

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Policy Title** | Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for Children and Adults |
| **Version Date** | Jan 2023 |
| **Next Review Date** | Jan 2024 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1** | **Purpose & Scope** |
| 1.1 | **Care Merseyside** recognises that Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults is everyone’s responsibility. We aim to ensure that we undertake our responsibilities with regard to protection of children and/or vulnerable adults at all times and that we respond to concerns appropriately. |
| 1.2 | The policy establishes a framework to support employees and volunteers in their practices and sets out the organisation’s expectations. We aim to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults with whom the organisation engages across its operational activities. |
| 1.3 | Care Merseyside does not currently carry out any regulated or controlled activities as defined in law with regard to any service users for any of its activities. |
| 1.4 | For the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) factsheet on children see;  <http://rcdow.org.uk/att/files/safeguarding%20forms%202014%20branding/children's%20factsheet%20-%20regulated%20activity.pdf>  See Department of Health Booklet Regulated Activity (Adults) *at:*  <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216900/Regulated-Activity-Adults-Dec-2012.pdf>  and see also the Department of Education Regulated Activity with regard to Children (Scope*) .* |
| **2** | **Definitions** |
| 2.1 | **Safeguarding Overview and Definition of Terms**  Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of children and/or vulnerable adults from abuse. Child and adult protection is about responding to risks in circumstances that arise requiring action to be taken. |
| 2.2 | **Definition of a child**  A child is under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child). |
| 2.3 | **Definition of abuse**  Abuse is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused both by someone inflicting harm and/or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture. |
| 2.4 | **Forms of abuse:**   * + Physical abuse   + Sexual abuse   + Emotional abuse   + Bullying   + Neglect   + Financial (or material) abuse   This can also include child sexual exploitation, trafficking, forced marriage, bullying, and honour based violence amongst other abuses. |
| 2.5 | **Definition of Vulnerable Adults (Adults at Risk)**  A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.  This mayinclude a person who:   * Is elderly and frail * Has a mental illness or disability * Has a physical or sensory disability * Has a learning disability * Has a severe physical illness * Is a substance misuser * Is homeless |
| 2.6 | **Other Adult risk factors may include:**   * Not having mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety arising from a mental disorder – including fluctuating mental capacity associated with mental disorder (as defined under the Mental Capacity Act 2005). * Communication difficulties * Physical dependency – being dependent on others for personal care and activities of daily life * Low self-esteem * Experience of abuse * Childhood experience of abuse |
| 2.7 | **Statutory guidance and further information**  **The Department of Education Statutory Guidance for Children is available at:**  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>  **For further information on signs and indicators of abuse go to:**   * Child Abuse: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/> * Adult Abuse: <http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/ataglance/69-adults-safeguarding-types-and-indicators-of-abuse.asp> |
| **3** | **Responsibilities** |
| 3.1 | This policy identifies the overall responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, **The Steering Group Committee**, employees (defined as staff (paid) and volunteers (unpaid)), Service providers (Unpaid) for ensuring the safety, health, wellbeing, reduction of risks, safeguarding and protection of children and adults with who engages in its operational activities. |
| 3.2 | All employees (staff, volunteers and **service providers**) have responsibility to follow the Safeguarding policy and related policies, and to report any welfare concerns using the required procedures. **Care Merseyside** expects all employees to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contributing to safeguarding discussions, and to positively involve people in developing safe practices. |
| 3.3 | **Additional specific responsibilities** |
| 3.3.1 | **Trustees**  Trustees have primary responsibility for safeguarding in their charity. This means:   * Acting in the best interests of children & adults at risk * Taking all reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them * Assessing and managing risk * Putting safeguarding policies and procedures in place * Undertaking monitoring and reviews to ensure that safeguards are being implemented and are effective. * Responding appropriately to allegations of abuse. * Liaison with the Designated Person(s) and the Senior Management Team (SMT) and monitoring their work.   The Designated Trustee is **Faisal Maassarani**.  The Trustees have delegated authority to the **Steering Group** to ensure effective day-to-day operational implementation and management of the policy. |
| 3.3.2 | **Designated Person/s**  The Designated Person is the Chief Executive **Catherine Connolly**. If a complaint is made against them the Designated Person will be **Faisal Maassarani**.  Care Merseyside also has a Deputy Safeguarding Perso*n* who is responsible for dealing with any related concerns in the event that the Designated Person is ill, on holiday or an allegation of abuse is made about him/her. This person **is Ruth Melling**.  The Designated Person will be available for vulnerable adults and children to speak with should they the need to talk with someone about an incident which has happened whilst working for or receiving assistance from, the Care Merseyside.  The responsibilities of the Designated Person will include:   * Ensuring the policy is monitored and reviewed * Promoting the welfare of children & vulnerable adults * Ensuring staff and volunteers have access to ongoing appropriate Safeguarding training and information * Receiving staff concerns about safeguarding and responding to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately * Keeping up to date with local Safeguarding arrangements and DBS * Developing and maintaining effective links with relevant agencies, including Knowsley Safeguarding Children’s Board (KSCB), Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB), and Local Authority Designated Officer * Taking forward concerns about responses (**See Reporting a Concern** and **Making A Referral.** |
| 3.3.3 | **The Steering Group** have a responsibility to ensure:   * The policy is accessible * The policy is implemented   Sufficient resources (e.g. time and money) are allocated to ensure that the policy is effectively implemented |
| 3.3.4 | **Line Managers**  Line Managers also have responsibility to support staff to report concerns and to provide support and assistance with the relevant Safeguarding Forms. |
| **4** | **Implementation Stages** |
|  | The scope of this Safeguarding Policy is broad ranging and in practice, it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within the organisation.  These include:   * Equality and Diversity Policy * Confidentiality Policy * Data Protection Policy * Anti-Fraud policy (Financial Whistleblowing) * Complaints & Grievances (other Whistleblowing guidance) * Health and Safety Policy (includes Lone Working provisions) * Lone Working Risk Assessment |
| **5** | **Safe recruitment**  Care Merseysideensures safe recruitment through the following processes |
| 5.1 | **Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) and DBS Gap Management**  If the need should arise the Care Merseyside will commit resources prior to any offer of appointment for DBS checks on employees or volunteers for any roles that may arise in the future involving contact (regulated activities) with children and /or vulnerable adults.  <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about#dbs-check-eligibility> |
| 5.2 | **Volunteers**  All volunteers have to complete a volunteer application form before commencing work providing a declaration in line with the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Details must be provided for an adequate risk assessment to be undertaken. |
| 5.3 | **Job Adverts and Interview:**  Care Merseysidewill provide a simple Safeguarding Statement for job adverts that ‘recruitment is done in line with safe recruitment practices’. See also the Equality and Diversity Policy. |
| 5.4 | **Service delivery contracting and sub-contracting:**  Service delivery contracts to be monitored for compliance with the Safeguarding Policy. |
| **6** | **Communications Policy, Training and Support for Staff** |
| 6.1 | Care Merseyside will commit the necessary resources for communications, training and support for all staff in relation to Safeguarding, as follows: |
| 6.1.1 | **Induction**:  Induction of new employees and volunteers will include meeting the Designated Safeguarding Person, discussion of the Safeguarding Policy, reading other relevant policies and procedures, and arrangements for undertaking mandatory training. |
| 6.1.2 | **Training**  All staff in contact with children and /or vulnerable adults will have access to training appropriate to their role. Staff will be provided with access to Safeguarding Awareness Training for Working with Children & Young People and Working with Vulnerable Adults. |
| 6.1.3 | **Communications and discussion of safeguarding issues**  Commitment to the following communication methods will ensure effective communication of safeguarding issues and practice:  As **a Social Prescribing Charity, Care Merseyside** recognises a moral, ethical and social aspect to Safeguarding. The Steering group will lead and promote a ‘Culture of Safeguarding’ based on the Care Merseyside ‘Background, Visions and Values’ Statement.  Steering Group Meeting (quarterly reports and discussion).  Open discussion in Team Meetings and by line manager briefings.  As an agenda item/ discussion in formal or informal one to one supervision with employees, volunteers and service providers |
| 6.1.4 | **Support**  We recognise that involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be stressful for staff concerned. The mechanisms in place to support staff include:   * Debriefing sessions * One to one supervision * Support with accessing counselling * Staff have a right to request support via any of the above mechanisms at any time. |
| **8** | **Professional Boundaries** |
| 8.1 | Care Merseyside expects all staff and volunteers to protect their own personal and professional integrity and that of the organisation. The following guidance must be adhered to; |
| 8.1.2 | **Staff and volunteers will:**   * Remember they are a role model and provide an example for those they work with to follow * Bear in mind that some actions, no matter how well-intentioned, may be easily misinterpreted and so leave all parties vulnerable * Be alert to any potential harm to children and adults at risk * Respect the right to privacy * Provide opportunities for children and adults at risk to discuss any concerns they may have * Speak to the Designated Person(s) if concerned about the safety or welfare of an individual * Speak to the Designated Person if they suspect a child or adult at risk is developing or has developed an infatuation with them, or has inappropriate feelings towards any member of staff or volunteer; * **Refer to the Whistleblowing Policy/Statement** if concerns arise about the suitability of a member of staff or volunteer in relation to working with children or adults at risk, or if an allegation is raised by another member of staff, service user or third party, such as an external organisation or community member. * Follow **Care Merseyside** guidance and training in relation to the use of electronic communication and social networking sites. |
| 8.1.2 | **Staff and volunteers will not:**   * Arrange to see or communicate with service users in circumstances unconnected with their work, including the use of texting and personal social media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter * Work unsupervised for substantial periods of time with any child or adult at risk, except where one-to-one work is necessary i.e. an interview in an office setting. All unsupervised contact must be risk assessed and agreed with the line manager. * Permit abusive behaviour by others or engage in it themselves * Show favouritism to, or become too closely associated with, an individual. Nor should they get drawn into inappropriate, attention-seeking behaviour (e.g. crushes) * Allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching of any kind which could be misunderstood * Do anything which might undermine a good reputation for providing a safe environment |
| 8.2 | If the professional boundaries and/or policies are breached this may result in disciplinary procedures or enactment of the allegation management procedures. Serious breaches of conduct may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal (see the Disciplinary Procedure). |
| **9** | **Safeguarding Reporting** |
| 9.1 | **Reporting a Safeguarding Concern**  All employees must follow the Reporting guidance for raising and reporting safeguarding concerns at the Care Merseyside**. See the Flowchart below and Forms attached for Reporting a Concern** and **Making a Referral.**  *Ensure the person is safe from immediate harm, If requiring urgent medical assistance or Police ring 999.*  *Communicate your concerns with your immediate manage/supervisor*  *Discuss with young person/vulnerable person.*  *Obtain permission to make referral if safe and appropriate*  *Designated Safeguarding Person to be informed and advice sought from Knowsley Children and Families helpdesk or Adults helpdesk*  *Complete the Local Authority Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Incident Report Form if required and submit to the local authority within 24 hours of making contact*  *Ensure that feedback from the Local Authority is received and their response recorded* |
| 9.2 | Remember! No Secrets! You cannot promise under any circumstances to ‘keep a secret’. The duty is to Report *not* Investigate. Safeguarding records may be used as evidence in disciplinary proceedings or in civil or criminal prosecutions. |
| **10** | **Allegations Management** |
| 10.1 | Care Merseysiderecognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its staff or volunteers made within the organisation, or by a professional from another organisation or any other person.  The process for raising and dealing with allegations is as follows: |
| 10.1.1 | **First step:** Any member of staff (paid or unpaid) from the Care Merseyside is required to report any concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Person. |
| 10.1.2 | **Second step**- Designated Safeguarding Person to contact the local authority for advice. |
| 10.1.3 | **Third step** – follow the advice provided |
| 10.2 | **Whistle Blowing** |
|  | All staff have a responsibility to report immediately any occurrences or suspicions of abuse, no matter what the setting, who the perpetrator is or who the victim is. Anyone who reports abuse is protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act **1998.**  Care Merseyside will respect and not penalise those who stand up for anyone who is suspected of being abused. |
| 10.3 | Further guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/whistleblowing-guidance-for-charity-employees>  Care Merseyside recognises its legal duty to report any concerns about unsafe practice by any of its paid or unpaid staff to the appropriate authorities. Serious incidents will be reported to the Charities Commission (see guidance available via the link below)  <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>  For Disclosure Barring Service referrals:  <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-referrals-guidance--2> |
| **11** | **Monitoring** |
| 11.1 | The organisation will monitor the following Safeguarding aspects:  Recruitment   * Safer recruitment practices * DBS checks undertaken if required * References applied for new staff * Records made and kept of staff and volunteer supervision and appraisal * Register/ record of staff/volunteer training on child/ vulnerable adult safeguarding relevant to their role * Whether safeguarding concerns are being reported and actioned * Checking that policies are up to date and relevant * Reviewing the current reporting procedure in place * Presence and actions of Designated Person for Safeguarding * The Designated Safeguarding Officer and Designated Trustee to be informed if any of the above require action to ensure compliance. |
| **12** | **Managing Information** |
| 12.1 | Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and Confidentiality Policy. |
| 12.2 | All staff must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. The public interest in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults may override confidentiality interests. |
| 12.3 | All staff are advised that they cannot promise service users or their families/ carers that they will keep secrets. However, information is only to be shared on a need to know basis and the procedures must be followed when a disclosure is made. |
| 12.4 | The Designated Safeguarding Person must be informed before information is shared with a third party or statutory agency. |
| **13** | **Conflict resolution and Complaints** |
| 13.1 | Care Merseysideis aware of the need to refer to the relevant Children and Adults Safeguarding Board and any relevant local policy on resolution of professional disagreements in work relating to the safety of children (e.g. Local Authority Escalation Policy) .  If escalation is necessary this will be taken forward by Catherine Connolly, Faisal Maassarani or Lee Panter in their respective Safeguarding roles. |
| 13.2 | Conflicts in respect of safety of vulnerable adults will be taken forward by Catherine Connolly, Faisal Maassarani or Lee Panter via the relevant Adult Care Directorate and Safeguarding Board. |
| 13.3 | **The Complaints Policy is to be made available on request and displayed on the Care Merseyside website.** |
| **14** | **Communicating and Reviewing the Policy** |
| 14.1 | Care Merseysidewill make clients aware of the Safeguarding Policy through the following means:   * The Safeguarding Policy to be published on the Care Merseyside website. * A Safeguarding Statement displayed in the offices and on the website of the Care Merseyside advertising the names of the Designated Person(s) and contact details. * This policy will be reviewed by the Steering Group annually and whenever there are changes in legislation or operational practice that make a review necessary |