



Aware Confidentiality & Risk Management Policy

Confidentiality is very important to Aware. Information provided by people who avail of Aware's services and programmes service users is to be kept confidential, except in specific circumstances where there is a risk to self or other.

Risk arises:

- When a person has immediate plans to die by suicide.
- When a person has immediate plans to harm others.
- When there is identifiable information that a child or a vulnerable adult* is at risk of, or has in the past been subjected to, harm/abuse/neglect.

** A Vulnerable Person considered to be 'an adult who may be restricted in capacity to guard himself / herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation. Restriction of capacity may arise as a result of physical or intellectual impairment', (Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults at Risk of Abuse: National Policy and Procedures. Incorporating Services for Elder Abuse and for Persons with a Disability 2014:3)*

Procedures for Volunteers/Training Partners/Staff to follow, having distinguished between suicidal ideation (i.e., thoughts about suicide) and immediate intent to die by suicide.

- 1) Where a person has immediate plans to die by suicide or plans to harm others.**
In this regard, immediate means directly after the current interaction (meeting, call, programme, email).

1.1) Where a person has immediate plans to die by suicide

Volunteer will:

- a) Acknowledge what the person has shared e.g., *'from what you shared it sounds like this is a very difficult time for you and that you have thoughts that life isn't worth living,*
- b) Ask if the person is talking about suicide and if they have begun to make a plan e.g., *'when you have these thoughts are you talking about taking your own life, are you talking about suicide? If yes, 'have you made a plan to end your life today?'*
- c) Remind the person of the Confidentiality and Risk Management Policy and that based on what the person has shared, you are concerned for their safety. *'In Aware we have a policy in place to ensure that people are safe. Based on what you have shared I am concerned for your safety'.*

- d) Ask the person for their name, location and contact number. If the caller gives identifiable details (i.e., name and location) ring 999/112 (if the person does not give any identifiable details encourage the caller to go straight to A&E or dial 999/112 for an ambulance) *'One way you can keep safe now is for you to give me your name, location and contact number so I can ring 999/112 for an ambulance to bring you to hospital or if you chose not to give me your details, I encourage you to ring 999/112 or go straight to A&E after this call'*. You must end the call now to dial 999/112.
- e) Dial 999/112 – dialling 999/112 is the best and safest way to support the person. Ask for the ambulance service and explain your emergency, who you are and give whatever information you have.
- f) Debrief after the call with particular focus on your own self-care and the steps that they will take to obtain additional support if required.
- g) Immediately document the incident through the **Volunteer Area** under **Online Forms – Confidentiality and Risk Management Policy**.

1.2) 'Harm to Others' Procedures

Where a person reports that they are planning or have an immediate plan to harm another person/people.

Volunteer will:

- a) Acknowledge what the person has shared and explain our concern.
- b) Ask the person for name, location and contact number.
- c) Dial 999/112 – ask for the Gardaí, explain your emergency, who you are and give whatever information you have.
- d) Follow Gardaí directions
- e) Debrief after the call with particular focus on own self-care and the steps to take if additional support is required.
- f) Immediately document the incident through the **Volunteer Area** under **Online Forms – Confidentiality and Risk Management Policy**.

2) Where a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm/abuse/ neglect.

This policy is in place so we can all work together in our community to protect children and vulnerable adults at risk of abuse/harm/neglect.

2.1) Where there is identifiable information that a child or a vulnerable adult is currently at risk of harm/ abuse/ neglect.

Volunteer will:

- a) Acknowledge what has been shared and express your concern for the child or vulnerable adult.
- b) Remind the person of the Confidentiality and Risk Management Policy
- c) Ask the person for their name, location and contact number, alongside identifiable information; including name of person(s) who is alleged to have abused the child

or vulnerable adult; the name of the child or vulnerable adult, address, contact numbers if they have this information.

- d) Inform the person that you are obliged to report directly to the Gardaí and to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in Aware. The DLP will inform TUSLA/HSE of the disclosure(s) made.
- e) If the person discloses identifiable information contact the Gardai, ring 999/112 and provide the information that was disclosed.
- f) Debrief after the call with particular focus on own self-care and the steps to take if additional support is required.
- g) Immediately document the incident through the **Volunteer Area** under **Online Forms – Confidentiality and Risk Management Policy**.

2.2) Where there is identifiable information that an adult has been harmed/abused/neglected retrospectively (as a child, under 18 years).

Volunteer will:

- a) Acknowledge what has been shared.
- b) Remind the person of our Confidentiality and Risk Management Policy and that potentially there may be children at current risk of harm, abuse, or neglect.
- c) Ask the person if they wish to give identifying information (name, location and contact number) which will be passed on to the DLP who will report this to TUSLA.
- d) Give the person other relevant support service contact details such as the HSE National Counselling service 1800 234 111, Rape Crisis Centre 1800 778 888 and One in Four 01-6624070.
- e) If the person chooses not to give any details to Aware, encourage the person to contact TUSLA directly themselves as there may be children at risk of abuse from the alleged perpetrator(s).
- f) Debrief after the call with particular focus on own self-care and the steps to take if additional support is required.
- g) Immediately document the incident through the **Volunteer Area** under **Online Forms – Confidentiality and Risk Management Policy**.

Designated Liaison Person:

- Designated Liaison Person (DLP): The Designated Liaison Person can be contacted via the main Aware office on 01 – 661 7211 or via email confidentiality@aware.ie (during office hrs only)
- Please note that a Designated Liaison Person (DLP), who is a member of staff, has been appointed by the Board to take responsibility for reporting child protection or vulnerable adult concerns to TUSLA/HSE and to act as the liaison person for reported incidents to the Gardaí.

Additional Points:

- Familiarise yourself regularly with the Aware Confidentiality and Risk Management Policy, always have a hard copy at the ready.

- The volunteer is responsible for informing the DLP of concerning information. The volunteer does not have responsibility for what, if any, information is sent to TUSLA or HSE nor what follow up or steps are taken by TUSLA or HSE.
- Volunteers are encouraged to practice self-care techniques. If additional support or advice is required, contact your service manager.