**THE GOOD HEART FROME CIC**

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY for Adults**

**April 2024**

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This Policy is approved and robustly endorsed by THE GOOD HEART, FROME and is due for review ANNUALLY.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**The Good Heart is committed to protecting people who participate in its activities from harm and abuse. We will also ensure that all volunteers work together, in line with this safeguarding policy, and act promptly when dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour.**

**SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYBODY’S RESPONSIBILITY**

We will work together to prevent and minimise the risk of abuse or harm. If we have concerns that someone is at risk being abused or harmed our first duty is to person concerned.

**DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION**

If we know or suspect that someone is at risk, we will respond and ensure our concerns are properly recorded. We will respond according to this policy and other centre procedures

**IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS –TELL SOMEONE**

**2.CONFIDENTIALITY**

**The Good Heart is committed to respecting the right to confidentiality of everyone involved with its activities.** Sometimes it is necessary to share information to ensure a person’s wellbeing, for example, sometimes practical information needs to be shared with the volunteer team. Occasionally, sensitive information may be shared in this way. Such sharing will always be kept to the minimum required. The Good Heart Confidentiality Policy gives more information on this issue.

**3.WHAT IS ABUSE?**

**Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other persons or group of people.**

Abuse may be single or repeated episodes.  It is not only harming somebody; it also includes neglect of their basic needs or failure to protect them from harm.

**Types of abuse**

* **Physical:** for example, hitting, slapping, pushing, restraining or uninvited touching.
* **Psychological and emotional:** for example, shouting, swearing, frightening, blaming, ignoring or humiliating a person, threats of harm or abandonment, intimidation, verbal abuse.
* **Financial:** including the illegal or unauthorised use of a person’s property, money or other valuables, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance.
* **Sexual:** such as forcing a person to take part in any sexual activity without his or her informed consent.
* **Discriminatory:** including racist or sexist remarks or comments based on a person’s age, race, sex, national origin, disability, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, medical condition or illness, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment. This also includes stopping someone from being involved in other cultural activity, services or support networks.
* I**nstitutional**: the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service, especially to vulnerable people. This includes a failure to ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to protect people and maintain good standards of care in accordance with individual needs, including training of staff, supervision and management, record keeping and liaising with other providers.

**4. HOW MIGHT WE NOTICE HARM OR ABUSE?**

Concerns about or evidence of abuse or harm can come to us through:

1. A direct disclosure by the person concerned.

2. A complaint or expression of concern by a volunteer, a carer, a member of the public or a relative.

3. An observation of the appearance or behaviour of the person at risk.

Signs and indicators of abuse

* Unexpected bruising or injuries or lack of medical attention when a injury is present.
* A person is no longer attending or enjoying sessions
* A person’s belongings or money are going missing
* A change in someone’s appearance eg. losing weight, neglecting self
* Increased anxiety in group situations

**It is important that volunteers and members of the public know who to contact if there are any safeguarding concerns at The Good Heart. How to access relevant information and who to contact is available on our notice board, on the website and documented here.**

**5. OUR COMMITMENT**

**The Good Heart is committed to:**

* Identifying abuse and harm.
* Responding effectively to concerns and formal complaints.
* Creating a safe space for everyone at The Good Heart.
* Regularly monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our policies, procedures and practices for protecting people.
* Ensuring that our policies, procedures and practices stay up to date with good practice and the law in relation to safeguarding.

The Good Heart will use various channels for informing everyone about who are the designated safeguarding persons and how to contact them, along with how to access this policy.

Volunteers and guests are entitled to respect and protection from harm. We aim to give everyone a positive and rewarding experience. However, it is important to appreciate the limits of volunteers’ role, time and skills. On some occasions we will suggest that suitable professional support is required.

**6. HOW WE REPORT ABUSE**

**Statutory and legal responsibilities**

There may be serious incidents, involving ‘adults at risk of harm’ (previously referred to as ‘vulnerable adults’). In these cases, there may be a statutory or legal requirement to inform the local authority and other relevant agencies to ensure protection from significant harm or abuse.

*(An adult at risk is defined as a person aged 18 years or over, who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or 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.)*

**The procedure for reporting abuse at The Good Heart**

* **If someone is in immediate danger, call 999**
* **If someone is making a personal disclosure or you are reporting something that has happened, document the incident using our INCIDENT REPORT FORM . Do explain that you will need to pass on the information to The Good Heart’s Safeguarding lead.**
* **Meet or call a Safeguarding Lead as close to the event as possible.**
* **Safeguarding lead will decide whether the disclosure will need to be referred to Somerset Council’s Safeguarding Services. The number to call is 0300 123 2224 or email adults@somerset.gov.uk**

**7. TRAINING AND CODES OF BEHAVIOUR**

Designated Safeguarding leads will hold an up-to-date Enhanced Disclosure DBS certificate.

Volunteers will be DBS checked if they are alone with a vulnerable adult at any time.

Designated Safeguarding lead will follow the training requirements of The Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board ( SSAB)

Volunteers will receive yearly in house training from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

**Practical guidelines for volunteers working with vulnerable adults**

**Avoid:**

* Spending time alone or making unnecessary physical contact with adults using our services
* Non-consensual touching in general.
* Meeting alone with people at risk associated with The Good Heart, outside of the work environment.
* Investigative questioning after an allegation or concern has been raised. Instead, listen with an open mind in a caring manner. Then record the information and report it to the designated safeguarding person, who will notify the appropriate authorities if required.

**You should never (even in fun):**

* Initiate or engage in sexually provocative conversations or activity
* Allow the use of inappropriate language to go unchallenged
* Do things of a personal nature for adults at risk that they can do themselves
* Trivialise or exaggerate adult at risk abuse issues
* Allow any allegations made to go without being reported and addressed
* Make promises to keep any disclosure confidential from relevant authorities

**Regarding all your relationships within and around The Good Heart:**

* Respect everyone’s right to privacy.
* Help create a culture in which volunteers and children feel able to report experiences of harmful uncomfortable attitudes or behaviour.
* Act with discretion with regards to your personal relationships. Ensure your personal relationships do not undermine harmony or impact on your capacity for impartiality.
* Be aware that conflicts of interest can arise, leading to misunderstandings. This can happen particularly where there is an imbalance of power or close personal relationship.
* Be aware of the procedures for reporting concerns or incidents and how to contact the designated safeguarding person.
* Should you find yourself the subject of inappropriate affection or attention from an adult at risk, it is essential to share this with a designated safeguarding person.
* Report any concerns to one of the designated safeguarding people. If neither is available tell another responsible person at the centre.
* Maintain appropriate boundaries with others at The Good Heart. Be aware of the scope of your role and when necessary, pass information to those whose role it is to deal with specific matters.
* Be careful not to give personal advice to individuals that goes beyond your expertise or role. Respond with empathy and kindness, rather than being drawn in to giving expert advice.

1. **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The guidance given in this policy follows both local and national legislation

* The Care Act 2014
* The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
* The Equality Act 2010
* The Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Act 2006
* The Mental Capacity Act 2005
* The Sexual Offences Act 2003
* The Human Rights Act 1998
* The Data Protection Act 1994 and 1998
* Prioritise the wellbeing and safety of all who visit or to The Good Heart.
* Never promise to keep anything reported confidential. It should be explained at the outset that any disclosure will be shared internally or with external agencies as required. However, the person’s privacy will be respected as much as possible.
* For the purposes of recording, it is important to listen. Questions, however, should be kept to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged, and leading questions avoided. *(The use of leading questions can cause problems for any subsequent investigation and court proceedings.)*
* All those involved should take great care in reaching conclusions and making decisions. Regarding sharing information within the organisation, confidentiality and privacy of all the individuals concerned should be protected as appropriate and feasible. When the process is complete, consideration should be given to what is appropriately shared with the wider The Good Heart community.
* Whatever action you may have to take, and even if the authorities are involved, don’t lose sight of the person or persons at the centre of the concern.

Ensure that there is someone to whom they can turn for support after any allegation or investigation. If they give further information, then go through the process of listening and recording as already described.

* When dealing with adults at risk, their wishes, feelings and mental capacity must be taken into account and people should be supported to make their own decisions and encouraged to give informed consent when possible and safety considerations permit.
* Be aware that although the particular individual that has disclosed abuse may now be safe and protected, it is important to think about the potential risk to others from the alleged perpetrator. If the matter is serious, inform the appropriate agencies as required.
* It is important to think carefully how best to maximise everyone’s rights to privacy as much as is feasible. There will be people with whom information needs to be shared. In many cases this could be anonymised, and the person’s name only be shared with those where this is essential. Consider carefully what is shared by email, particularly bearing in mind GDPR considerations, and again anonymise where feasible or encrypt and password protect documents with names of alleged perpetrators and those who have been harmed.
* The Good Heart needs to make clear decisions to promote wellbeing and safety of all they come into contact with. However, it is important to maintain equanimity towards all those involved in any allegation and at the same time ensure robust safeguarding procedures. Respect and compassion need to be shown to both the person harmed and the alleged perpetrator, and where appropriate and feasible, care and support given.

Vicki Ross - Safeguarding Lead April 2024