

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE ACRE

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

### 1. Introduction

1.1. Cambridgeshire ACRE is fully committed to equality of opportunity in the management of its employment policies and procedures and the delivery of its projects and services. By focusing on the unique contribution of every individual, managing diversity goes far beyond the traditional equal opportunities approach of targeting specific groups. Diversity is inclusive. It not only acknowledges and understands differences between people, but also seeks positive ways to harness these differences to enhance creativity, innovation and productivity. Managing diversity is not just socially desirable, but a driver of organisational effectiveness.

1.2. This policy applies to all:

1.2.1. Employees, volunteers, trustees and secondees/work placements of Cambridgeshire ACRE. For the purpose of this policy, employees, volunteers, trustees and secondees/work placements are referred to collectively as 'employees'.

1.2.2. Applicants applying for a position with us and/or wishing to access one of our services subject to the limitations under 2.2.2 below.

1.2.3. Service users, members of the charity and/or other stakeholders as appropriate.

1.3. Cambridgeshire ACRE **respects** and **values** all its employees. All employees will receive equal opportunity and treatment and, where appropriate and possible, training to ensure career progression within the organisation.

1.4. Cambridgeshire ACRE is committed to a programme of action to make this policy statement effective. Training will be provided for employees as appropriate and employees will be encouraged to respect, act in accordance with, and thereby promote this policy at all times. Stakeholders will also be regularly reminded of our commitment to equality and diversity throughout our activities.

### 2. Managing Equality and Diversity

#### 2.1. Internally

2.1.1. Cambridgeshire ACRE aims to reflect its commitment to diversity throughout all its employment procedures and policies. In particular, the principle of equal opportunities will apply to recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer, training and development, benefits, facilities, redundancy selection and all other terms and conditions of employment including the implementation of its disciplinary and grievance procedures.

2.1.2. Cambridgeshire ACRE will not tolerate discrimination of any kind.

2.1.3. Cambridgeshire ACRE aims therefore to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, disability, race, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or similar philosophical belief, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin, age, trade union membership or non-membership, nor is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

2.1.4. Operating methods, selection criteria and other work procedures will be regularly reviewed to ensure that, where decisions are made about individuals, whether it be in relation to their selection for: employment, promotion, training, or redundancy; their general treatment, remuneration or any other employment procedure, such decisions are consistent with the principles of this policy and that employees are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

## **2.2. Externally**

2.2.1. Cambridgeshire ACRE recognises that we live in a diverse society and believes that this diversity positively enriches the community and that nobody should suffer disadvantage by reason of social exclusion or owing to their race or colour; disability; age; marital status and/or financial status or, any other reason listed under section 2.1.3. above.

2.2.2. Cambridgeshire ACRE will therefore demonstrate good practice in the delivery of all its projects and services. Individuals and/or organisations will be actively encouraged to take advantage of all our projects, services and facilities, subject to any predetermined qualifying criteria for the delivery of a specific project or service established by the funding body or bodies.

## **3. Monitoring**

3.1. Cambridgeshire ACRE sees monitoring and evaluation as a valuable management tool and will actively monitor equality and diversity within its working practices.

3.2. Project Managers will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating their projects on a day-to-day basis and for producing reports as and when required.

3.3. The Chief Executive will be responsible for reporting on the monitoring and evaluation of equal opportunities in projects and services to the Board on a regular basis and for producing statistical reports as requested by the Board and/or funding bodies.

- 3.4. Employees who consider that they have been discriminated against should, in the first instance, make use of the grievance procedure to resolve the issue. If, however, an employee considers the grievance procedure to be inappropriate, owing to the nature or severity of the discrimination, he/she should report the matter immediately to the Chief Executive, who will conduct a full and thorough investigation.
  
- 3.5. Any stakeholder who considers that discrimination has occurred in the delivery of Cambridgeshire ACRE's projects and services should make use of the complaints procedure to resolve the issue. A copy of the Complaints Procedure can be obtained by phoning 01353 860850.

*Version in use: Approved by the Board on 10-Sep-2015*

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE ACRE POLICY & PROCEDURES FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF VULNERABLE ADULTS (SOVA)

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Cambridgeshire ACRE is committed to ensuring that vulnerable adults are safe in all respects when involved in our activities.
- 1.2. We will do this through our policy and procedures, which are designed to safeguard vulnerable adults. Adherence to our policy and procedures will also protect our employees.
- 1.3. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, trustees and secondee/work placements of Cambridgeshire ACRE. For the purpose of this policy, employees, volunteers, trustees and secondee/work placements are referred to collectively as 'employees'.
- 1.4. The aim of this policy is to outline the practice and procedures for employees to contribute to the prevention of abuse of vulnerable adults through raising awareness and providing a clear framework for action when abuse is suspected or alleged.

## 2. Definition of Terms

- 2.1. Throughout this policy, and informing its implementation, the following definition of terms apply:
  - 2.1.1. **Vulnerable adult:** any person aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.
  - 2.1.2. **Significant harm:** should be taken to include not only ill-treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment that are not physical); the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, emotional, social or behavioural development.
  - 2.1.3. **Adult abuse:** Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It is physical, sexual, financial, emotional, discriminatory, or psychological violation or neglect of a person unable to protect him/herself to prevent abuse from happening, or to remove him/herself from abuse or potential abuse by others.

## 3. Vulnerable Adult Policy Statement

- 3.1. All Cambridgeshire ACRE employees have a duty to safeguard vulnerable adults who come into contact with Cambridgeshire ACRE, and to respond to any concerns they

may have regarding the physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological safety of a vulnerable adult or concerns relating to discriminatory or financial violation or exploitation of a vulnerable adult. This policy is in place to protect all vulnerable adults regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion.

3.2. Cambridgeshire ACRE believes that every vulnerable adult has the right to be:

3.2.1. Protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation.

3.2.2. Listened to, to have their views given careful consideration and to be supported in participating in decisions which affect them

3.2.3. Respected and understood in the context of their own individual needs and with respect to their cultural, religious and ethnic origin, age, gender, disability and sexuality.

#### **4. Responsibilities**

4.1. All employees have a duty to safeguard vulnerable people from abuse and to ensure that where a person has been abused that they receive support and protection from further abuse.

4.2. All employees have a duty to report abuse or suspected abuse and to act on complaints of abuse. It is the responsibility of all employees to be aware of, and be working within, the guidance laid down within this document.

4.3. All employees have a duty to work in partnership with service users, families and carers in order to ensure service users are protected from harm.

4.4. All employees have a duty to accept the principle that agencies work together in order to protect vulnerable people from abuse.

4.5. Employees are expected to maintain close links with all relevant statutory and voluntary bodies in the pursuit of safeguarding vulnerable adults.

4.6. All employees of Cambridgeshire ACRE must be familiar with this procedure and their role within it.

4.7. Reporting inappropriate professional practice or 'whistleblowing' is a requirement for all employees.

#### **5. Responsible Person**

5.1. Cambridgeshire ACRE's Chief Executive is the designated Responsible Person.

5.2. All concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of abuse must be referred to the Responsible Person. If the designated Responsible Person is unavailable then vulnerable adult protection concerns should be raised with the Head of Business Services. If the Head

of Business Services is not available, the alerter may contact Cambridgeshire Direct to report their concerns (please see page 20 for further details).

5.3. The Responsible Person is responsible for ensuring that vulnerable adult safeguarding policies and procedures are being implemented correctly. S/he will:

5.3.1. Act as a source of information and support for fellow employees.

5.3.2. Provide advice as to how the safeguarding process would operate within Cambridgeshire ACRE.

5.3.3. Be contactable when fellow employees have queries or need advice or information about how the safeguarding process works.

5.3.4. Ensure that all employees are aware of their own role and the roles of others.

5.3.5. Ensure that a clear process is articulated that must be followed once an allegation or suspicion of abuse is alerted.

5.3.6. Ensure that other Cambridgeshire ACRE procedures and guidance fit with this SOVA Policy and Procedures, for example, whistleblowing procedures.

5.3.7. Access specialist adult protection training and development to ensure competencies are maintained for the role and responsibilities of a Responsible Person.

5.4. This policy and guidance will be reviewed annually by the Responsible Person. Where changes, amendments, or updates are recommended, these will be ratified by the Cambridgeshire ACRE Board.

5.5. All stakeholders will be informed of this policy as appropriate. The policy is held centrally for employees at the Cambridgeshire ACRE office. In addition, the policy will be available for any interested parties upon request.

## **6. Recruitment of Employees**

6.1. Cambridgeshire ACRE takes seriously its obligations to ensure that employees undergo appropriate vetting before being allowed contact with vulnerable adults, and to present a barrier to those seeking employment with Cambridgeshire ACRE who might present a risk to vulnerable adults.

6.2. Cambridgeshire ACRE's recruitment process requires that a Disclosure and Barring Service check is carried out on employees whose role might bring them into contact with vulnerable adults.

6.3. Cambridgeshire ACRE takes its responsibility to ensuring the safety of vulnerable adults seriously. Cambridgeshire ACRE will act on any and all concerns raised in relation to its employees.

## **7. Employee training and supervision**

7.1. All employees working directly with vulnerable adults will receive awareness training in vulnerable adult safeguarding. This training will include:

7.1.1. Basic definitions of abuse,

7.1.2. Signs of abuse,

7.1.3. What to do if someone tells you they are being abused,

7.1.4. What to do if you suspect abuse.

7.2. The organisation will respond quickly to employee requests for information and training on issues relating to adult safeguarding. Employees are encouraged to ask questions and talk to the Responsible Person about any concerns related to adult safeguarding. In addition, we are committed to seeking support for our employees in the event that vulnerable adult safeguarding issues arise.

## **8. Policy implementation**

8.1. Included alongside this policy are the associated procedures for ensuring effective implementation. As stated above, all employees are required to understand this policy and to ensure that it is being effectively implemented at all times. The appendices attached set out the following procedures and protocols:

8.1.1. Procedure to be followed if you think a vulnerable adult may be at risk of abuse, is being, or has been abused, either by a health or social care professional / a member of their family / any other person, including another vulnerable adult – Appendix A

8.1.2. Procedure to be followed if a vulnerable adult tells you that they are being, or have been, abused - Appendix B

8.1.3. Procedure for Responsible Person to report concerns/suspicions that someone is being abused - Appendix C

8.1.4. Allegations against employees – Appendix D

## **9. Confidentiality**

9.1. In operating this policy, employees must also be aware that, in order to protect vulnerable adults, in some circumstances it will be necessary to share what might normally be regarded as confidential information. The protection of all confidential information is recognised as good practice but public interest can override the duty of confidentiality. Anyone who is told or suspects abuse of any vulnerable adult should report the incident in line with these procedures. The following principles should be adhered to:

- 9.1.1. Information will only be shared on a need to know basis,
  - 9.1.2. Information will only be shared when it is in the best interests of the vulnerable adult concerned,
  - 9.1.3. Confidentiality must not be confused with secrecy,
  - 9.1.4. Informed consent<sup>1</sup> should be obtained but if this is not possible and other vulnerable adults are at risk it may be necessary to override it.
- 9.2. Guidance in the form of a Code of Good Practice (Appendix E) has also been developed to provide employees with ideas which not only will help to protect vulnerable adults, but will also help to identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse. Employees should familiarise themselves with this and if it is necessary to carry out practices contrary to it, only do so after discussions with, and approval of, the Board.
- 9.3. Remember the first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults and that it is the responsibility of all employees to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect.

*Version: Approved by the Board on 10-Sep-2015*

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> The term 'informed consent' can be defined as: 'The voluntary and continuing permission of the adult to agree to a course of action or inaction, based on adequate knowledge of the purpose, nature, likely effects and risks of the 'proposed action/inaction' including the likelihood of its success and any alternatives to it. Permission given under any unfair or undue pressure is not consent'.

## Appendix A

### **PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IF YOU THINK A VULNERABLE ADULT MAY BE AT RISK OF ABUSE, IS BEING, OR HAS BEEN ABUSED, EITHER BY:**

- **A HEALTH OR SOCIAL CARE PROFESSIONAL**
  - **A MEMBER OF THEIR FAMILY**
  - **ANY OTHER PERSON, INCLUDING ANOTHER VULNERABLE ADULT**
1. The Responsible Person is responsible for ensuring that all employees are aware of and understand the importance of implementing these procedures, even though the overwhelming majority of vulnerable adults, which you will come into contact with through your Cambridgeshire ACRE work, are likely to experience a perfectly safe and happy life.
  2. It is recognised as well, that a percentage of the vulnerable adults that you come into contact with will, through the nature of their experiences, demonstrate behaviours that might be indicators of abuse. Many factors associated with disadvantage can also result in a vulnerable adult's behaviour being affected, thereby making the identification of abuse even more difficult. You are not expected to suddenly become expert in the protection of vulnerable adults nor are you expected to investigate abuse. You are, however, expected to comply with these procedures.
  3. Employees, who for any reason become concerned that a vulnerable adult may be at risk of abuse, is being, or has been, abused must immediately report that concern to the Responsible Person (or in his/her absence the Head of Business Services).
  4. The Responsible Person will discuss your concerns with you to clarify their cause and obtain all the known relevant information. This will then be forwarded to the appropriate local Social Services Department stating that it concerns vulnerable adult protection.
  5. In the absence of the Responsible Person or a suitable alternate, you should report your concerns directly to the local Social Services Department (see Appendix C) and then inform the Responsible Person or his/her alternate as soon as possible.
  6. Should the concern relate to the Responsible Person, you should contact the Head of Business Services who will contact the Social Services Department directly.
  7. In all cases you should make notes about the incident with dates and recording your actions.
  8. Every reported incident of abuse or suspected abuse will be taken seriously and will be fully recorded at all stages of the process. Everyone has a responsibility to report any circumstances which indicate the presence of suspected or actual abuse.
  9. It is recognised by Cambridgeshire ACRE that employees who report in good faith will receive full support for their actions.

## **PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IF A VULNERABLE ADULT TELLS YOU THAT THEY ARE BEING, OR HAVE BEEN, ABUSED**

1. Vulnerable adults will occasionally disclose abuse to an individual they have come to feel they can trust. This happens for many reasons but the important thing to remember is that if they do tell you, they are doing so in the hope that you will act to stop it happening, even if they ask you not to do anything with the information.
2. Vulnerable adults may feel as if they are betraying someone they are close to and whom they love. It is not unusual for a vulnerable adult to love the abuser but want the abuse to stop, especially when that person is a family member or carer. Equally, it may be someone they fear e.g. a person whom they perceive to be able to influence decisions concerning their future. Either way, it takes great courage for a vulnerable adult to talk about abuse and your response can be crucial.
3. It is important to remember too, that it can be more difficult for some vulnerable adults to tell than for others. Vulnerable adults who have experienced prejudice and discrimination through racism may well believe that people from other ethnic groups or backgrounds don't really care about them. They may have little reason to trust those they see as authority figures and may wonder whether you will be any different.
4. Vulnerable adults with a disability will have to overcome barriers before disclosing abuse. They may well rely on the abuser for their daily care and have no knowledge of alternative sources.
5. If a vulnerable adult discloses abuse to you in the course of your Cambridgeshire ACRE work it is important to react appropriately.
6. Do:
  - 6.1. Remain calm and receptive.
  - 6.2. Listen without interrupting.
  - 6.3. Only ask questions of clarification if you are unclear what the vulnerable adult is saying.
  - 6.4. Make it clear that any information they may give you will be treated seriously and sensitively.
  - 6.5. Acknowledge their courage in telling you and ask them what they would like to happen now.
  - 6.6. Tell them they are not responsible for the abuse.
  - 6.7. Let them know you will do what you can to help them, and where possible, get their consent to inform Cambridgeshire ACRE's Responsible Person and local Social Services Department.

7. Do not:
  - 7.1. Allow your shock or distaste to show.
  - 7.2. Probe for more information/ask other questions - you are taking a disclosure, not investigating.
  - 7.3. Make assumptions or speculate.
  - 7.4. Make negative comments about the abuser.
  - 7.5. Make promises you cannot keep.
  - 7.6. Agree to keep the information secret.
  
8. It is therefore essential that everything possible is done to protect the vulnerable adults who place their trust in us. If a vulnerable adult tells you that they are being, or have been abused, you must:
  - 8.1. Make an immediate record of what the vulnerable adult has said, using their own words.
  - 8.2. Follow the instructions for reporting to Cambridgeshire ACRE's Responsible Person.
  - 8.3. Tell them that you will have to inform Cambridgeshire ACRE's Responsible Person and that, if appropriate, the relevant authorities will also have to be informed.

## PROCEDURE FOR RESPONSIBLE PERSON TO REPORT CONCERNS OR SUSPICIONS THAT SOMEONE IS BEING ABUSED

1. Once a concerns or suspicion of abuse has been reported there are two options. Your course of action may depend on the nature and severity of the abuse:
  - 1.1. Contact the Cambridgeshire Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Team on 0345 045 5202 (Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm). Multi-agency adult protection arrangements will make sure something happens as a result of your call.
  - 1.2. Out of hours emergency social care is available on 01733 234724. They will discuss your concern and act upon it.
2. You will be asked to give your name and contact number but this information will not be passed on to the abuser or the abused. However, you may be asked to give evidence or to contribute to a multi-agency strategy meeting.
3. If the person is in immediate danger or needs medical treatment, do not delay in taking action to protect the vulnerable victim. Contact the police and/or call an ambulance by phoning 999. When contacting the police, you will need to record the crime number and remind them they are responding to a vulnerable adult who may have communication difficulties. If your vulnerable adult is taken to hospital via an ambulance, make a note of the hospital they are being taken to.
4. If you have any concerns, do not:
  - 4.1. Confront the possible abuser yourself.
  - 4.2. Start an investigation yourself.
  - 4.3. Agree to keep anything confidential.
  - 4.4. Destroy or taint evidence that may be used if the situation is investigated.
5. Where possible the referrer should record any further information which may assist any enquiry.
6. The flowchart overleaf summarises the course of the action that should be taken.

Flowchart for employee reporting suspected or actual abuse



## ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES

1. Any vulnerable adult protection allegation made against an employee, whether by a carer, service user, colleague or anybody else will be treated with the utmost seriousness and responded to immediately. This will apply regardless of whether the allegation relates to actions within a work or personal context.
2. Such allegations must always be shared with the Responsible Person who will involve other members of the Cambridgeshire ACRE Senior Management Team and Board as necessary.
3. In all cases where a vulnerable adult protection allegation has been made against an employee, the individual will immediately be suspended from Cambridgeshire ACRE until the investigation into the allegation is completed. The allegation will be referred to the Cambridgeshire Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Team as appropriate (see Appendix C).
4. Allegations against employees will be dealt with under the Cambridgeshire ACRE's Disciplinary Policy.
5. Action under vulnerable adult safeguarding and disciplinary procedures will usually work in parallel.
6. All action taken in response to an allegation against an employee will:
  - 6.1. Protect the rights and wishes of the vulnerable adult,
  - 6.2. Protect the rights of the employee.
7. If there is the possibility of a criminal offence having occurred, any criminal investigation will take precedence over any internal investigation.
8. In situations where it is possible that a criminal offence has occurred but the complainant is unwilling to make a formal complaint to the police, Cambridgeshire ACRE will give careful consideration as to whether it has a duty to report the matter to the Police directly. This decision will be based on risk to service users, risks to others, and the seriousness of the allegation. This decision will be made by the Responsible Person.

## VULNERABLE ADULTS CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

This Code has been developed to provide you with advice that not only will help to protect vulnerable adults, but will also help you and your fellow employees identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse.

Good practice will also protect Cambridgeshire ACRE through reducing the possibility of anyone using their role to gain access to vulnerable adults, in order to abuse.

While it is not intended that this code should restrict employees from normal ways of working, e.g. comforting a distressed vulnerable adult through providing a hug, there is much they can do to avoid situations that may give rise to misinterpretation, which will also work to protect vulnerable adults.

If in doubt, consider how an action or activity may be perceived as opposed to how it is intended.

Wherever possible, you should be guided by the following advice.

If it is necessary to carry out practices contrary to it, you should only do so after discussion with, and the approval of, the Board.

- Avoid unobserved situations of one-to-one contact with a vulnerable adult. If it is unavoidable, always keep a door open and ensure you are within the hearing of other adults.
- Never invite a vulnerable adult to your home without the knowledge and consent of the carers and the Board.
- Never offer to or take a vulnerable adult alone in your own vehicle without the knowledge and consent of the carers and the Board.
- If it is necessary to do things of a 'personal' nature for a vulnerable adult, e.g., toileting if they are disabled, ensure these are carried out with the full knowledge of the carers.
- Develop a culture in which employees feel comfortable enough to point out inappropriate attitudes and behaviours to each other.
- Don't engage in or allow any sexually provocative games involving or observed by vulnerable adults, whether based on talking or touching.
- Never make suggestive remarks or discriminatory comments to a vulnerable adult.
- Don't engage in or tolerate any bullying of a vulnerable adult, either by vulnerable adults or other people.
- Don't engage in or tolerate inappropriate physical activity involving vulnerable adults.
- Never enter a room where a vulnerable adult may be changing their clothes or not be fully dressed, without first clearly getting their consent to enter.

- Respect all vulnerable adults, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual identity.
- Avoid 'favouritism' and singling-out 'troublemakers'.
- Never trivialise abuse.
- Never let allegations by a vulnerable adult go unreported, including any made against you.

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE ACRE

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### 1. Introduction and Scope

- 1.1. Cambridgeshire ACRE aims consistently to provide its members and service users with an efficient, prompt and courteous service. We recognise, however, that, in order to maintain, develop and improve the quality and delivery of our services, we need to receive constructive feedback and be kept informed of any problems experienced by our service users.
- 1.2. Cambridgeshire ACRE pledges to take seriously any feedback or complaint received and to resolve problems through the effective use of this complaints procedure. We also pledge to make service users aware of this procedure wherever possible through our website and corporate literature and will provide a copy of the procedure on request.
- 1.3. The procedure commits Cambridgeshire ACRE to:
  - 1.3.1. Welcoming and recognising the value of comments - positive and negative - on what it does, as such feedback and suggestions enable the organisation to review and improve its services for effectiveness in meeting its objectives.
  - 1.3.2. Treating all complaints seriously.
  - 1.3.3. Ensuring that all Cambridgeshire ACRE staff are aware of the complaints procedure and its significance and their responsibility for meeting the commitments.
  - 1.3.4. Investigating complaints quickly, thoroughly and effectively.
  - 1.3.5. Ensuring the appropriate person deals with the complaint, and that the complainant is notified of the name of the person dealing with their complaint when it is acknowledged within two working days of the complaint being initially received.
  - 1.3.6. Keeping the complainant informed about the progress of the complaint and any action taken as a result of investigations.
  - 1.3.7. Taking action to minimise the chances of the problem recurring.
  - 1.3.8. Learning from mistakes by monitoring the type and frequency of complaints and taking them into account when planning ahead.

## 2. Procedure for Making a Complaint

- 2.1. Your correspondence at each stage of the procedure should be sent to Cambridgeshire ACRE, 72 Market Street, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4LS. Please ensure all correspondence is clearly marked "Private and Confidential" and addressed to the appropriate person (indicated in the three stages under 2.3 below).
- 2.2. You should set out your complaint clearly and precisely giving as much detail as possible including the date, who was involved and the circumstances leading up to your complaint being made. Please also attach copies of any previous correspondence sent and/or responses received from the organisation that is relevant to the complaint being made.
- 2.3. The stages of the procedure are:
  - 2.3.1. Stage 1: Contact the person who is responsible on a day-to-day basis for the relevant area of work. (If you are unsure who this is you can either contact the Head of Business Services on 01353 860850 in order that he/she can advise you who to write to or, alternatively, write to him/her and he/she will forward your complaint to the appropriate person.) It is expected that our staff will be able to resolve most complaints immediately - although some staff do work part-time. Cambridgeshire ACRE will aim to respond to your initial contact within fifteen working days.
  - 2.3.2. Stage 2: If the problem needs more urgent attention than can be given at Stage 1, or is of a personal nature, or if you are not satisfied with the response at Stage 1, you should contact the Chief Executive in writing. The Chief Executive will conduct an investigation into the complaint and respond to you as soon as is reasonably practicable but within ten working days.
  - 2.3.3. Stage 3: If you are not satisfied with the response at Stage 2, or if your complaint relates to the Chief Executive, you can raise the issue in writing with the Chairman. The Chairman will review the situation, taking into account all the information received and any previous action taken by the organisation and will make a considered response as soon as reasonably practicable but within twenty-one working days. The decision of the Chairman will be final.

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# CAMBRIDGESHIRE ACRE

## Health & Safety: Lone Working

### 1. LONE WORKING

- 1.1. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, trustees and secondees/work placements of Cambridgeshire ACRE. For the purpose of this policy, employees, volunteers, trustees and secondees/work placements are referred to collectively as 'employees'.
- 1.2. Cambridgeshire ACRE is concerned to ensure the safety of employees who are exposed to risks arising from working alone and is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the minimization or removal of these risks.
- 1.3. Whenever making a journey or visiting a new community or venue, employees should routinely take steps to avoid putting themselves at risk by:
  - 1.3.1. Making appointments and visits during the day and arranging to meet in public places whenever possible. The appointment must be recorded on the employee's electronic diary and the diary must be shared with other staff.
  - 1.3.2. Checking to ensure that the person they are talking to is actually the person they think they are and the person they are supposed to be visiting (e.g. look for an identity badge).
  - 1.3.3. Trusting their instinct. If a situation feels unsafe or makes a lone worker uneasy, then he/she should trust his/her instinct and take the appropriate action to remove him/herself from the situation that is causing concern.
  - 1.3.4. Making for a busy area if they think that they are being followed or turning and walking in the opposite direction if a car pulls up alongside them.
  - 1.3.5. Declining offers of help from strangers whenever in a vulnerable situation (e.g. when in a broken down vehicle late at night on an isolated road). If an employee is in desperate need of help because of injury or lack of the means to contact help, then they should politely ask the person to call the police, ambulance or breakdown service on their behalf rather than accept an offer of a lift. Employees are advised not to get out of their car when being approached by a stranger. Employees should lock all doors and speak to the person through a window until recognised assistance arrives.
  - 1.3.6. Always carry a mobile phone so they can summon help if required.
  - 1.3.7. Keeping to planned routes and time frames and ensuring that details of their movements are left with either the office or a friend/relative and remembering to notify them of any change to those plans.
  - 1.3.8. Choosing a parking place which is well lit and in public view.

- 1.3.9. Avoiding entering a lift or any other enclosed space with someone that makes them feel uneasy.
- 1.3.10. Avoiding dangerous short cuts (e.g. down dark alleys) and walking facing traffic on the street side of the pavement.
- 1.3.11. Trying to keep one hand free for defensive purposes.
- 1.3.12. Avoiding giving out their personal telephone number or address.
- 1.4. When working, walking or travelling alone, employees should always try to:
  - 1.4.1. Appear confident and knowledgeable.
  - 1.4.2. Be alert and demonstrate a sense of purpose.
  - 1.4.3. Stand, walk and talk in such a way as to display confidence.
  - 1.4.4. Be aware of the surroundings and how to get back to safety if needs be.
- 1.5. If working at another organisation's office, then an employee must ensure that he/she follows the health and safety procedures set out by that organisation. If he/she is at all unsure or has any health and safety concerns, then he/she should ask to speak to that organisation's Health and Safety Officer to clarify matters.

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE ACRE

## Working Near Water

### 1. WORKING NEAR WATER

- 1.1. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, trustees and secondee/work placements of Cambridgeshire ACRE. For the purpose of this policy, employees, volunteers, trustees and secondee/work placements are referred to collectively as 'employees'.
- 1.2. Whenever completing an activity near water, employees should routinely take steps to avoid putting themselves at risk by:
  - 1.2.1. Taking reasonable care when approaching the water's edge, test the firmness of the ground before placing their weight on it.
  - 1.2.2. Be sure that the river is safe. Check for an easy route in and out of the water in case of emergency. Do not deliberate enter the water.
  - 1.2.3. If working alone always carry a mobile phone so help can be summoned if required.
  - 1.2.4. Wear suitable robust footwear with appropriate soles.
  - 1.2.5. If appropriate, wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid. Choose the correct life jacket for the conditions and ensure it fits correctly.
- 1.3. If an employee is unable to swim:
  - 1.3.1. Ensure another individual is with them and that they have informed the project team, a friend or family member with the details of their movements.
  - 1.3.2. Remember to notify them of any changes to those plans.
- 1.4. Attend all training sessions provided by Cambridgeshire ACRE to become aware of:
  - 1.4.1. Cold water shock
  - 1.4.2. Waterborne diseases, including Weil's Disease (leptospirosis), which are extremely rare, but if you enter the water can become exposed to.
  - 1.4.3. Precautions to take to minimise the risk of illness or disease including:
    - 1.4.3.1. Wear protective clothing
    - 1.4.3.2. Cover all cuts and broken skin with waterproof plasters
    - 1.4.3.3. Wash hands before and after coming into contact with water