



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW (the Society) has zero tolerance for behaviours and acts of violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults.

This policy applies to abuse or harm of all vulnerable adults (people we assist), 18 years and older. The Society recognises that people we assist are experiencing situations which may increase their vulnerability to abuse or harm.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy sets out:

- the steps the Society takes to prevent abuse and harm to vulnerable adults in the Society's work
- the Society's procedures to prevent and manage incidents involving abuse and harm to vulnerable adults
- Society Personnel's (members, volunteers, and employees) responsibility to keep vulnerable adults safe
- how to respond and report any concerns about vulnerable adults.

Please note, this document is a supporting resource only. Please familiarise yourself with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and refer to the policy for further details.

The rights of vulnerable adults

The Society is committed to:

- protecting the rights of vulnerable adults
- respecting the dignity of vulnerable adults while maintaining our duty of care
- applying a person-centred approach and responding sensitively to concerns of abuse and harm.

Actions we take to protect vulnerable adults

There are a number of ways in which the Society protects vulnerable adults. These include:

- Making sure our services and programs have current risk assessments. This helps us identify potential risks to the safety of vulnerable adults and allows us to put measures in place to stop these risks from occurring.
- Giving Vulnerable Adults access to information on how to report concerns regarding abuse or harm of themselves or others.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults induction learning and refresher training.
- When recruiting and selecting new members, volunteers, and employees, the Society carries out background checks to ensure as far as possible that people joining the Society do not pose a risk to vulnerable adults. These checks include a Working with Children Check, a Police Check, two reference checks, and an interview.
- The Society must seek the consent of the vulnerable adult or if they do not have the capacity, their identified guardian for the vulnerable adult's image or story to be used by the Society. If consent is given, the Society must ensure the vulnerable adult or identified guardian understands how the videos or stories will be used, where they will be used, and for how long. The images and stories must be stored securely and only accessed by people who are authorised to access them.



Breaches of the Code of Conduct or Safeguarding Vulnerable Adult Policy

Any member, volunteer, or employees who does not follow the right behaviour or breaches the policy may be temporarily or permanently removed from their role in the Society. Any unlawful behaviour will be reported to relevant authorities.

Responding to and reporting concerns of abuse or harm of vulnerable adults

The Society is legally required to report abuse and harm of some vulnerable people and will investigate allegations and incidents of abuse or harm that are connected to our work.

The Society views abuse and harm of vulnerable people as unacceptable and will take all concerns and reports of abuse seriously. We will act on reports immediately and undertake an investigation in a way that respects confidentiality and is fair and professional.

How to report any concerns about a vulnerable adult

All members, volunteers, or employees must report:

1. Any concern of abuse or harm of a vulnerable adult who is
 - a) a person with a disability or mental health condition
 - b) a person aged 65 years or older or living in a residential aged care service.
2. Any abuse or harm connected with the Society's activities, programs, or services at a Society property or off site e.g. home visitations.
3. Any concern or allegation about the behaviour of Society Personnel (Members, volunteers, or employees), members of the public, contractors, or external providers
4. Any concern of abuse or harm that you are told about
5. Any breach of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy or Code of Conduct.

In an emergency or after business hours:

1. Call Police on 000 immediately
2. Contact your Regional Director
3. Phone 1800 4 SUPPORT (1800 478 776).

If it is not an emergency

Members must:

1. Report the concern to your Conference President as soon as possible and no later than the end of the day/shift
2. Complete the Safeguarding Notification Form before the end of the day/shift using either:
 - a) the digital Safeguarding Notification Form or
 - b) the manual Safeguarding Notification Form before the end of the day/shift, and email safeguarding@vinnies.org.au or call the Safeguarding team on 1800 478 776.

Employees and volunteers must:

1. Report the incident to their Team Leader, Manager or Supervisor and Safeguarding team as soon as possible and no later than the end of the day/shift
2. Complete the Safeguarding Notification Form either:
 - the digital Safeguarding Notification Form or
 - the manual Safeguarding Notification Form before the end of the day/shift, and email safeguarding@vinnies.org.au
3. Ensure that an Incident Report Form is completed with a Safeguarding Notification Form attached (where the incident is connected to the Society's work).

Conference Presidents and Presidents must report any Safeguarding reports to their Regional Directors.

If the report is outside of business hours, report to the Regional Director as soon as possible.

Employees who are responsible for external reporting must ensure they fulfill their external reporting requirements. The Regional Director will make sure the relevant external reporting is completed.

Additional information

- You must follow the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy.
- You must complete the required background checks.
- When recruiting new members or volunteers, you must make sure they complete the required background checks. Speak to your Central Council President or Regional Director for more information.
- You must behave in line with the Society's Code of Conduct.
- You must attend the Society's Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Learning Induction and Refresher course.
- In your work with the Society, you must take every action to reduce the possibility of harm to vulnerable adults. You must consider and manage the risks related to your activities e.g. home visits or the Hubs.
- You must keep all information and reports about vulnerable adults confidential.
- You must report any concerns, allegations, or incidents related to a vulnerable adult immediately.

1. If an emergency or out of hours, call the Police 000

Or

2. Call 1800 4 SUPPORT (1800 478 776) as soon as possible during business hours.

For questions or support, please contact your Central Council President, Regional Director, or the Safeguarding Team at 1800 4 SUPPORT (1800 478 776).



Flow Chart 1: Managing concerns of abuse or harm towards a Vulnerable Adult

