Vulnerable Persons Policy	ABCA SYSTEMS GROUP LTD

Introduction

The policy is intended to provide clear guidance on the requirements for all staff members to ensure, whatever the circumstances, that all people we come into contact with during the course of our business are treated fairly, with regard to their individual rights and needs.

This applies to the individuals who are vulnerable and those with diagnosed Mental Health issues and to any other persons involved.

This policy applies to ABCA Systems employees who are dealing with situations where the person in question is, or may be:
▪ Suffering from a Mental Health issue;
▪ Vulnerable for any other reason (e.g. care home resident)

The aims and effects of this policy revolve around the need to ensure our conduct with people with Mental Health Issues and their friends and families remains professional and effective, and is applied fairly, regardless of any diversity issues.

When dealing with vulnerable people, with or without mental health issues, all staff will treat them sensitively, fairly and without prejudice whilst safeguarding their Human Rights. ABCA Systems Ltd. will ensure that its actions and those of its staff are proportionate, legal, accountable and necessary.

In delivering the Vulnerable Persons Policy, ABCA Systems Ltd. will also ensure that all those affected by an individual's vulnerability (such as family, friends, carers and the wider community) are treated with dignity and respect and also receive a high-quality service.

The company will monitor all incidents falling within the scope of this policy and will work with partner agencies to ensure the delivery of a professional service that evolves over time through joint learning experiences.

The company embraces the 'social model of disability', which is an approach that recognises that the barriers erected by society are often far more 'disabling' than an individual's own particular impairment.

In administering this policy, the company acknowledges the main types of severe mental illness are: -

Schizophrenia

This **is a long-term mental health condition that causes a range of different psychological symptoms, including:**
▪ Hallucinations – hearing or seeing things that do not exist
▪ delusions – unusual beliefs not based on reality that often contradict the evidence
▪ muddled thoughts based on hallucinations or delusions
▪ changes in behaviour
Doctors often describe schizophrenia as a psychotic illness. This means sometimes a person may not be able to distinguish their own thoughts and ideas from reality.

Changes in thinking and behaviour are the most obvious signs of schizophrenia, but people can experience symptoms in different ways.

Bipolar Disorder

Formerly known as manic depression, is a condition that affects your moods, which can swing from one extreme to another. People suffering from bipolar disorder will have periods or episodes of:

- depression – where you feel very low and lethargic
- mania – where you feel very high and overactive (less severe mania is known as hypomania)

Symptoms of bipolar disorder depend on the mood which the sufferer is experiencing. Unlike simple mood swings, each extreme episode of bipolar disorder can last for several weeks (or even longer), and some people may not experience a "normal" mood very often.

Depression

This is more than simply feeling unhappy or fed up for a few days. Depression affects the way a person eats and sleeps, the way you feel about yourself, and the way you think about things. A depressive disorder is not a sign of personal weakness or a condition that can be willed or wished away. People with a depressive illness cannot merely 'pull themselves together' and get better. Without treatment, symptoms can last for weeks, months, or years.

Dual diagnosis

Having a mental illness significantly increases your risk of misusing alcohol and drugs. Of all people diagnosed as mentally ill, 29 percent either misuse alcohol or drugs.

Policy Requirements

This Policy is designed to ensure correct procedures and protocols are adhered to by all staff when dealing with such incidents, ensuring rights and responsibilities are met, in accordance with legislation, current thinking and best practice. The policy offers the best possible service to the individual and the community that is requiring assistance.

The policy sets the standards to assist staff to deal with the vulnerable persons more effectively. By not having this policy the company runs the risk of failing to give best possible assistance to the individual, and may also contravene guidelines and agreements and fail to provide expected levels of service to the individual, the public and our partnership agencies. There are legislative obligations in addition to duty of care implications that require these procedures to be formalised.

Resource & Training Implications

The training in this area will be delivered using the i-Hasco module on safeguarding vulnerable adults. We have a duty to provide adequate services to the customer from a position of knowledge, which can only be achieved by showing an ongoing commitment to such a training program.

Each Department Manager will be responsible for local training and advice in order to keep staff updated on the protocols.

Staff involvement within this training will be considered a mandatory, and will be required to be updated annually. It will be the responsibility of all Department managers during the training phase to ensure they are aware of the policy and procedures. Staff will be expected to be aware of the content of this policy.

The Training will reflect the following points:

An overview on common disorders that staff may encounter when dealing with persons with a mental health issue;

- The most effective way of dealing with such persons and resolving situations involving mental health issues.
- A discussion on the association between drug use and mental health problems, and how to deal and recognise persons under the influence of drugs.
- Relevant law implication updates as they arise.
- Updated current thinking and Best Practice within the area.