RIDGELINE TRUST SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Ridgeline Trust (the Charity formally known as East Reading Horticultural Therapy & Community-based Training Ltd)is a charity that provides horticultural therapy for people with experience of temporary or permanent learning, mental or physical disabilities and for others with particular needs. Through gardening and time spent in the natural environment, we help people to learn new skills, improve their communication, social skills and environmental awareness, and build their self-esteem and confidence, with the ultimate goal of enhancing their wellbeing.

Introduction
We welcome children, young people and vulnerable adults into the Ridgeline Therapeutic Garden both as volunteers and client**s** to be cared for in a safe environment by people whom they can trust. It is, therefore, the duty of the Charity, and particularly those who work with them, to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults, children and young people with whom they come into contact and protect them from abuse.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of Ridgeline staff, trustees and volunteers in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults, children and young people and to provide a clear procedure that will be followed when safeguarding concerns are raised.

Definitions
A child or young person is defined as a person under the age of 18.
An adult is a person over the age of 18. A vulnerable adult is defined as 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 herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation".

What is abuse?
Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. Abuse is behaviour that causes a person harm and may be a single act or omission or repeated acts or omissions. It can occur in any relationship and abuse can be committed by a relative, a friend or neighbour, health or social care workers, another vulnerable adult or anyone else who comes into contact with a vulnerable adult, child or young person. There are various types of abuse:

- **Physical abuse**- including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

- **Sexual abuse**- including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult or child has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting. It may include non-contact activities involving children in looking at or being involved in sexual online images and/or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Psychological abuse**- including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse**- including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect and acts of omission**- including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse**- including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Procedure to be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is suspicion of abuse

All Ridgeline staff, volunteers and trustees have a responsibility to protect vulnerable adults, children and young people and to take any allegations or suspicion of abuse seriously.

Volunteers – If someone tells you that they are being abused or you suspect abuse it is your responsibility to raise the issue with your supervisor (either one of the Horticultural Therapists or the Development Manager) the same day or if this is not possible, the next working day. If your supervisor is not available or you are uncomfortable raising the issue with him/her you should contact the named Safeguarding Trustee.

DO

- Listen carefully to what the person says and offer reassurance and support.
- Try to ascertain the basic facts but do not attempt to investigate the allegations or make any assumptions.
- Make a note of what the person said using their own words rather than paraphrasing.
- Do not promise confidentiality and explain that you have a responsibility to raise this with your supervisor.
- Make a note as soon as possible afterwards with details of the allegation or suspicion quoting the words used. Your note should include all relevant information including the date, time and place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse and a description of any injuries observed.

Ridgeline Staff should follow the same procedure for volunteers if someone tells you they are being abused, where you suspect abuse or where a volunteer reports allegations of abuse.

- The Development Manager or the Horticultural Therapist must raise the issue with the appropriate Local Authority Safeguarding Team (this will be the Local Authority in whose area the vulnerable adult, child or young person resides) the same day or if this is not possible within 24 hours.
- Concerns, conversations or observations about a child, young person or vulnerable adult that do not need to be reported to the Local Safeguarding Team should be recorded on an incident/concern form and kept securely with the client's file.
- Where possible consent should be obtained from the child or adult before sharing information with third parties. However it is recognised that this is not always possible or desirable as the safety and welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult must be the priority.
- Where a concern is raised or an allegation made against a Ridgeline member of staff or volunteer, the matter will be investigated in accordance with our Staff Disciplinary Policy or Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure.
- Ridgeline staff are also responsible for ensuring that accurate notes are kept not only of the allegation or disclosure but of all action taken subsequently. All written records must be held securely for a specific time as outlined in the Charity's Data Protection Policy.
- Disclosures or allegations of abuse must be treated confidentially and will only be shared with people who need to know; usually this will only be the Local Authority Safeguarding Team and staff and volunteers who have been involved with the initial allegation or disclosure.
- Ridgeline staff may contact the Safeguarding Trustee or in her absence the Chair of Trustees for support and guidance at any time. Staff should inform the named Safeguarding Trustee when a safeguarding matter is raised and detail what action has been taken. The Safeguarding Trustee does not need to be told the identity of the person about who the concern has been raised.

Responsibilities of Ridgeline Trust

The responsibility to safeguard vulnerable adults, children and young people will be reflected in our recruitment procedures for staff and volunteers. Staff will be required to submit a CV and volunteers will complete an application form. References will be sought for all paid and volunteering roles and enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks will be carried out for all staff and volunteers who work directly with children and vulnerable adults. New members of staff and volunteers will not work with children or vulnerable adults until a satisfactory DBS check has been completed.

All new staff and volunteers will be required to read this policy and will receive a briefing on their responsibilities in relation to protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Staff and volunteers who work alongside or come into regular contact with children and vulnerable adults will attend training in safeguarding and will receive an annual refresher on our policies and procedures. Ridgeline will ensure that records are kept of all training undertaken by staff and volunteers.

This policy will be reviewed annually or in the light of new legislation

Reviewed and approved by Trustees February 2021

Reading Borough Council Adult Safeguarding Team

T: 0118 9373747

https://www.reading.gov.uk/adult-care/protecting-adults/adultabuse/

Wokingham Borough Council

https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/safety-and-abuse/report-a-safeguarding-concern/
T: 0118 974 6371

West Berkshire Council

https://www.westberks.gov.uk/safeguardingconcern
T: 01635 519056
Safeguardingadults@westberks.gov.uk

Emergency out of hours for all Berkshire Local Authorities

T: 01344 786543