

VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

The Office of Public Guardian gives the following definition of a vulnerable adult:

A person 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 her self, or unable to protect him or her self against significant harm or exploitation.

Some of FRU's clients may be vulnerable adults. FRU volunteers have a responsibility to report any concerns as to whether their client, who may be a vulnerable adult, is subject to abuse.

Abuse may take the form of physical, financial, material, sexual, psychological, discriminatory, emotional abuse or neglect. If a FRU volunteer has a concern that his or her client is subject to abuse, they should in the first instance raise their concerns with the relevant legal officer.

FRU volunteers agree to abide by the Bar Code of Conduct and are required to maintain client confidentiality. When safeguarding vulnerable adults, there may be a need to disclose confidential information to someone from another organisation, such as the police or adult social services. FRU will only do this when the law allows, and when disclosure will help its clients, or prevent a crime. If confidential information is to be shared, this should be done where possible with the person's agreement. If this is not given, assessment of their best interests may still justify disclosure, and issues involving a wider or public interest may justify overriding their views. Where the client lacks mental capacity, another adult may need to be consulted on their behalf.

Any information shared will be on a "need to know" basis, i.e. only information that is directly relevant to any investigation, and the minimum necessary to achieve the objective of protection of vulnerable adults.

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