

# **REFURBIZ**

## ***Policy for Working with Vulnerable Adults***

### **Introduction**

This policy outlines a code of behaviour that Refurbiz expects its entire staff (both paid and voluntary) and its contractors to abide by when in contact with vulnerable adults whilst acting on behalf of Refurbiz.

All members of Staff, and other Contractors, are liable to find themselves in contact with members of the general public, and therefore representing Refurbiz; and it is important that they should

- (i) unfailingly be courteous and patient;
- (ii) deal fairly with them in all their commercial dealings
- (iii) refrain from inappropriate behaviour, and
- (iv) reliably pass on any messages given to them in either direction.

This is good business practice, and helps Refurbiz earn a good reputation.

But there are some people who are especially vulnerable, and in such cases staff must take extra care in the ways described in this Policy.

### **Definition of Vulnerable Adult**

There is no legal definition of the term “vulnerable adult”. The definition adopted by Refurbiz is as follows:

A vulnerable adult is a person over the age of eighteen who is in, 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 himself or herself, or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Refurbiz may be in contact with vulnerable adults as staff, paid or unpaid; or as customers. For this reason personnel may be required to undergo a Criminal Records Check (CRB).

The senior person on site is responsible for discreetly informing staff if a vulnerable adult is working.

Code of Behaviour. In contrast with children, it may not be obvious if a customer is a vulnerable adult, or that there is a vulnerable adult present in a home to which we are delivering, collecting or servicing items. For this reason the following Code of Behaviour should be deemed to be the normal standard of behaviour for all Refurbiz personnel.

### **Code of Behaviour**

When working with vulnerable adults, whenever practicable, Refurbiz personnel should:

- ensure that they are always in the company of another appropriately checked adult, or at least that there is one such on site;
- whilst they treat all people with respect, display good and appropriate behaviour as described above;
- understand the difference between friendliness and familiarity;

- recognise that some vulnerable adults may make inappropriate decisions, and be more susceptible to suggestions;
- recognise that vulnerable adults may be adversely affected by usual modes of speech, language and action, and feel bullied or hurt;
- bear in mind that someone else might misinterpret their actions, no matter how well intentioned;
- be aware that any physical contact may be misinterpreted and so must be avoided whenever possible;
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations and/or suspicions of abuse;
- record any allegations a vulnerable adult makes;
- ensure that whenever relevant the persons who are normally responsible for the vulnerable adult (care workers, parents, guardians, etc) are informed if there are any problems, difficulties in understanding, or risk of inappropriate decisions.

### **Examples of unacceptable behaviour**

- Distressing a person by shouting at them or calling them derogatory names.
- Slapping a person.
- Allowing, or engaging in, inappropriate touching of any kind.
- Engaging in sexually suggestive behaviour within a person's sight or hearing, or making suggestive remarks to or within earshot of a vulnerable adult.
- Persuading someone to spend money, or make a commitment to an action that is inappropriate.
- Not checking that it is appropriate for someone to spend money or make a commitment to an action.

### **What to do if a vulnerable adult is abusive or violent**

Following such an incident it is important that the following steps are taken:

- Ensure the safety of all those involved in the incident
- Gain appropriate first aid or medical attention for anyone injured.
- Once the person is calm provide the opportunity for the person to reflect on the incident if this is appropriate.
- Undertake a formal de-briefing with other adults involved or affected by the incident.
- Once the situation is calm responsible persons / carers / agencies should be informed of the incident.
- The incident itself must be formally recorded.

### **Compliance**

Refurbiz takes its responsibilities in this area very seriously and expects its Staff and Contractors to comply with this policy in all respects.

Failure to comply may lead to disciplinary proceedings for staff, or severance of contract for contractors. (See the appropriate disciplinary procedures).

As adopted by Trustees, 14 October 2008.