



# FUTURE LIVING

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY – ADULTS AT RISK OF HARM

### 1. POLICY OUTLINE

This policy and its accompanying procedure establish the position of Future Living Hertford (“FLH”) and its employees and volunteers (including trustees) (“the staff”). This document aims to clearly explain our policy and procedures for protecting those who come into contact with FLH from harm.

Changes in policy may be made from time to time to meet the operational needs of FLH, as well as legislative requirements and, where possible timely notice of these changes will be provided to the staff.

#### 1.1 Dissemination

This Safeguarding Policy and Procedure will be clearly communicated to the staff during their Induction process. All service users will be made aware of the policy during their initial Assessment interview or counselling session.

#### 1.2 Recruitment and Training

FLH’s recruitment and selection procedure requires references, proof of identity and, in our care and support services, enhanced disclosure and 3 yearly re-checks for every member of the staff who works with service users.

Our employment policies prevent barred persons from being employed in any position that involves working with service users.

All the staff will work within the procedures that accompany this policy, and they are informed of the existence of the Safeguarding procedures and told how to locate a copy within the FLH premises. Further, all members of the staff who work with service users are given a copy of the Procedure at Induction. Additionally, all front-line members of the staff will receive training on these procedures at Induction.

The procedures that deliver this policy complement Hertfordshire County Council’s safeguarding practices and will ensure that all colleagues engaged in delivering our services:

- Are alert to the possibility of abuse towards adults at risk and children
- Are alert to abuse of a service user or applicant to any FLH service
- Know how to recognise abuse
- Understand the need to share information about concerns with agencies that need to know
- Understand professional boundaries

- Identify risks associated with lone working by the members of the staff they manage
- Know and use local authority guidelines (or FLH guidelines in their absence)
- Know how and where to report concerns
- Are aware of good practice and serious incident reporting procedures to ensure that the Board is made aware of serious allegations involving any members of the staff.

### 1.3 Application

The application of this policy recognises the key principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (the Act) which sets out the right for everyone covered by the Act to make decisions and for any decision made on their behalf to be in their best interests. The staff will always act in accordance with the principles of that Act when they believe that someone is being abused and in determining how to report that abuse.

### 1.4 Risk Assessment

FLH performs a risk assessment on each service user which is completed as part of the initial client assessment process, using the DASH Risk Checklist. Training on DASH is provided for all members of the staff that perform client assessments. (See Appendix – DASH Risk Checklist)

### 1.5 Safeguarding Adults at Risk

FLH will provide service users with information about how and with whom they can share any concerns, complaints and anxieties.

FLH will inform service users of the need to safeguard adults at risk and children within the sign up procedure, and in the service handbooks. Counsellors will reiterate this during their contracting with each service user.

Safeguarding is a standard agenda item for service delivery team meetings and operational management team meetings, including Board meetings.

FLH procedures ensure that the staff know the arrangements and contact details for reporting concerns to both the designated FLH Safeguarding Team Lead and local authority safeguarding teams.

FLH will work with relevant agencies, on individual cases and reviewing best practice and new legislation so that appropriate strategies can be developed for responding to the needs of the service users.

Training includes the recognition of potential child sexual exploitation, online grooming and missing person's protocols. It is provided in a way that is appropriate for each member of the staff's level of engagement with children in their day-to-day work.

### 1.6 Safeguarding Children

Refer to the FLH Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

## 2. SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

This policy applies to all service users attending FLH's support services, applicants and visitors to our services, as well as any information FLH receive on family members or non-related adults at risk.

It supports the safeguarding processes of local authorities in whose areas FLH work.

The policy and its accompanying procedure and guidelines outline the responsibilities of the staff in relation to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults using FLH services.

The policy recognises that the safeguarding of service users who attend FLH premises or access FLH services elsewhere is the responsibility of all members of the staff.

Safeguarding is the right of persons accessing FLH services to be protected from any form of abuse.

### 2.1 Definition of abuse

Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that deliberately or unknowingly causes them harm, endangers life or violates their rights. It includes not only physical, emotional and psychological ill treatment but also neglect (including self-neglect), financial or sexual abuse, and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. It concerns the misuse of power, control and /or authority and can be perpetrated by an individual, a group or an organisation. In particular:-

- A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.
- An adult is anyone aged 18 or above.
- The Care Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as 'someone over the age of 18 who has a need for care and support. Someone who is experiencing or at risk of neglect and abuse'.

An adult at risk of abuse may:-

- Have an illness affecting their mental or physical health
- Have a learning disability
- Suffer from drug or alcohol problems
- Be 'frail'

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides a statutory framework to empower and protect vulnerable people who are not able to make their own decisions. It makes it clear who can take decisions, in which situations, and how they should go about this.

The definition of abuse includes Domestic Abuse and forced marriage. Domestic Abuse is 'any single incident or pattern of conduct where someone's behaviour towards another is abusive, and where the people involved are aged 16 or over and are, or have been, personally connected to each other (regardless of gender or sexuality).' Some incidents of abuse could also be relevant to FLH's domestic abuse policy and procedures, and it will be clear how FLH propose to manage any such incident. Forced marriage is one in which one or both of the spouses do not consent to the marriage and some element of duress is involved, including the use of physical and emotional pressure. Forced marriage is not sanctioned within any culture or religion.

FLH recognises that everyone has the right to protection from abuse and to be treated no less favourably than others, regardless of gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion/beliefs, pregnancy/maternity and gender reassignment.

## 2.2 Safeguarding adults at risk

Safeguarding adults at risk means protecting their right to live in safety and free from abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding duties for adults at risk apply to any charity working with anyone aged 18 or over who:-

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs), and
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

## 2.3 Safeguarding children

Refer to the FLH Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

## 3. **PRINCIPLES**

FLH will:-

- Protect all those who use the services that FLH provides and anybody connected with the charity from harm and to promote their well-being and welfare. (This includes the charity's service users, children of adults who use our services, and members of the staff)
- Provide parents and the staff with information on the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

This policy statement applies to anyone working with or on behalf of FLH, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff and volunteers.

FLH will seek to keep its service users safe by:-

- valuing, listening to, and respecting them
- appointing a designated safeguarding lead and a backup safeguarding lead
- developing safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect best practice and that are in line with legislation and local authority guidelines
- using FLH safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving service users, parents, families and carers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that FLH has a policy and procedure to help deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- sharing information about safeguarding best practice with service users, children, their families and the staff via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions as appropriate
- recruiting new members of the staff safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made

- providing effective management for the staff through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures
- implementing a code of conduct for all of the staff
- using FLH procedures to manage any allegations against a member of the staff appropriately
- ensuring that FLH have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that FLH provides a safe physical environment for service users and the staff by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- recording and storing information professionally and securely in line with current GDPR requirements.

### 3.1 Implementation

- The welfare of the child or adult at risk of abuse is of paramount consideration.
- FLH will not tolerate abuse in any circumstances. Doing nothing is not an option.
- All children and adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious beliefs and sexual identity have a right to protection from abuse.
- Adults have the right to be in control of their life, make decisions, be treated with respect and consideration and have their confidentiality respected.
- All children and adults at risk of abuse have a right to intervention, support and/or information which could make life better and/or safer for them and be involved in decisions that are made about them.
- FLH will promote the empowerment, wellbeing, security and safety of children and adults at risk of abuse consistent with their rights, mental capacity and personal choices.
- FLH aim to minimise the risk of abuse by being sensitive to cultural, gender and individual needs in its service delivery.
- FLH will maintain a culture and standards that prevent the development of poor care and support practices.
- FLH recognises that inter-agency co-operation is essential if children and adults are to be protected effectively from abuse. FLH will work closely in partnership with key agencies and professionals, sharing information and developing appropriate strategies to respond to the needs of our clients.
- All of the staff will be aware of, and comply with, local guidelines in relation to reporting concerns about children or adults at risk. Where no such local procedures exist externally, FLH will provide its own.
- FLH will report instances of disclosed or suspected abuse to the appropriate social services contact in line with local authority guidance, alerting the police or other emergency services as required. Where appropriate, FLH will report concerns to the Disclosure Barring Service or the Care Quality Commission.
- FLH actively encourages and supports reporting of concerns and will protect members of the staff disclosing malpractice from the risk of victimisation provided the disclosure is made in good faith.
- FLH will review new legislation as it arises and continually review its working practices to ensure that they are fit for purpose and in line with local authority and legislative requirements.

## 4. **Responsibilities**

- All children and adults have the right to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Safeguarding children and adults is the responsibility of everybody within FLH

- Working in partnership with relevant agencies, in conjunction with local safeguarding procedures, has demonstrable results

All of the staff who work for FLH in any capacity are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy and its associated procedures. This is made clear during the induction process.

Failure to report suspected harm or abuse in line with the procedure that accompanies this Policy may be regarded as colluding with the harm or abuse and may be subject to an internal investigation.

## **5. COMPLIANCE**

It is the responsibility of FLH's Board and Executive and Strategic Leadership Team to ensure compliance and the effectiveness of the procedure accompanying this policy.

Safeguarding Leads are responsible for maintaining, updating and delivering appropriate procedures to deliver policy objectives, and to ensure that these are available and understood by all teams.

It is the responsibility of managers of all front line members of the staff to ensure that they understand the importance of this policy and related procedures and receive training at induction and in their on-going personal training plan.

This policy and its accompanying procedures are reviewed annually.

### **5.1 Application**

FLH deliver the principles of this policy through the application of its safeguarding procedures which clearly distinguishes between the requirements to safeguard adults and children at risk of abuse.

The procedures recognise that FLH have responsibilities as an employer of the staff members who work with children and with adults at risk and also that any member of the staff may identify potential abuse in their daily work.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out in December 2018 in connection with the development of this policy. No individual, or groups of individuals, were identified as being knowingly disadvantaged by this policy.

## **7. LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect vulnerable adults and children in England.

We comply with relevant legislation and regulation, including:-

- The Care Act 2014

- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Children Act 1989, 2004
- 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2023
- 'Every Child Matters' Department of Health 2007
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 2000
- Local Safeguarding Child Board and Joint SW Child Protection Procedures
- Department of Health 'No Secrets' 2000
- SP QAF

FLH works within the framework and guidance provided by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board. (Local Authority: Hertfordshire).



## **SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE – ADULTS AT RISK OF HARM**

**IMPORTANT: All of the staff should be aware that whenever a service user mentions a change in contact details such as changing a telephone number or moving home, that the service user should be asked for these new contact details immediately.**

Any new contact details should be handed to the C.E.O. or Safeguarding Officer.

### **PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A DISCLOSURE**

#### **1. CONTEXT**

It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that an adult has been abused or a threat has been identified that may result in emotional or physical harm.

1.1 FLH has two safeguarding policies and procedures. One is for adults at risk of harm and the other is for children. Both policies are given to all of the staff when they start work with the charity and are part of the FLH mandatory reading list. They can be made available to other interested parties, including service users and local authorities, upon request. The Procedures include a section on recognising abuse.

1.2 All of the staff who work with service users will have undergone checks to ensure their suitability to work with our client base. Should any DBS check reveal that any members of the staff is unsuitable for work with vulnerable groups or young children their contract will be liable to immediate termination. For paid members of staff all service user contact will cease immediately pending investigation by the Board of Trustees.

1.3 All of the staff who work with service users will have been trained in safeguarding the groups with which they will be working (adults or children) either through training provided by the local authority or their educational establishment.

1.4 All service users of FLH undergo a formal assessment process prior to working with the charity. FLH utilise the DASH Risk Assessment process to do this.



## 2. RECOGNISING TYPES OF ABUSE

2.1 Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent.

2.2 Abuse can occur in any relationship and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

2.3 The Hertfordshire Community Foundation (HCF) in their Safeguarding Adults Designated Person/Lead Training course (June 2019) defines the types of abuse and their indicators as follows:-

Type of Abuse	Definition	Indicators
Physical	Assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.	On body: symmetrical bruising; burns; marks; cuts.  Behaviours: wincing in pain; uncomfortable movement; flinching; limping; fabricated illness; underweight.  Change in behaviour: anger
Sexual	Rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.	Physical: UTI's; bed wetting; for women – intimate bruising; pregnancy; STI's; for men – faecal incontinence.  Change in behaviour – change in dress or presentation; either overt sexual behaviour or withdrawing from people; suddenly not wanting to be around or touched by certain genders.
Psychological	Emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.	Change in behaviour: anxious; nervous; fearful; not wanting to go out; low self-worth.
Financial or Material	Theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.	Appearance: cold; unfed; unkempt.  Debt; homeless or about to be evicted or concerned about bailiffs; gambling; new best friend. Not able to pay usual outgoings so cuts down on heating, lighting, food, other expenses.
Discriminatory	Forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.	Name calling; segregation; not how intended but how perceived.

Neglect/Acts of Omission	Ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs; failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services; the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.	Unkempt or unwashed; malnutrition; soiled clothes or bed linen.  Neglect is wilful – any of above; isolated; under/over medicated; under/over weight; withholding medication.  Act of omission – individual fails to act when they see something occurring.
Organisational	Neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one-off incidents to on-going ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organization.	In organizational setting – not responding to requests for toilet, drink, food etc.  Treating someone either physically, verbally or psychologically in a demeaning or belittling way.  Organisation does things at set times, i.e. toilet, bed, meals – lack of freedom; autocratic management style.
Domestic Abuse	Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence. More specifically detailed in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021	Change in behaviour; physical symptoms as before. 1 in 3 women; 1 in 6 men. Defined as someone in the same household, i.e. family or spouse.  Police can prosecute even if person doesn't consent.
Modern Slavery	Slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.  Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.	Under or not paid; not seen or allowed to leave.  1746 cases in 2013, up 47% from 2012.
Self-neglect	This covers a wide range of behaviour, neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.	Self-harm; hoarding; unkempt; drug and alcohol abuse; not medicating; not attending appointments.
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	Sometimes referred to as female circumcision – refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.  This practice is illegal in the UK.	A girl or woman who has had FGM may have difficulty walking, sitting or standing, spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet, have unusual behaviour after an absence from school or college, be particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations, may ask for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
Forced Marriage	A forced marriage is where one or both people do not or cannot consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is an appalling and indefensible practice and is	Persistence absence from school/work; requests for extended leave; drop in performance; low motivation; decline in behaviour/engagement; leaving work accompanied; surveillance by siblings or

	recognized in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.	cousins at school; evidence of self-harm; depression; social isolation; eating disorders or substance misuse; evidence of family disputes, domestic abuse or running away from home; unreasonable restrictions, e.g. kept at home by parents and financial restrictions.
Radicalization	An individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo or reject and/or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice.	Self-identification; 'Them and US' view; changes the way individuals interact with society; changes in an individual's personality and expression of emotion, by association (with radical organisations).
Hate Crime	Crimes committed against someone because of their disability, gender-identity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation are hate crimes and should be reported to the police.  Hate crimes can include: threatening behaviour; assault; robbery; damage to property; inciting others to commit hate crimes; harassment.	Lack of confidence and self-esteem, anxiety and unhappiness.  Withdrawal, subservient behaviour and a constant seeking of approval of so-called friends.
Mate Crime	Exploitation, abuse or theft from any vulnerable person by those they consider to be their friends.  Those that commit such abuse or theft are often referred to as 'fake friends'.	
Cyber Bullying	Takes place through mobile phones, emails, instant messaging, online gaming, social networking and much more.  It can include: hurtful text messages; name calling on social networking pages; threats online; being targeted online because of who you are, or because someone thinks you are 'different'.	Stops using the computer or turns off the screen when someone comes near; appears nervous or jumpy when using the computer or cell phone; is secretive about what they are doing on the computer; spends excessive amounts of time on the computer; becomes upset or angry when computer or cell phone privileges are limited or taken away.

## 2.4 Domestic abuse

FLH has a broad client-base but was originally founded to offer support services to domestic abuse survivors and so all of the staff should remain vigilant for the signs of new or ongoing abuse, with regard to protecting both the adults at risk and their families in these types of situations.

### 2.4.1

#### Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Definition

'Domestic abuse involves any single incident or pattern of conduct where someone's behaviour towards another is abusive, and where the people involved are aged 16 or over and are, or have been, personally connected to each other (regardless of gender or sexuality).'

2.4.2 Most research suggests that domestic abuse occurs in all sections of society irrespective of race, culture, nationality, religion, sexuality, disability, age, class or educational level.

2.4.3 The definition would therefore also include incidents where extended family members may condone or share in the pattern of abuse e.g. forced marriage, female genital mutilation and crimes rationalized as punishing women for bringing 'dishonour' to the family.

2.4.4 It is important to recognise that FLH service users or their families may be the victims of Domestic Abuse or be affected by it occurring within their household. This is likely to have a serious effect on their physical and mental wellbeing.

2.4.5 Where adults are victims of Domestic Abuse, they may need extra support to plan their future. The violence or threat of violence may continue after a victim has separated from the abuser. It is important to ensure that all the vulnerable people in this situation have appropriate support to enable them to maintain their personal safety.

2.4.6 A separate Domestic Abuse Protocol is in place between Police, Social Services and Health. For more information on this process, visit the following website:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/herts-sunflower/domestic-abuse-strategy-summary.pdf>

<https://www.hertssunflower.org/media/documents/domestic-abuse-2022-25-strategy-on-a-page.pdf>

2.4.7 Incidents reported by the police through the domestic abuse protocols will be addressed under the adult protection processes if it is considered that an adult may be at risk of abuse.

### **3. RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE**

3.1 In the event of an incident or disclosure to a member of the staff they will need to remind the service user of their duty of care towards them and their family.

(The service user should already be aware of FLH's requirement to act to protect them and their family, or any other person known to be at risk, through (a) having been through an initial assessment, and (b) during counselling contracting if they are a counselling client.)

3.2 The member of the staff to whom a disclosure is made should follow the Reporting Procedure (Section 4 of these procedures), noting the following rules when talking with the service user or person reporting the abuse:

#### **DO**

- Make sure the individual is safe
- If required, take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance

- Ascertain and establish the basic facts, including whether other agencies, schools, health or social services are aware of the situation.
- When making client notes after the session, ensure that you include all of the facts and the reason you believe this to be a safeguarding concern. Make careful notes and, where appropriate, obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Evaluate whether there is an immediate risk – e.g. on disclosure of suicidal thoughts, serious self-harm, concerns about risk of harm to children etc., where no other authority is aware of the situation, you may need to remind the client of your need discuss the issue they have brought with a Safeguarding Lead, breaking confidentiality only within the bounds of the specific safeguarding concerns mentioned. (Refer to the FLH Safeguarding Training and Section 4 of this procedure for further guidance on this).
- Immediately speak to the Safeguarding Officer or, if she is unavailable, the Lead for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

#### **DO NOT**

- Promise confidentiality
- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional adult protection agencies, following a referral from the designated FLH Safeguarding Lead, Safeguarding Officer and/or Safeguarding Trustee.

3.3 Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to either the Safeguarding Lead or, if that person is unavailable, the Safeguarding Officer or, if neither are available, the Safeguarding Trustee, that working day where possible.

3.4 Any incidents reported to the Safeguarding Officer shall be discussed with the Safeguarding Lead (or Safeguarding Trustee should the Safeguarding Lead be unavailable) before telephoning and reporting the matter to the appropriate local social services duty social worker or seeking advice from the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Board where necessary. (Should the matter be reported to the Safeguarding Lead directly, the matter will be reported to the appropriate authorities as detailed above, and the Safeguarding Trustee informed that a new safeguarding case has been referred). This step is to ensure that FLH has ultimate responsibility for safeguarding, not one individual, and aims to ensure that a discussion takes place to clarify that the best interests of the service user and/or person being safeguarding are being served.

3.5 The Safeguarding Lead shall, where appropriate, telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local social services duty social worker, seeking advice from the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Board where necessary. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made by the Safeguarding Lead and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority Social Services department within 24 hours.

### 3.6 Responding to a suspicion or allegation of abuse when working online or via telephone

When working with service users online or via telephone, the reporting procedures remain the same as they are for face-to-face work, with the following exceptions:

3.6.1 All of the staff who are working with service users should keep their email open whilst they are working so that should they have any concerns whilst talking to a service user they can email the Safeguarding Lead for advice. Should they not receive an immediate response they should text and request a response to their email, or a call back from the Safeguarding Lead. Current Safeguarding Leads to contact are:-

Emma@futurelivinghertford.co.uk  
07939 066179

Miriam Bassidi-Ahmad  
01992 537344

Should the Safeguarding Lead not respond then the alternative reporting structure (see Section 4) should be followed.

3.6.2 Should the staff member be concerned about an imminent threat of harm then the procedures in Section 4 of this procedure should be followed (i.e. contact the emergency services and then inform the Safeguarding Lead of the action that has been taken).

3.6.3 When working via the telephone with service users who are using a mobile telephone, all the staff should check at the beginning of the call that the service user is at home. Should the service user be somewhere other than their home environment, the staff member should ask for details of their location so that in the event that a situation arises where the staff member becomes concerned for the welfare of the service user, then appropriate measures can be taken.

Service users cannot be forced to reveal their location, however it should be stressed to any resistant service user that this is simply a precaution, to ensure that they are safe, and that their welfare is paramount.

3.6.4 All of the staff that are working with service users in a counselling capacity will have undergone training recognised by their regulatory body to prove their competency in this area.

## 4. REPORTING

**C.E.O. (Safeguarding Officer & Lead): Emma Fleming Telephone: 07939 066179**

**Safeguarding Trustee:**

**Amanda Thurston**

**Telephone: 07939 234886**

**Safeguarding Lead:**

**Miriam Bassidi-Ahmad**

**Telephone: 01992 537344**

N.B. Report first to the Safeguarding Lead; if that person is unavailable, report to the Safeguarding Officer. If the Safeguarding Officer is unavailable, call the Safeguarding Trustee.

4.1 Promises of confidentiality must not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

4.2 On identifying a safeguarding concern, it is important to understand how imminent or serious the threat is, and whether other agencies or authorities have been informed. FLH provides training to all team members who are likely to be informed of a disclosure – including staff and volunteers. This will determine the type of action that will be taken by the person receiving the information.

4.3 Reporting where there is NO imminent risk, or where authorities have already been informed

4.3.1 Should the risk be such that there is NOT an imminent danger to the service user or a person they are discussing, then the staff member to whom the disclosure has been made should continue with the session, making mental notes of the details so that factual client notes may be made after the session, including everything of relevance, as revealed to them.

4.3.2 The person to whom the disclosure has been made should then complete the Safeguarding Form (see Appendix) and hand it to the Safeguarding Lead for review (noting the above reporting chain should the Safeguarding Lead be unavailable).

4.3.3 The Safeguarding Lead (or Safeguarding Officer/Safeguarding Trustee) will then review the report and may request further details from the person making the report (in which case, access to appropriate sections of client notes may be required).

4.3.4 The Safeguarding Lead will keep a record of all safeguarding reports. This record will conform to current GDPR requirements and will be made either at the time of the initial report or in a reasonable timeframe (within 24 hours) of being reported. The current reporting system is the DASH database system, which is currently used only by keyworkers and the Safeguarding Officer of FLH. The report will include the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information, including:-

- the date of the report
- the time of the incident
- the place where the alleged abuse happened
- the name of the complainant, the names of people the incident has been reported to and the names of others present and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused
- the nature of the alleged abuse
- a description of any injuries observed
- the account which has been given of the allegation

The record will be factual and will not include impressions or assumptions.

4.3.5 The Safeguarding Officer will liaise with the Safeguarding Lead (or the Safeguarding Lead will liaise with the Safeguarding Trustee) to decide whether the safeguarding process should be instigated or if other support/services are appropriate. It is the C.E.O.'s responsibility to either make contact with other agencies/authorities as appropriate, or to authorise the Safeguarding Lead to do so.

Feedback will be given to the person who raised the safeguarding alert, who will be advised on what (if anything) to say to the service user.

4.3.6 Information will usually be provided to the individual by the Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Officer. This could be about other sources of help or information that could enable them to decide what to do about their experience, enable them to recover from their experience and enable them to seek justice.

#### 4.4 Reporting where there IS imminent risk, or where authorities have not already been involved

4.4.1 Once the staff member has established that a person is at risk, or a child is involved in the safeguarding concern and no authorities (e.g. school, local authorities, doctor) have been made aware of the situation/risk, then the staff member receiving the information should evaluate the level and immediacy of the risk. Should it be necessary, the staff member may need to stop the session, telling the service user that they are concerned about a safeguarding issue, and seek immediate advice from the Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Officer.

Should the risk be immediate and life-threatening then the staff member may need to call the emergency services prior to involving the FLH Safeguarding team.

In instances where there is imminent risk (e.g. threat of suicide where the person has indicated they are currently suicidal and in danger of harming themselves) then that person should not be left alone. If working face-to-face within the charity's building the person receiving the information should ask them to accompany them to see the Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Officer and should ensure that the person at risk is accompanied at all times through the building.

4.4.2 The staff member will need to complete a Safeguarding Form but in this instance it may need to be completed with the Safeguarding Lead, Safeguarding Officer or Safeguarding Trustee present.

4.4.3 Steps 4.3.3 to 4.3.6 above will then be performed and documented by the Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Officer.

4.5 In all instances where a safeguarding need is suspected, the staff member should complete a Safeguarding Form and inform the Safeguarding Lead or, in their absence, the Safeguarding Officer or Trustee. This should be completed, even when the staff member is uncertain of whether the matter is actually a safeguarding concern – the Safeguarding team will review and advise on this. If in doubt, the practice is that an initial Safeguarding Form should be filled in.

4.6 The Safeguarding Lead will be responsible for maintaining a list of all safeguarding cases that have been logged (i.e. a Safeguarding Reporting Form has been completed), along with details of which have been referred and, for cases that haven't, a reason that they have not been.

## **5. MANAGING ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST A MEMBER OF THE STAFF**

FLH will ensure that any allegations made against a member of the staff will be dealt with swiftly.

Where a member of the staff is thought to have committed a criminal offence the police will be informed. If a crime has been witnessed the police should be contacted immediately.



The safety of the individual(s) concerned is paramount. A risk assessment must be undertaken immediately to assess the level of risk to all service users posed by the alleged perpetrator. This will include whether it is safe for them to continue in their role or any other role within the service whilst the investigation is undertaken.

The Safeguarding Lead will liaise with local authorities to discuss the best course of action and to ensure that the FLH's disciplinary procedures are coordinated with any other enquiries taking place as part of the ongoing management of the allegation.

FLH has a whistle blowing policy and the staff are aware of this policy. The staff will be supported to use this policy.

## **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

6.1 Adult and child protection raises issues of confidentiality which must be clearly understood by all. FLH is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information around Safeguarding issues will be shared only with those who need to know.

6.2 The staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of adults at risk of harm with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and adult social services.

6.3 Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

6.4 All personal information regarding all FLH service users will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines.

6.5 If a service user confides in a member of the staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of the staff tells the service user sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.

6.6 Within that context, the service user must, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

6.7 Where possible, consent must be obtained from the service user before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the service user and/or child is the priority.

6.8 Where a disclosure has been made, the member of the staff must let the service user know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.

6.9 The staff must assure the service user that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The service user's involvement in the process of sharing information must be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

## **7. THE ROLE OF KEY INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES**

### **7.1 Adult Social Services**

7.1.1 The Department of Health's 'No secrets' guidance document requires that authorities develop a local framework within which all responsible agencies work together to ensure a coherent policy for the protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse.

7.1.2 All local authorities have a Safeguarding Adults Board, which oversees multi-agency work aimed at protecting and safeguarding adults at risk. It is normal practice for the board to comprise of people from partner organisations who have the ability to influence decision-making and resource allocation within their organisation.

## **7.2 The Police**

7.2.1 The Police play a vital role in Safeguarding with cases involving alleged criminal acts. It becomes the responsibility of the police to investigate allegations of crime by preserving and gathering evidence. Where a crime is identified, the police will be the lead agency and they will direct investigations in line with legal and other procedural protocols.

## **8. ROLE OF DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS**

8.3.1 The role of the Safeguarding team is to deal with protection issues that arise within the organisation. They will respond to all concerns and enquiries.

8.3.2 The role of the C.E.O. is to:

- Assume the responsibilities of the Safeguarding Officer should he/she be unavailable at the time that the member of staff wishes to make a safeguarding concern known to the charity
- To support the Safeguarding Officer with the fulfilment of their duties, and advise where necessary
- To take responsibility on behalf of the charity for informing authorities external to the charity
- To report all cases of safeguarding concerns raised with authorities to the Trustees

8.3.3 The role of the Safeguarding Trustee is to fulfil the duties of the Safeguarding Lead (C.E.O.) should the Safeguarding Lead be unavailable. This will include providing support and advice to the Safeguarding Officer and authorising contact with local authorities and external agencies.

8.3.4 In cases of emergency, i.e. imminent threat to life/harm, then the Safeguarding Officer or person taking the report/receiving the information may act to alert the emergency services without obtaining prior consent from the C.E.O. (Safeguarding Lead) or Trustee.

## **9. ROLE OF THE LINE MANAGER**

9.1 The role of the line manager is to support the member of the staff involved with the incident, and to ensure that their welfare needs are considered. Should a line manager not be available then the Safeguarding Officer or C.E.O. will act in this capacity.

## **10. TRAINING**

During the Induction process, the staff are made aware of the importance of these procedures. Specialist training will be provided for the FLH Safeguarding team and all members of the staff who are working with service users will be made aware of the need for them to receive safeguarding training which is appropriate for the service user work they will be performing.

FLH has also developed a safeguarding course which will be delivered to the staff, ideally before they start to work with service users, and which gives details of how to apply the Safeguarding procedures within the charity and how to identify whether a safeguarding issue should be reported on immediately, by stopping a client session, or whether it can wait until the session has finished (and be referred to the Safeguarding team for advice without the client being informed at this stage).

## **11. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

FLH has a complaints procedure available to all of the staff.

## **12. RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

FLH operates procedures that take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of its service users and their families, including arrangements for appropriate checks on new members of the staff where applicable.

## **13. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION**

These procedures should be read in conjunction with FLH's:-

- Equalities and Diversity Policy
- Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedure
- Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Professional Boundaries Guidance
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Client Complaints
- Data Protection Policy
- Recruitment Policy and Procedure
- Criminal Record Bureau Employees Checks
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Partnership Working Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Induction Guide (for staff and volunteers) and Safeguarding Training

## **14. COMPLIANCE AND REVIEW**

The Safeguarding Policy and Procedures will be reviewed annually by the CEO or a delegated member of staff. Where revisions are required these must be ratified by a quorate of the Trustees. The C.E.O. will ensure that any changes are clearly communicated to all of the staff

To ensure compliance to the policy one Trustee will be elected to oversee the planning process and ensure all planning is in line with the policy.

The Trustee currently elected to ensure compliance in this area is Amanda Thurston.

## APPENDIX

### DASH RISK CHECKLIST

APPENDIX

SAFEGUARDING REPORTING FORM

## APPENDIX

### JOB DESCRIPTION: SAFEGUARDING LEAD

#### Future Living Hertford Safeguarding Lead Job Description

Reports to the Board of Trustees, via the C.E.O.

#### Purpose of the Role

The key role of the Safeguarding Lead is to take responsibility for promoting positive safeguarding procedures and practice within the charity.

This responsibility will be in addition to their existing or main roles and responsibilities.

Main duties are:

- To receive information from, and offer advice to, staff, volunteers, clients and other relevant parties, e.g. families and/or carers, about concerns relating to adult or child protection issues, and to maintain secure records of this information
- To assess this information promptly and take appropriate action
- The Safeguarding Lead must be familiar with national and local safeguarding legislation and guidance, with procedures for referral to the local authority's children's or adult's services and police procedures for investigating abuse of children and adults at risk.
- The Safeguarding Lead must know how to contact and establish links with the local Safeguarding Children Boards, Adult's Safeguarding Board and the relevant people within children's and adult services or police. They will work closely with the C.E.O. in this capacity, notifying the C.E.O. and obtaining authorisation prior to contacting local authorities (except in emergency situations).
- They will assess the safeguarding development needs of all staff and volunteers and co-ordinate the training.
- They will keep all staff and volunteers informed of good practice and new legislation and guidance.
- They will monitor the number of safeguarding concerns, keeping confidential records and feeding back to the C.E.O. for reporting to the Trustees on the quality of their safeguarding work. Reports shall also be generated on how many safeguarding concerns have been raised but not referred, and the reasons for this.
- They will ensure that Future Living Hertford (FLH) policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding are kept up to date with any changes.

## APPENDIX

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

*This Code of Conduct has been written by the NSPCC and adapted for use by Future Living Hertford ("FLH").*

#### Purpose

All staff members, volunteers and Trustees of FLH who work or come into contact with children and young people can be viewed as acting in a position of authority and have a duty of care towards the children and young people we work with. You are likely to be seen as a role model and are expected to act appropriately.

#### Responsibility

You are responsible for:

- prioritising the welfare of children and young people
- providing a safe environment for children and young people
  - ensuring that any equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
  - having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate.
- following our principles, policies and procedures
  - including our policies and procedures for safeguarding and whistleblowing
- staying within the law at all times
- modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow
- challenging all unacceptable behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour code to your line manager or the C.E.O.
- reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, following our Safeguarding Procedures
  - this includes behaviour being displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.

#### Rights

You should:

- treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- understand that children and young people are individuals with individual needs
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation
- challenge discrimination and prejudice
- encourage young people and adults to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

#### Relationships

You should:

- promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- avoid favouritism



- be patient with others
- exercise caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- ensure your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the work of the project you are involved in
- ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people
  - if a situation arises where you are alone with a child or young person, ensure that you are within sight or hearing of other adults.
  - if a child specifically asks for or needs some individual time with you, ensure other staff or volunteers know where you and the child are.
- only provide personal care in an emergency and make sure there is more than one adult present if possible
  - unless it has been agreed that the provision of personal care is part of your role and you have been trained to do this safely.

### Respect

You should:

- listen to and respect children at all times
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy as far as possible.
  - if you need to break confidentiality in order to follow child protection procedures, it is important to explain this to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity.

### Unacceptable behaviour

When working with children and young people, you must not:

- allow concerns or allegations to go unreported
- take unnecessary risks 🚭 smoke, consume alcohol or use illegal substances
- develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people
- make inappropriate promises to children and young people
- engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive
  - including having any form of sexual contact with a child or young person.
- let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number, email or postal address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- patronise or belittle children and young people
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people.

### Upholding this code of behaviour

You should always follow this code of behaviour and never rely on your reputation or that of our organisation to protect you.

If you have behaved inappropriately you will be subject to our disciplinary procedures. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave Future Living Hertford. We may also make a report to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority child protection services.

If you become aware of any breaches of this code, you must report them to your line manager or the C.E.O. If necessary you should follow our Whistleblowing Procedure and Safeguarding procedures.

End

Agreed by trustees: 18/09/2024