



## SPECIALISTERNE IRELAND

Specialisterne Ireland is a not-for-profit organisation that recruits and supports talented individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. It is an innovative social business concept originally founded in Denmark in 2004. Specialisterne is internationally recognised as the first and foremost example of how individuals on the Autistic Spectrum can be included and realise their potential in meaningful and productive jobs.



# Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults Policy

## 1.0 Policy Statement

Specialisterne Ireland are committed to providing a consistent approach to safeguarding and protecting vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect and to ensuring that all employees and people working on its behalf are aware of their personal and professional obligations to promote vulnerable adult's safety and welfare in accordance with all relevant procedures, guidance documentation and legislation.

In December 2014, the Health Service Executive published its ***Policy Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse - National Policy and Procedures***, which encompasses both elder abuse, and concerns of abuse relating to people availing of disability services.

This document has been designed and written to ensure that all Specialisterne Ireland staff are meeting standards of best practice in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults and Specialisterne Ireland staff are required to familiarise themselves with the policy and relevant procedures.

## 2.0 Vulnerable Adult Definition

A vulnerable adult is an individual aged 18 years or over who may require assistance to care for themselves, or protect themselves from harm or being taken advantage of. This may be as a result of a disability (intellectual, physical, mental or hidden disability), a sensory impairment, age or some other form of illness.

## 3.0 Vulnerable Adult Abuse Definition

Vulnerable Adult Abuse is defined as a *“single or repeated act, lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress or violates their human civil rights”* (Protecting our Future, Report of the Working Group on Elder Abuse, September 2002)

A vulnerable adult may be subjected to more than one form of abuse at any given time.

## 4.0 Types of Abuse

The different types of abuse may be categorised as follows:-

- Psychological / Emotional Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Financial Abuse

- Neglect
- Discriminatory Abuse
- Institutional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse

#### **4.0.1 Psychological / 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.

#### **4.0.2 Physical Abuse**

Slapping, pushing, hitting, kicking, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint (including physical or chemical) or sanctions.

#### **4.0.3 Financial Abuse**

Theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance, or financial institutions or misuse of misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

#### **4.0.4 Neglect**

Ignoring medical or physical care needs, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

#### **4.0.5 Discriminatory Abuse**

Ageism, sexism, racism, that based on an individual's disability, sexual orientation or marital status, other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

#### **4.0.6 Institutional Abuse**

May occur within residential care and acute settings including nursing homes, acute hospitals and any other in-patient settings, and may involve poor standards of care, rigid routines and inadequate responses to complex needs.

#### **4.0.7 Sexual Abuse**

Rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the individual has not consented, or could not consent, or into which he or she was forced to consent.

### **5.0 Who may commit abuse?**

Any individual or organisation may be guilty of abuse. Most often it is someone well known to the other person, for example, a family member, friend, and relative or

care provider – a relationship where there is an expectation of trust. Other forms of abuse include;

- Professional – failure to act, poor practice, misuse of power.
- Peer Abuse
- Stranger Abuse.

## **6.0 Responding to and Reporting Vulnerable Adult Protection Concerns**

If you are concerned in relation to the protection or welfare of a vulnerable adult you are required to contact the Designated Liaison Officer. When the Designated Liaison Officer receives a report about suspected or actual abuse, they should do the following;

- Consult with the vulnerable adult to hear his or her wishes;
- Clarify or get more information about the matter;
- Where there is any doubt or uncertainty seek advice and consult with the Statutory Authorities
- Make a formal referral to Statutory Authorities.

## **7.0 Confidentiality**

All information concerned with the identification and reporting of vulnerable adult abuse is subject to best practice guidelines and guidance on confidentiality.

The policy of confidentiality will **not** apply in the following circumstances:

- a. In the event that Specialisterne Ireland is aware or believes that a candidate is in danger from their own actions or the actions of others;
- b. A candidate poses a threat to others;
- c. A disclosure of sexual abuse is made to Specialisterne Ireland;
- d. In these circumstances Specialisterne Ireland reserves the right to communicate the relevant information to the appropriate Statutory Authorities (e.g. HSE, Garda Siochana etc.)