

## Introduction

This policy sets out ABCA's approach to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults from significant harm, abuse or neglect, and promoting their welfare and wellbeing. This applies to the individuals who are vulnerable and those with diagnosed Mental Health issues and to any other persons involved.

Effective safeguarding is a shared responsibility. This policy applies to all staff who individually and collectively have a responsibility to play a part in safeguarding the children, young people and adults who are at risk of abuse or neglect, and those vulnerable customers who give rise to concerns due to issues of self-harm or self-neglect which are not as a result of third party abuse.

This policy applies to ABCA Systems employees who are dealing with situations where the person in question is, or may be:

- Suffering from a Mental Health issue;
- Vulnerable for any other reason (e.g. care home resident)

The aims and effects of this policy revolve around the need to ensure our conduct with vulnerable groups and their friends and families remains professional and effective, and is applied fairly, regardless of any diversity issues.

When dealing with vulnerable adults or children, with or without mental health issues, all staff will treat them sensitively, fairly and without prejudice whilst safeguarding their Human Rights. ABCA Systems Ltd. will ensure that its actions and those of its staff are proportionate, legal, accountable and necessary.

In delivering the Policy, ABCA Systems Ltd. will also ensure that all those affected by an individual's vulnerability (such as family, friends, carers and the wider community) are treated with dignity and respect and also receive a high-quality service.

The company will monitor all incidents falling within the scope of this policy and will work with partner agencies to ensure the delivery of a professional service that evolves over time through joint learning experiences.

The company embraces the 'social model of disability', which is an approach that recognises that the barriers erected by society are often far more 'disabling' than an individual's own particular impairment.

In administering this policy, the company acknowledges the main types of severe mental illness are: -

### *Schizophrenia*

**This is a long-term mental health condition that causes a range of different psychological symptoms, including:**

- Hallucinations – hearing or seeing things that do not exist
- delusions – unusual beliefs not based on reality that often contradict the evidence
- muddled thoughts based on hallucinations or delusions
- changes in behaviour

Doctors often describe schizophrenia as a psychotic illness. This means sometimes a person may not be able to distinguish their own thoughts and ideas from reality.

Changes in thinking and behaviour are the most obvious signs of schizophrenia, but people can experience symptoms in different ways.

### *Bipolar Disorder*

Formerly known as manic depression, is a condition that affects your moods, which can swing from one extreme to

another. People suffering from bipolar disorder will have periods or episodes of:

- depression – where you feel very low and lethargic
- mania – where you feel very high and overactive (less severe mania is known as hypomania)

Symptoms of bipolar disorder depend on the mood which the sufferer is experiencing. Unlike simple mood swings, each extreme episode of bipolar disorder can last for several weeks (or even longer), and some people may not experience a "normal" mood very often.

### *Depression*

This is more than simply feeling unhappy or fed up for a few days. Depression affects the way a person eats and sleeps, the way you feel about yourself, and the way you think about things. A depressive disorder is not a sign of personal weakness or a condition that can be willed or wished away. People with a depressive illness cannot merely 'pull themselves together' and get better. Without treatment, symptoms can last for weeks, months, or years.

### *Dual diagnosis*

Having a mental illness significantly increases your risk of misusing alcohol and drugs. Of all people diagnosed as mentally ill, 29 percent either misuse alcohol or drugs.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

A 'child' is anyone who is aged up to 18 years. All children and young people have the right to be safe from harm and need safe environments to grow with confidence. Everyone is responsible for helping to keep children safe. Safeguarding children and young people means protecting them from any potential source of harm.

There are links between domestic abuse, substance misuse, mental health needs and poor outcomes for families and children. Families may demonstrate levels of resilience with appropriate support, and therefore it is not inevitable that families who experience problems are at risk and in need of protection. We also need to consider circumstances where families may not reach the criteria for safeguarding, but where interventions such as offering financial support or signposting to appropriate services may act to prevent deterioration and the need for statutory intervention.

### **Safeguarding adults**

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live and work in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

Six key principles underpin adult safeguarding:

- Empowerment – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent
- Prevention – It is better to take action before harm occurs
- Proportionality – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- Protection – Support and representation for those in greatest need
- Partnership – Local solutions through services working with their local neighbourhoods, where people have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
- Accountability – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

## **Policy Requirements**

This Policy is designed to ensure correct procedures and protocols are adhered to by all staff when dealing with such incidents, ensuring rights and responsibilities are met, in accordance with legislation, current thinking and best practice. The policy offers the best possible service to the individual and the community that is requiring assistance.

The policy sets the standards to assist staff to deal with the vulnerable persons more effectively and safeguarding children, young persons and adults when required. By not having this policy the company runs the risk of failing to give best possible assistance to the individual, and may also contravene guidelines and agreements and fail to provide expected levels of service to the individual, the public and our partnership agencies. There are legislative obligations in addition to duty of care implications that require these procedures to be formalised.

## **Resource & Training Implications**

The training in this area will be delivered using the i-Hasco module on safeguarding vulnerable adults. We have a duty to provide adequate services to the customer from a position of knowledge, which can only be achieved by showing an ongoing commitment to such a training program.

Each Department Manager will be responsible for local training and advice in order to keep staff updated on the protocols.

Staff involvement within this training will be considered a mandatory, and will be required to be updated annually. It will be the responsibility of all Department managers during the training phase to ensure they are aware of the policy and procedures. Staff will be expected to be aware of the content of this policy.

The Training will reflect the following points:

An overview on common disorders that staff may encounter when dealing with persons with a mental health issue;

- The most effective way of dealing with such persons and resolving situations involving mental health issues.
- A discussion on the association between drug use and mental health problems, and how to deal and recognise persons under the influence of drugs.
- Relevant law implication updates as they arise.
- Updated current thinking and Best Practice within the area.