

Supporting individuals in vulnerable circumstances Policy April 2019



Woodcraft Folk
Education for Social Change

YOUTH IS
NOT WASTED
ON THE YOUNG

Policy Purpose

This policy seeks to give guidance to staff and volunteers around how to support the engagement and active participation of vulnerable members of our community.

This policy does not replace Woodcraft Folk's safeguarding policy which describes how to protect children, young people, volunteers and staff from harm, but sets a framework to support vulnerable adults in our groups, campaigns and fundraising.

Individuals may also find it useful to read Woodcraft Folk's [Equal Opportunities Policy](#), [Reasonable Adjustment guidance](#) and [Vulnerable Supporters Policy](#).

Individuals in vulnerable circumstances: definition

The Care Act (2014) defines a vulnerable adults, as someone who:

- Lives in residential accommodation, sheltered housing or receives domiciliary care,
- Receives any form of health care,
- Is detained in lawful custody,
- Has any form of disability or has a prescribed physical or mental problem
- Requires assistance in the conduct of own affairs

This definition excludes many instances of vulnerability e.g. homelessness, English as a second language, refugee status, those with undiagnosed conditions of short-term mental health issues. As such, Woodcraft Folk believes that vulnerability is much broader and can be both permanent and transient. For example all people may, at some stage in their life, be in a vulnerable circumstance or require additional care and support. The reason for using the wording 'an individual who may be in a vulnerable circumstance or require additional care and support' rather than 'a vulnerable person' is to avoid labelling and defining people as being 'vulnerable', and to recognise the broad range of issues which may impact upon someone's ability to engage with a charity as a volunteer, supporter or donor.

It is the context and circumstance they may be in at the time of making a decision about contributing that is relevant. For example, a recently bereaved person may be in a vulnerable circumstance following the death of a family member, but this may change as time progresses. At the time of bereavement they could still have the capacity to make a contribution, but may need additional support to help them make their decision.

Principles

All children, regardless of vulnerability, are welcome to participate in Woodcraft Folk activities. Support plans will be created following our [Reasonable Adjustment](#) guidance for those children and young people with additional support needs.

Woodcraft Folk is first and foremost a movement for children and young people which relies on the support and active engagement of volunteers of all ages. The education of children and young people is our primary purpose and their wellbeing and safety is paramount. Please see Woodcraft Folk's [Safeguarding policy](#) for more details.

Woodcraft Folk believes that all members of society can contribute to our charitable objectives regardless of vulnerability, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socio-economic status, disability, nationality, immigration status and being members of Indigenous Peoples or ethnic, religious or linguistic groups. Please see Woodcraft Folk's [Equal Opportunities policy](#) for more details.

Whilst everyone can make a contribution to Woodcraft Folk's vision, the way an individual is enabled to contribute practically is contingent upon risk to children, their competency and Woodcraft Folk being able to support the individual to do it safely and effectively (e.g. by recruiting an appropriate supervisor).

Woodcraft Folk will welcome all those who support our aims and principles to become a member of, or supporter, of the Folk.

Individuals will be recruited to volunteering roles against agreed role descriptions and person specification, and must demonstrate either skills or experience or the competency to develop necessary skills. See Woodcraft Folk's [Volunteering Opportunities guide](#) for more details.

Volunteering directly with children and young people is not a right, and those volunteers who do must:

- Complete appropriate screening and vetting procedures
- Behave appropriately at all times, demonstrating Woodcraft Folk values and recognising the position of trust in which they have been placed
- Observe the rules established for the safety and wellbeing of the children and young people who attend Woodcraft Folk activities
- Follow recognised policies and procedures, especially around safeguarding, inclusion and health & safety

Safeguards need to be in place to support engagement, balancing individual's wellbeing, managing risk and the needs of children and young people within the organisation.

Informed consent is vital, if there is any doubt that an individual does not understand the contribution they are being asked to make, an agreement should not be reached.

All staff and volunteers working with adults in vulnerable circumstances should receive appropriate guidance/training to enable them to identify vulnerable individuals and take steps to support their participation.

All staff and volunteers should know to whom they should report concerns about the participation or engagement of an adult in vulnerable circumstances. In the first instance this will be to the local Volunteer Co-ordinator or Safeguarding Officer and if necessary escalated to the Lead Safeguarding team.

Recognising a vulnerable person

The following are examples of indicators that an individual may experience vulnerable circumstances:

- Disability, both physical and learning difficulties
- Physical and mental health conditions
- Experiencing times of stress and anxiety e.g. bereavement, family separation, unemployment, homelessness
- Influence of alcohol or drugs

Signs that an individual is in vulnerable circumstances, may include:

- Asking irrelevant and unrelated questions or displaying signs of forgetfulness
- Unable to read and understand the information they are provided with, and asking for it be continually repeated
- Responding in an irrational way to simple questions
- Saying 'yes' or 'no' at times that it is clear they haven't understood
- Taking a long time or displaying difficulty in responding to simple questions or requests for information
- Repeating simple questions, such as 'what do you want', 'who are you'
- Wandering off the subject at hand and making incongruous statements
- Saying that they are not well or not in the mood to continue
- Displaying signs of ill-health or making signs of discontent or exasperation
- Indicating that they are feeling under pressure, rushed or experiencing stress

Possible sources of support

Local Safeguarding Officer or Woodcraft Folk's Lead Safeguarding Officer
safeguarding@woodcraft.org.uk

Ann Craft Trust is a leading authority on safeguarding disabled adults. They have lots of useful templates, resources and definitions of common conditions on their website.
www.anncrafttrust.org

Volunteer recruitment flowchart

The following flowchart should be used for all new volunteers or those changing their role within the organisation.



Useful links:

- [Volunteer Policy](#)
- [Expenses Policy](#)
- [Volunteers Guide](#)
- [Welcome to Woodcraft Folk Guide](#)

