAbility is committed to providing the highest possible standards to all those who use our services because we are:

- **Passionate** - dedicated to strengthening voices, supporting rights and changing lives.
- **Empowering** - enabling people to live life to the full.
- **Resourceful** - proactive and finding effective ways to make things better.
- **Collaborative** - valuing partnerships and making collaborative working a positive experience.
- **Honest** - working with integrity and sticking to our principles

VoiceAbility is committed to promoting the right to be safe and secure and to be free from any form of abuse and/or neglect.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all people working on behalf of VoiceAbility in a paid or unpaid capacity.

The Care Act 2014 defines an adult at risk of abuse as:

A person with care and support needs (whether or not they are eligible for support) who is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect and due to their care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

**Guidance and support**

We will provide clear safeguarding guidance for our staff and volunteers and a dedicated intranet site support good safeguarding practice.

Our guidance will enable our staff and volunteers to:

- be alert to and to know when to report allegations and suspicions of abuse.
- know how to follow local authority protocols when reporting safeguarding concerns
• know who within Voiceability to contact about an allegation of abuse if the line manager is not available.
• know how our role fits in with the wider legislation relevant to Safeguarding (especially Care Act and Mental Capacity act).
• know what to do if an allegation of abuse does not meet a safeguarding threshold
• provide escalation guidance to ensure staff know what to do if we are worried that the actions taken by the local authority are not keeping the person safe (including when a concern is rejected)
• know what will happen as a result of a Safeguarding referral
• understand the key legislation and how to use this to ensure people’s rights are respected in matters relating to Safeguarding
• know what to do if they suspect abuse by a VoiceAbility staff member

Training
All staff and volunteers will have Safeguarding training relevant to their roles and responsibilities. This includes:

• training for all staff and volunteers in using our policy, process guide and intranet
• refresher training for all staff at least every two years
• training to enable managers to promote good safeguarding practice within their teams
• training for Trustees

Workforce Management
VoiceAbility will ensure the appropriate DBS re-checks are undertaken in line with VoiceAbility DBS, Employment and Engagement of Ex-Offenders Policy (HR021).

Referrals to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)
VoiceAbility is committed to its duty to make referrals to the DBS in line with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. It is the responsibility of the Director of Human Resources to make a referral to the DBS when anyone working on behalf of Voiceability has been dismissed due to abuse or removed from working with children or adults at risk (or may have been if the person had not left or resigned etc.). Referrals will be made in line with DBS Ex-Offenders Policy HR021.

Open Culture
As an organisation we recognize the importance of an open culture where staff feel confident and supported to raise any issues relating to safeguarding.
We will ensure that staff are provided with an appropriate context to discuss Safeguarding matters. This will include:

- regular 1:1 supervision
- regular team meetings with a dedicated section in each meeting for staff to provide any safeguarding related updates
- a Safeguarding Communities of Practice and Teams Forum which will encourage discussion about Safeguarding matters
- regular and thorough case audits to support good safeguarding practice
- safeguarding refresher training

In all of these contexts, staff will be listened to and supported to work through Safeguarding dilemmas.

Volunteers will be supported by their management to discuss any Safeguarding matters.

**The consequences of not following this policy and the related guidance**

The consequence of not following our safeguarding policy is a serious matter because it may result in avoidable harm. It is therefore of paramount importance that this policy and guidance is followed at all times. Any breach of this policy or guidance may result in disciplinary action.

**Safeguarding Governance Committee**

The committee will meet on a quarterly basis and include a senior external professional, trustees, and staff with frontline and management experience.

The aim of the committee is to ensure an open culture of learning from mistakes and working proactively to embed good safeguarding knowledge and practice. They do this by having clear oversight of safeguarding processes and practice within VoiceAbility and ensuring that failings that result in avoidable harm are reported to the Charity Commission.

**Equality and Diversity Statement**

VoiceAbility believes in fostering an inclusive workplace which welcomes, values and celebrates the diversity of its staff and partners, treats all on a basis of equality and encourages all to meet their maximum potential. All activities and behaviour in the workplace or associated with it should ensure that everyone is able to participate as fully as reasonably possible, and that no one is unreasonably excluded on grounds such as disability, mental health, gender/ transgender/ intersex, age, race or ethnicity, sexuality/ sexual orientation, marital/ civil partnership status, social background or any other inappropriate reason. VoiceAbility endeavours to ensure that this ethos is reflected in our practices, policies and the services provided.
GDPR and Data Protection
VoiceAbility only keeps records of individuals and their applications for as long as it is relevant to do so. For details of retention periods for personal documents and information, please see VoiceAbility Privacy Policy.

Amendment history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of change</th>
<th>Changed by (Initials)</th>
<th>Brief description of what was changed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2021</td>
<td>KH</td>
<td>Separate policy and guidance created. Policy significantly shorter. Includes a section on Open Culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2022</td>
<td>SI</td>
<td>Annual review Renamed – England Re-worded ‘advocate’ to ‘all staff and volunteers’ Policy owner changed to Director of Practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>