**Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy**

**Document Control**

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| Version | 002 |
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| Policy owner | Helen Slee, Chair of Trustees |
| Audience | This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Together Now. |
| Formally endorsed by | Board of Trustees |
| Endorsement date | May 2021 |
| Next Review | May 2023 |

**Version History**

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| Date Issued | Version | Status | Reason for change |
| May 2019 | 001 | Approved |  |
| May 2021 | 002 | Approved | Updated definitions and inclusion of additional procedures for managing safeguarding disclosures. |
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**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

* provide protection for the children and young people who receive our services, including the children of adult members or users.
* provide protection for vulnerable adults who receive our services.
* provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy sets out:

* our safeguarding standards
* what we expect of our people when concerns are reported
* how we look to continuously learn and improve our safeguarding practice

**Introduction**

We recognise that everyone has a key role to play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding is defined by the Children Act 1989 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

The government defines the term ‘safeguarding children and young people’[[1]](#footnote-1) as:

*‘protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children’s health or development ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes’*

And the policy objective on safeguarding vulnerable adults[[2]](#footnote-2) is to

*‘prevent and reduce the risk of significant harm to adults from abuse or other types of exploitation, whilst supporting individuals in maintaining control over their lives and in making informed choices without coercion’*

**Policy statement**

We are committed to working with others to ensure that people who receive our services do so in an environment that is free from prejudice and safe from abuse.

All our staff and volunteers have a responsibility to support the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults where there is a risk of abuse or neglect.

For the purposes of the policy, abuse can include but is not limited to physical, financial, material, sexual, psychological, discriminatory, emotional abuse and neglect.

Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetuated by anyone.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

**Vulnerability to abuse and exploitation**

We recognise that:

* due to the nature of our core charitable mission, our service users can be more at risk of or vulnerable to abuse than others
* the nature of our work may create a power imbalance between our charity staff and volunteers and beneficiaries
* these imbalances may change with the decisions that are made relating to the services, support and funding that can be made available to our beneficiaries
* a beneficiary’s vulnerability can change during the course of our relationship with them, and it therefore requires that safeguarding is considered throughout the relationship to recognise concerns and take reasonable steps to safeguard all of our beneficiaries’ welfare.

**Safeguarding children**

We recognise that:

* the welfare of the child/young person is paramount
* all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
* working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

* valuing them, listening to and respecting them
* adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
* recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
* sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
* sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
* providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

Our responsibility:

* To ensure volunteers are aware of children and young people’s need for protection
* To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected
* To support and where possible secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability
* To Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check volunteers that have access to or work with Vulnerable Adults

Responsibilities of our staff and volunteers:

* To be familiar with the safeguarding children policy
* To take appropriate action in line with our policy
* To declare any existing or subsequent convictions

**Safeguarding adults**

Definition

Vulnerable adults are people who are over 18 years of age and are getting or may need help and services to live in the community. Vulnerable adults may be unable to take care of themselves and unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by other people.

Rights and responsibilities

Our responsibility:

* To ensure volunteers are aware of vulnerable adult’s need for protection
* To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected
* To support and where possible secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability
* To DBS check volunteers that have access to or work with Vulnerable Adults

Responsibilities of our staff and volunteers:

* To be familiar with the vulnerable adult protection policy
* To take appropriate action in line with our policy
* To declare any existing or subsequent convictions.

Vulnerable adults have the right:

* To be made aware of this policy
* To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
* To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
* To be involved in any process as appropriate
* To receive information about the outcome

**Safeguarding Procedures: Disclosure Management**

Support for those who report abuse

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they are staff, volunteers, service users, carers or members of the general public should be reassured that:

* They will be taken seriously
* Their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared with the appropriate authorities if they or others are at significant risk

Prioritising the safety and wellbeing of the child, young person or vulnerable adult should be the primary consideration.

Disclosures

The incident should be handled sensitively and professionally, including:

* Providing reassurance that what has been reported is being taken seriously
* Providing reassurance that it was the right thing to do to provide the information
* Do not interrupt the disclosure
* Allow the individual to speak freely
* Ask open questions if you need to clarify understanding
* Do not ask leading questions
* Be aware that the use of a translator may influence the information shared and received
* Ask the person what help they need so that they can be involved in the decisions that happen next
* Ask permission to share information with the DSL and others as appropriate.
* Confirm what will happen next and that you will keep them informed
* Write up the incident as soon as possible following the disclosure

All concerns about alleged or suspected harm should be reported to the DSL immediately.

Appropriate actions should be:

* Agreed with the DSL
* Actioned
* Documented
* Shared with the person who disclosed the incident or a suitable proxy to ensure they are involved in the process

Record Management:

* Records of incidents should be accurately recorded and stored in a safe, secure and confidential manner.
* Information should only be shared on a need to know basis, and records should only be accessible by appropriate parties.

**Safeguarding Procedures: Recruitment Processes**

Recruitment Processes include:

* Appointment and support for a suitably trained, resourced DSL
* DBS checks for all members of Together Now who have access to or work with beneficiaries of the charity
* Appointments of trustees and volunteers are to occur in line with The Charity Commission best practice guidance, and new Trustees are subject to relevant checks and to complete trustee eligibility declarations

The responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead includes:

* Promote awareness of the policy and processes to all relevant parties
* Monitor implementation of the policy
* Report any safeguarding issues or concerns to the Trustee Board
* Report any issues or concerns regarding the implementation of the policies and processes to the Trustee Board
* Identify training and information needs, and act on these for all relevant parties
* Act a single point of support and information for all relevant parties on safeguarding issues
* To determine whether concerns or disclosures should be reported to an external party

Staff and volunteer wellbeing:

* The person who has received the disclosure should arrange a debriefing call with the DSL after the incident has been addressed to allow time to discuss how it has affected them, how it was managed and provide the opportunity to learn from the incident.

**Continuous learning and improving our safeguarding practice**

Together Now members

All members of Together Now who have access to or work with beneficiaries should be provided:

* Supervision and support to discuss safeguarding risks and concerns
* Opportunities to attend safeguarding training as required

**Safeguarding Policy and Process Improvements**

The following should be undertaken to allow opportunities to improve the policies, procedures and processes relating to safeguarding beneficiaries of Together Now:

* Beneficiaries should be provided opportunities to feed back on what we are doing well and what risks there are to them that we should be aware of so that we can keep beneficiaries safe.
* Any safeguarding incidences are to be reviewed by a member of the Board who was not involved in the incident retrospectively. to review the response in line with the safeguarding policy to confirm if the actions taken were sufficient and handled appropriately. No personal identifiable data should be included as part of this process.
* Where poor practice or a breach of the policy is identified, appropriate action will be taken.
* Lessons on the handling of the incident are to be recorded to support with appropriate management of future incidents.

**Safeguarding Policy Updates**

* This policy should be reviewed at least annually and updated in line with new policy and practice.
* This policy should also be updated outside of the planned review schedule in the event of updated processes, learning or policies that impact the management of safeguarding incidents.

1. [Working together to safeguard children](about:blank), https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/197402/Statement_of_Gov_Policy.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)