

## Safeguarding Policy

- 1 Durham Nightline acknowledges its statutory obligations with regard to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.
- 2 For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall be used:
  - 2.1 A 'child' shall be defined as 'a person aged under 18 years'.
  - 2.2 An 'adult' shall be defined as 'a person aged 18 years or over'.
  - 2.3 A 'vulnerable adult' shall be defined as 'a person aged 18 years or over, 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' and has either a mental or physical disability'
  - 2.4 'Significant harm' shall be defined as 'physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or neglect'.
- 3 Durham Nightline notes that although some students are still children for at least some of their time at university, the vast majority of students are adults. Volunteers shall therefore treat all callers as an adult, unless evidence to the contrary is presented/ there is significant reason to suspect otherwise.
- 4 Where a volunteer is confident that a caller is under the age of 18, they must refer to the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Procedure.
- 5 It should also be noted that a volunteer should be as certain as is feasibly possible within the context of the call, before identifying a caller as a 'vulnerable adult'. Common sense and good judgement are to be used when dealing with such an issue.
- 6 The central purpose of the principles of Nightline as a non-judgmental, anonymous and confidential listening service is to allow any caller to be able to talk freely without fear of personal information being passed on. However, Durham Nightline realises that there are certain circumstances when the protection of vulnerable groups of people from significant harm or exploitation by others should override this principle.
- 7 Where a volunteer has any concern leading them to believe that a caller has revealed information that suggests a child is at future risk of significant harm or exploitation by another person or persons, it is Nightline's policy to report this to the police. Consent shall not be required from the caller.
- 8 In order to protect confidentiality and anonymity for our callers, it is Nightline's policy that generally, the future risk of significant harm or exploitation to adults will not be reported without the consent of the caller. However, if the volunteer believes that a vulnerable adult is at future risk of significant harm or exploitation then this must also be reported to the police, without requiring the consent of the caller.
- 9 If during a call, a situation as described above arises, the volunteer must refer to the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Procedure.