

SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Safehands is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for all staff and fully recognises its responsibility to help safeguard the welfare of both adults and children protect them from harm. The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount, and Safehands takes seriously its duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults and children in its care.

Core Principles

Our core principles set out our approach to Safeguarding.

- i. The safety and welfare of staff and service users is paramount.
- ii. All staff and service users regardless of age, ability, sex, race, religion or belief, ethnic origin, gender reassignment, social status or sexual orientation have the right to be protected from harm.
- iii. The rights, dignity and worth of all staff and service users should always be respected.
- iv. Safehands will promote and foster a culture of trust and support to ensure staff and service users are comfortable in reporting any issues.
- v. It is the responsibility of child protection professionals to determine whether abuse has taken place, but it is everyone’s responsibility to report concerns. All staff must follow the procedures in place for reporting concerns or disclosures. Allegations against members of staff or volunteers will be handled fairly in accordance with our policies.
- vi. Safehands will ensure that as part of their induction, new staff and volunteers are made aware of the company’s arrangements for safeguarding and will provide safeguarding training for all staff and offer this to Board members. This will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated in line with statutory requirements. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will receive training updated every two years.
- vii. Safehands is committed to encouraging and undertaking effective and safe recruitment of staff. The company will assess all posts to be filled and ensure that recruitment checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are undertaken in line with Safer Recruitment.
- viii. Safehands will ensure there is a member of the Senior Leadership Team with responsibilities to lead on safeguarding, child protection and preventing terrorism (the Designated Safeguarding Lead) and that there is always cover for this role, including arrangements for support during the evenings.
- ix. Allegations of abuse or concerns that a staff member may pose a risk of harm to a child or young person will be notified to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- x. All staff and volunteers can raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice as laid out in the Whistleblowing Policy.

2. DEFINITIONS

‘Child’ means a person under 18 years of age.

‘Vulnerable Adult’ means an adult (a person aged 18 or over) who is (or may be) in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness; and 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.

‘Staff’ means all those working for or and on behalf of the Company, full time or part time including volunteers.

‘Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)’ (DSL) means the person with lead responsibility for Child Protection and Safeguarding issues.

Document Ref No: SHP001	Revision Number: V2.0	Created by: Compliance Manager
Authorised: Katie Armstrong		Location: SharePoint\Docs Management\RE
Controlled by: Compliance Department		Date Issued: 30.11.2020

'DBS' means Disclosure and Barring Service.

'LADO' means the Local Authority Designated Officer.

3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Directors, together with the DSL are responsible for:

- Ensuring Policies are reviewed and updated in line with the law.
- Ensuring that staff and volunteers undertake regular safeguarding training.
- Safehands having in place safe recruitment policy and procedures, including appropriate use of reference checks on new staff and volunteers.
- Ensuring that any volunteers are properly supervised.
- Ensuring Disclosure and Barring Service checks are undertaken in line with the DBS Policy.
- Making a 'referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or would have been had they not resigned.'
- Creating safeguarding reports for the Board of Directors as requested.
- Having in place procedures to deal with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers.
- To minimise the risk of abuse.
- To investigate all allegations of abuse.
- To undertake periodic checks to ensure all safeguarding procedures are working effectively.
- To be responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy.
- The Chair of the Board should liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and request reports for the Board of Directors, to assess the effectiveness of Safeguarding.

All Staff

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this Policy and related Policies, and to help ensure the safety and welfare of service users, referring concerns in writing to the designated safeguarding lead where appropriate to ensure that help and support is provided at the earliest possible opportunity.

In addition:

- To attend Safeguarding training to have the skills to recognise those who may be vulnerable and to know the appropriate action to take if they have concerns.
- Report any concerns via the safeguarding reporting channels.

4. TYPES OF ABUSE & NEGLECT

The following are types of abuse and neglect:

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child

opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse and violence against women and affects girls particularly from North African countries. It is illegal in England and Wales to allow girls to undergo this practice, which involves the 'partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons'.

We are aware that section 5b of the FGM Act 2003 has introduced a mandatory reporting duty which requires health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report to the police when a girl under the age of 18 informs them that FGM has been carried out on them or if they observe physical signs that FGM has been carried out. The signs to look out for are:

- Difficulty walking, standing or sitting.
- Spending longer in the bathroom or toilet.
- Appearing withdrawn, anxious or depressed.
- Displaying unusual behaviour after an absence from school or college.
- Being particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations.
- Asking for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

Honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing'.

Violent extremism: We are aware that there are extremist groups within our country who wish to radicalise vulnerable adults and children and to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. Any concerns will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

5. HOW WE PREVENT SAFEGUARDING

While it is not possible to prevent all abuse, we take steps to reduce the risk of abuse occurring.

Our staff should:

- 1) Know what abuse is;
- 2) Understand how it can happen;
- 3) Be alert to indicators of potential abuse situations;
- 4) Know the procedures for reporting concerns and poor practice; and
- 5) Provide appropriate support through good assessment and care planning.

We ask that staff don't:

- Spend excessive amounts of time with service users, away from others;
- Give any service users a lift or meet with them in an inappropriate setting e.g. a bar
- Have a romantic relationship with any service users, regardless of age
- Take service users into your home
- Avoid giving gifts: or any gift above a £30 value or give multiple gifts within a short space of time
- Be friends with any service users on social media, such as Facebook

The effectiveness of this Policy will be ensured through:

- i. Annual review of the Safeguarding Policy by the Board.
- ii. Informing the Board annually on safeguarding issues during the prior year to include as to how staff have complied with the Policy.

Policies

Safehands will ensure that it has policies and procedures which are consistent with Government guidance; this includes following procedures as set out by Local Safeguarding Boards.

This Policy will be reviewed annually, or as otherwise directed by legislative changes and should be read in conjunction the Staff Code of Conduct.

Safer Recruitment

Safehands is committed to encouraging and undertaking effective and safe recruitment of staff. The Company will assess all posts to be filled and ensure that recruitment checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are undertaken in line with Safer Recruitment practices.

Awareness & Training

Safehands will ensure that as part of their induction, new staff are made aware of the Company's arrangements for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, including preventing violent extremism and their responsibilities and will provide safeguarding training for all staff members. This will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated in line with statutory requirements.

All staff will undergo the Company's mandatory safeguarding training. In addition, staff will receive safeguarding and child protection updates (e.g. via email, e-bulletin, staff meetings etc.), as required.

Document Storage

All child protection records will be stored securely and separately from other records. Access will be restricted to safeguarding staff with safeguarding responsibilities.

Any transfer of child protection records to another institution will be separate from any other records. Records will be transferred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Equality Analysis

By virtue of the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, Safehands has a duty to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups.
- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

Where necessary a full equality impact assessment will be undertaken.

6. HOW TO REPORT A CONCERN

Everyone working with young people or vulnerable adults has a duty to report suspected, alleged or confirmed incidences of abuse IMMEDIATELY to the DSL or a Director.

In the event of someone reporting an allegation of abuse:

Please Do:

- Remain Calm.
- Ensure no-one is in immediate danger.
- Call for emergency service if urgent medical/police help is needed.
- Record all the facts.

Please Don't:

- Promise to keep secrets.
- Be judgemental or overreact.
- Challenge the alleged abuser.
- Investigate yourself.
- Do anything that could disturb evidence i.e. – tidy up or encourage the person to bathe.
- Discourage anyone from reporting concerns.
- Leave details of your concerns on a voice mail.

It is the responsibility of child protection professionals to determine whether abuse has taken place, but it is everyone's responsibility to report concerns.

All staff must follow the procedures in place for reporting concerns or disclosures.

Allegations against members of staff will be handled in accordance with Staff Disciplinary Policy.

Allegations of abuse or concerns that a staff member may pose a risk of harm to a child or young person will be notified to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

7. POLICY REVIEW DATE

This Policy will be reviewed annually, or legislative changes and should be read in conjunction with The Staff Code of Conduct.