

Policy Name	Module
Safeguarding	Safeguarding

Statement of purpose

This procedure and the accompanying policy outlines hand in hands approach to safeguarding adults at risk and to the prevention of abuse and neglect. Hand in Hands recognises that it also has a duty to safeguard and protect children that we come into contact with.

Hand in Hands is committed to practice that protects adults receiving care from any level of harm. The organisation understands its duty to ensure that appropriate action is taken where an individual is experiencing harm or is at risk of harm.

This procedure aims to provide the appropriate steps to take to:

- ✓ Recognise the signs and symptoms of harm and abuse;
- ✓ Prevent and reduce the likelihood of abuse or other forms of exploitation of individual who may be at risk of harm;
- ✓ Take prompt action to respond to risks and concerns, and make sure that individual are safe and that their rights are protected;
- ✓ Support individual to maintain control over their lives and to make their own choices as far as possible.

It is the overall responsibility of the Registered Manager to ensure that all staff have read and signed (as understood) this Safeguarding Policy & Procedure for Hand in Hands and that it is implemented in daily practice. It is the overall responsibility of every staff member to follow this procedure. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action.

A current copy of the policy will be available in the head office file.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or more frequently if significant changes occur.

Signed:

Print name:

Date:

Review date:

Procedure and actions to follow when abuse is evident, disclosed or suspected

All employees have a duty to report abuse of any kind and will be fully supported when doing so. It is also very important that staff are alert whilst not jumping to any conclusion.

Staff **MUST NOT** at any time:

- ✓ Directly challenge the person accused of abuse.
- ✓ Be dismissive of the concern or ignore the allegation.
- ✓ Promise to keep abuse a secret, as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.
- ✓ Pass comment or opinion when a person discloses an allegation of abuse.
- ✓ Undertake their own investigation, which could harm evidence or alert the abuser.
- ✓ Disturb or destroy potential evidence.
- ✓ Make assumptions.
- ✓ Panic.

It is very important for staff to understand that it is not their responsibility to decide whether abuse has taken place or not, even if they were the staff member to witness or have allegations disclosed to them. This task is for competent and professional adult or child protection agencies, following a referral from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All staff should bear in mind the following principles at all times:

- ✓ The welfare of the adult or child at risk are paramount;
- ✓ The organisations policy and procedure, local authority guidance and inter-agency working practices must be followed at all times;
- ✓ Where possible, the cooperation of the family should be obtained unless there is a risk to the individual in taking this course of action;
- ✓ Records, stating facts, written in black ink, dated and signed by the responsible staff member should be completed within 24 hours of an incident occurring (or sooner if possible) and stored securely.

It is important for staff and managers to be clear that evidence, allegation or concerns about abuse could involve Hand in Hands staff, staff of other agencies, or other individuals, and to follow the relevant procedures below.

If Abuse is EVIDENT / WITNESSED/ IMMEDIATE ACTION

Staff members should:

- ✓ Assess the situation i.e. are emergency services required?
- ✓ If the individual appears to be in immediate danger or a crime has been committed, then concerns should be reported to 999, without delay;
- ✓ Remain calm;
- ✓ If the abuser remains present, seek to calm the situation. However, staff should avoid putting themselves at risk of violence or other harm;
- ✓ Staff should immediately contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will inform the local authority safeguarding team;
- ✓ Maintain evidence where possible. Try not to disturb the scene, clothing or adult at risk if at all possible;
- ✓ Establish what the individual's views and wishes on what they want to happen, where possible;
- ✓ Inform the individual of the requirements to share information, explaining what information and to whom this would be shared;

- ✓ Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately and follow advice and guidance;
- ✓ Record what happened in detail as soon as possible after the incident, including all concerns, what was said by whom at the time, any factual statements, details of injuries and any other information that may be relevant to the report;
- ✓ Staff must also record their actions;
- ✓ Any relevant marks, bruises or injuries should be recorded on a body map (see Body Map Diagram attached)
- ✓ All information will be recorded and stored securely by the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Preserving Evidence

Under no circumstances can a staff member take photographs of an individual as a way of preserving evidence, unless instructed to do so

- ✓ Where possible staff should leave things as and where they are. If anything has to be handled, keep this to an absolute minimum;
- ✓ Staff must not clean up, touch anything they do not have to or throw anything away which could be used as evidence;
- ✓ Staff must not wash anything or in any way remove fibres, blood etc.;
- ✓ Staff should try to preserve the clothing and footwear of the individual;
- ✓ Preserve anything used to comfort or warm the individual, e.g. a blanket;
- ✓ Note in writing the state of the clothing of both the individual and alleged perpetrator (if present).
- ✓ Note injuries in writing. As soon as possible, make full written notes on the conditions and attitudes of the people involved in the incident;
- ✓ Take steps to secure the room or area where the incident took place. Do not allow anyone to enter until the police arrive.

If Abuse is DISCLOSED

It is often difficult to believe that abuse or neglect can occur. Remember, it may have taken a great amount of courage for the person to report that something has happened and fear of not being believed can cause people not to tell.

Staff members should:

- ✓ Try to speak with the individual in a private and quiet space;
- ✓ Accept what the individual is saying, do not question the individual or get them to justify what they are saying;
- ✓ If an individual begins to disclose details of abuse, listen carefully, record the actual words they use and do not prompt or ask leading questions;
- ✓ Remain calm and try not to show shock or disbelief;
- ✓ Let the individual disclose information at their own pace and do not 'interview' the person, just gain basic facts;
- ✓ Explain at the earliest opportunity to the individual that this information will need to be shared and to whom it will be reported to;
- ✓ Never agree to secrecy or promise to keep the matter a secret;
- ✓ Reassure the individual that the allegation is being taken seriously, that they will be involved in decisions about what happens next;
- ✓ Always reassure the individual that they have done the right thing in reporting the allegation and they are not to blame;
- ✓ Make an immediate record of the time, place and details given in disclosure;
- ✓ Inform the individual of the requirements to share information, explaining what information will be shared and to whom;

- ✓ Report the disclosure immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- ✓ Continue to maintain a full record of subsequent events thereafter;
- ✓ All information will be recorded and stored securely by the Designated Safeguarding Lead

If Abuse is SUSPECTED or CONCERNS ARISE

Staff members should:

- ✓ Note their concerns, whether based on a 'one-off' incident or remark, or noted as repetitive events or statements, and discuss immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- ✓ All information will be recorded and stored securely by the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- ✓ Listen carefully if an individual describes or discloses apparent abuse, without prompting or asking questions;
- ✓ Explain that legal guidelines require that a senior staff member is told;
- ✓ Never agree to secrecy or undertake any investigation;
- ✓ Complete written records of the conversation or noted concerns as soon as possible.

Recording of information

To safeguard the individuals we support will only share information:

- ✓ Where we have the consent of the individual; Or if this is not possible,
- ✓ Where either the individual is at significant risk to themselves, others or the individual lacks the mental capacity to give consent, or the individual is under duress or a criminal offence may have been committed.

Information about the individual will only ever be shared:

- ✓ When it is in the best interests of the individual;

And

- ✓ On a 'need to know' basis with the relevant people;

And

- ✓ In a secure manner.

Keep records about safeguarding concerns confidential and in a location where the alleged abuser will not have access to the record. Access should not be given to any unauthorised person for accessing confidential information including the sharing of passwords.

All staff are accountable for their actions or omissions.

Staff must ensure that information that they record is legible, factual, timely and accurate, with dates and signatures. Staff must include what they did and why, to demonstrate transparent, defensible decision making.

Procedures for child protection when abuse is evident, disclosed or suspected

All employees who come into contact with children during their working hours have a duty to safeguard them even if they don't work directly with them.

If any employee has concerns around a child's health or welfare, they must report this following the same procedures for the adults that they support.

- ✓ Report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately;

- ✓ Make a record of concerns that is factual, signed and dated;
- ✓ If staff feel that this process would be too slow, dial 999 and call the police; they can quickly remove a child to somewhere safe.

Actions of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Where abuse is evident or disclosed, and the allegation does not concern a member of staff

Following a report of evident abuse or disclosure, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should first take into account:

- ✓ The individual's wishes and preferred outcome;
- ✓ Whether the individual has the mental capacity to make an informed decision about their own and others safety;
- ✓ The safety and wellbeing of others, including children and others with care and support needs;
- ✓ Whether there is a person in a position of trust involved i.e. employees;
- ✓ Whether a crime has been committed.

After the above has been considered the Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the local authority safeguarding team. Full details of staff concerns and any evident injuries to the adult at risk or child must be reported and recorded.

If an allegation of abuse has been reported to the police, the manager or DSL must also report the allegation via a 'Statutory Notification' to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) within 24 hours of the allegation being reported to the Police.

Where staff report concerns

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should discuss the concerns as soon as possible with the local authority safeguarding team. A full record of the conversation should be kept, and a request made that a confirmation of the conversation and any actions immediately undertaken are sent in writing by that department to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All actions undertaken by Hand in Hands staff should be fully recorded. Staff reporting alleged abuse or sharing concerns should be fully supported during a period of possible uncertainty or anxiety.

If a staff member is subject to an allegation of abuse

Consideration must be given to whether the member of staff should be suspended pending investigation of the allegation. Depending on the severity of the allegation and safety of the individuals we support and employees, dismissal without notice will also be considered.

In accordance with the disciplinary procedure, a full and thorough investigation should be undertaken as soon as possible which must not interfere with any investigations carried out by third parties.

The local authority should be informed immediately.

If an offence appears to have been committed, the Police must be notified.

The Insurance Company must be notified using the incident report form if there is a potential claim.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) must also be notified.

The local authority safeguarding team must be notified so that an investigation into the alleged abuse can be conducted as with all other allegations.

Consideration should be given to whether the person against whom the allegations have been made should be referred at this or some later stage, to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) team.

If the member of staff is not happy with the response they receive from the Designated Safeguarding Lead, they should refer to the Hand in Hands '*Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure*'.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Never ignore the signs that an individual may be at risk of harm or abuse. This may place them in more danger or prolong their pain and distress.

Always ensure the individual's safety by reporting your concerns, suspicions or allegations without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Always fully complete the required documentation and ensure this is sent as possible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead to allow the necessary actions to be taken to safeguard the individual.

Record all required documentation with full details. Ensure what is recorded is only the facts of what you have observed, or what an individual has disclosed in their own words.

Keep records of concerns, suspicions and allegations secure and only share this information directly with Designated Safeguarding Lead to protect the individual's privacy.

Ensure evidence is preserved following this procedure

Refer your suspicions to another organisation (i.e the Police, local authority safeguarding team, CQC) if required to do so OR if you feel your suspicions have not been dealt with by the Designated Safeguarding Lead appropriately. This will mean following the organisations 'Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure'.