

## A Guide to Safeguarding for Prostate Cancer Peer Support Groups

### What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means ensuring your group is run in a way that actively prevents harm, harassment, bullying, abuse and neglect. This includes:

- Keeping people safe whilst they are taking part in your activities and
- Knowing how to recognise when someone in your group is affected by abuse or neglect, wherever it is happening, and knowing how to respond appropriately so you can help them speak up and take action.

### Who needs to think about safeguarding?

Every group has a responsibility to think about safeguarding. The time and effort you will need to spend on safeguarding depends on the level of risk involved in your group's activities. If your group works with at-risk children or adults, you should have written safeguarding policies and transparent procedures. A child is defined as someone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. An adult at risk is defined as:

#### **An individual aged 18 years or over who:**

- **Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) AND;**
- **Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, AND;**
- **As a result of those care and support needs, they are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of or the experience of abuse or neglect.**

Ensuring the safety and well-being of your members is a shared responsibility. This guide will provide essential information on the importance of safeguarding, the relevant legislation, and how volunteers can ensure compliance with UK law while maintaining a supportive environment.

### Section 1: Understanding the Importance of Safeguarding

What is Safeguarding? Safeguarding involves taking measures to protect vulnerable adults from harm, abuse, or neglect. It encompasses proactive steps to preserve their safety, well-being, and dignity.

#### **Why is Safeguarding Important? Safeguarding is crucial because it:**

- Protects vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Maintains the trust and safety of your support group.
- Upholds your organisation's reputation and integrity.
- Ensures compliance with legal obligations.

### Section 2: Legislation and Legal Responsibilities

The Care Act 2014 is the primary legislation governing safeguarding in England. It establishes the legal framework for protecting adults at risk of abuse or neglect and outlines the responsibilities of individuals, local authorities, and service providers.

## **Principles of the Care Act:**

- Empowerment: Encourage individuals to make their own decisions and support them when needed.
- Prevention: Take proactive steps to prevent harm.
- Proportionality: Intervene only to the extent necessary to mitigate risks.
- Protection: Support individuals at risk and take necessary actions.
- Partnership: Collaborate with other agencies to safeguard adults.
- Accountability: Be responsible for your actions and decisions.

## **Key Concepts:**

- Adults at Risk: Individuals aged 18 or over who may require care and support and are unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.
- Duty of Care: A legal obligation to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable adults.

## **Ensuring Compliance**

### **Volunteer Training:**

- Provide comprehensive training for all volunteers on safeguarding procedures, recognising signs of abuse, and reporting concerns.
- Encourage ongoing training to keep volunteers updated on best practices.

### **Develop a Safeguarding Policy:**

- Create a safeguarding policy specific to your prostate cancer support group. Detail the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and provide clear guidance on reporting procedures.

### **Risk Assessment:**

- Regularly assess potential risks and vulnerabilities within your support group. Take measures to minimise these risks.

### **Reporting and Responding:**

- Ensure volunteers promptly report any concerns to a designated safeguarding officer or local authorities if necessary.
- Maintain strict confidentiality and handle reports discreetly.
- Establish clear procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns.

### **Record Keeping:**

- Maintain accurate records of all safeguarding concerns, incidents, or actions taken. These records may be required for legal purposes.

## **Review and Monitoring:**

- Routinely review your safeguarding policy and procedures to ensure they remain current and effective.

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is an essential responsibility for all volunteer-led prostate cancer peer support groups. By understanding the importance of safeguarding, adhering to relevant legislation, and implementing best practices, your organisation can create a safe and supportive environment for its members. Always prioritise the well-being and safety of vulnerable adults within your community while offering valuable support to those living with prostate cancer.