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Criteria:

1. The Code of Behaviour (the Code) contains positive statements about how staff/volunteers are expected to behave towards vulnerable adults.

2. The Code outlines behaviours to be avoided.


4. The Code contains guidelines relating to physical contact and intimate care.

5. The Code contains guidelines relating to physical intervention and restraint.

6. The Code contains guidelines relating to diversity and additional care and support needs.

7. The Code contains guidelines on the handling of vulnerable adults’ money.

8. The Code contains guidelines on the use of technology, including photography.


10. The Code sets out an expectation that everyone in the organisation and everyone who uses its services, participates in its activities or visits, should relate to each other in a mutually respectful way.

11. The Code is tailored to your services/activities.
8.1 The Code of Behaviour (the Code) contains positive statements about how staff/volunteers are expected to behave towards vulnerable adults.

Having a Code of Behaviour for your organisation will minimise the opportunity for vulnerable adults to suffer harm. It will also help to protect staff/volunteers by ensuring they are clear about the behaviour that is expected of them and the boundaries within which they should operate. Many aspects of a Code of Behaviour are common sense but it is worth formalising these to ensure consistency of practice throughout the organisation. In terms of encouraging ownership, it is useful to involve staff/volunteers, vulnerable adults and carers/advocates in drafting and reviewing the Code for the organisation. The Code should be reviewed every three years or earlier if organisational changes make it necessary.

Standards of expected behaviour already exist for particular sectors, for example, the NISCC Codes of Practice for Social Care Workers and Employers of Social Care Workers. Organisations may find it useful to refer to sector-specific guidance when drawing up a Code of Behaviour for staff and volunteers.

See Appendix 3 – Professional Regulatory Bodies

Each organisation’s Code will be different, reflecting the nature and activities of the organisation. It should provide a clear guide to your staff and volunteers on how they should behave when working with vulnerable adults. It should be a positive document highlighting positive behaviours as well as those to be avoided.

The NISCC Code of Practice for Social Care Workers sets out the following six positive statements which may be useful for organisations to refer to or tailor when developing their own Code of Behaviour.

Social care workers must:

1. Protect the rights and promote the interests of service users and carers;
2. Strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of service users and carers;
3. Promote the independence of service users while protecting them as far as possible from danger or harm;
4. Respect the rights of service users while seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people;
5. Uphold public trust and confidence in social care services; and
6. Be accountable for the quality of their work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills.

8.2 The Code outlines behaviours to be avoided.

The Code should also highlight the behaviours that should be avoided. These refer to behaviours that staff/volunteers may slip into through lack of experience or training. While not intentionally harmful, such behaviour might be misconstrued, which ultimately could lead to allegations of vulnerable adult abuse being made. For example:
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Staff/volunteers should not:

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with vulnerable adults away from others;
- Take a vulnerable adult to his/her own home;
- Take a vulnerable adult alone on car journey, unless this forms part of the organisation’s core activities

If it is unavoidable or necessary, these kinds of behaviours should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of a manager and an appropriate record maintained.

### 8.3 The Code outlines unacceptable behaviours.

Unacceptable behaviours are those that should always be avoided in the interests of the safety of vulnerable adults, staff and volunteers. For example:

A staff member/volunteer should never:

- Abuse, neglect or harm or place at risk of harm vulnerable adults whether by omission or commission;
- Engage in rough physical games with vulnerable adults, including horseplay;
- Engage in sexually provocative games with vulnerable adults e.g. spin the bottle, strip poker;
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a vulnerable adult;
- Form inappropriate relationships with vulnerable adults;
- Gossip about personal details of vulnerable adults and their families; or
- Make/accept loans or gifts of money from vulnerable adults.

### 8.4 The Code contains guidelines relating to physical contact and intimate care.

Staff and volunteers should ensure that:

- Physical contact is person-centred and appropriate to the task required;
- They are trained to understand and implement a vulnerable adult’s care plan, where required;
- When providing intimate care, it is done sensitively and with respect for the individual’s dignity and privacy;
- If they are concerned about anything during intimate care, they report it to their Line Manager/Nominated Manager at the earliest opportunity.

### 8.5 The Code contains guidelines relating to physical intervention and restraint.

The guidelines should state that staff and volunteers should:

- Seek to defuse a situation, thereby avoiding the need to use any form of restraint;
- Only use restraint where it is absolutely necessary to protect the vulnerable adult or others from harm;
- Ensure that any restraint used is proportionate to the risk of harm;
• Only use forms of restraint for which they have received training and which follow current best practice;
• Record and report any use of restraint;
• Review any situation that led to the need for restraint with their Line Manager, with a view to avoiding the need for restraint in the future.

See Appendix 5 – Useful Reading

8.6 The Code contains guidelines relating to diversity and additional care and support needs.

Staff and volunteers should:
• Be open to and aware of diversity in the beliefs and practices of vulnerable adults and their families;
• Ask how a vulnerable adult’s care should be delivered, having regard to the cultural needs of others;
• Be aware of the difficulties posed by language barriers and other communication difficulties;
• Not discriminate against vulnerable adults and their families who have different cultural backgrounds and beliefs from their own;
• Use the procedures outlined in this Guidance to report any discrimination against vulnerable adults and their families by other staff members/volunteers.

8.7 The Code contains guidelines on the handling of vulnerable adults’ money.

Staff and volunteers should:
• Maintain records of vulnerable adults’ personal allowances, receipts and expenditure in line with organisational policy;
• Never deny a vulnerable adult access to his/her money;
• Never gain in any way when using the vulnerable adult’s money on his/her behalf or guiding the vulnerable adult in the use of his/her own money;
• Never borrow money from, or lend money to, a vulnerable adult;
• Report any suspicions of financial abuse.

8.8 The Code contains guidelines on the use of technology, including photography.

New technologies, such as social networking websites and mobile phones, can be misused by those who are intent on harming or exploiting vulnerable adults.
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Staff and volunteers should:

- Not photograph/video a vulnerable adult, even by mobile phone, without the vulnerable adult’s valid consent;
- Ensure that any photographs/videos taken of a vulnerable adult are appropriate;
- Report any inappropriate use of images of a vulnerable adult;
- Report any inappropriate or dangerous behaviour on the internet that involves a vulnerable adult.

It is important that vulnerable adults are made aware of the dangers associated with new technology, such as social networking sites and the internet, and know to tell someone if they encounter anything that makes them feel unsafe or threatened.

See Resource 1.2 – Consent

8.9 The Code outlines sanctions in the case of staff/volunteers breaching the Code.

Staff members and volunteers should understand that:

- If they are unsure of their actions and feel they may have breached the Code, they should consult with their Line Manager;
- Breaching the Code is a serious issue that will be investigated;
- Breaching the Code may result in disciplinary action and ultimately dismissal and if it constitutes harm/risk of harm, referral to the HSC Trust, police, DBS and regulatory bodies, as appropriate.

8.10 The Code sets out an expectation that everyone in the organisation and everyone who uses its services, or participates in its activities or visits, should relate to each other in a mutually respectful way.

It is essential to establish a set of ground rules in terms of the behaviour expected of staff, volunteers and vulnerable adults towards one another. For example, in relation to having respect for each other; avoiding the use of offensive language; use of alcohol, particularly on day trips; and sleeping arrangements on banding. The Code should be drawn up in consultation with staff, volunteers, vulnerable adults and carers/advocates, with the understanding that its breach by individuals using services could lead to their exclusion, or where the behaviour constitutes abuse, e.g. of a peer, referral to the police or HSC Trust for further investigation and action.

Carers and families or other visitors should also be made aware of the Code, in the expectation that they will also act in accordance with the Code when they are in contact with the organisation and any aspect of its work.
8.11 The Code is tailored to your services/activities.

As an organisation’s Code of Behaviour should be a living document, the organisation should take time to develop a Code of Behaviour which is appropriate to its specific activities, rather than attempting to use an ‘off the shelf’ version created by another organisation. The importance of particular areas of the Code will depend on the nature of the organisation’s activities, for example, handling vulnerable adults’ money may not apply to some settings.

In terms of encouraging ownership, it is useful if everyone to whom the Code applies is actively consulted about what should be contained in the Code.

The Code should be used as a training tool at induction, where each element is explained and discussed with new staff and volunteers. It can also be used as a framework for discussion in support and supervision sessions, and ongoing training. It should be reviewed on a regular basis to take account of situations arising for the first time, for example, in relation to new technology and at least once every three years.