

OFFA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT:

In our work with children/young people/adults who may be at risk to to age, illness or disability, the Council will endeavour, at all times, to provide services and activities which are safe for children, young people or adults at risk to participate in.

We aim to protect our service users from harm or maltreatment or exploitation, prevent the impairment of health or development, ensure the provision of safe and effective care, support and guidance, promote people`s life changes, opportunities and growth, ensure children enter adulthood successfully, and adults can participate fully to the best of their ability.

We will work in partnership with other local/national agencies to put in place appropriate procedures for reporting, making referrals, accessing training, specialist support as and when required.

SAFER RECRUITMENT:

The Council will seek to recruit all paid staff and volunteers using appropriate procedures, safeguards and checks. We will determine which roles are in regulated activities and so subject to a barring check list, which roles are eligible for enhanced DBS checks only, and take up references for all posts and volunteer roles.

We will provide an induction programme for all new volunteers and staff, appropriate training to enable all personnel to undertake their roles safely and confidently, and ongoing training as benefits the personal and professional development of individuals and our organisation.

We will review our recruitment procedures in response to changes in legislation and systems external to our organisation e.g. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

VOLUNTEERS:

All volunteer roles will be supported by a Volunteer Co-Ordinator/Supporter and volunteer roles which would otherwise be regulated activity, will be appropriately supervised.

Volunteers will be treated equally alongside any paid staff, and all volunteers will be offered the same opportunities for advancement, responsibility, training and gaining qualifications and acknowledgement for their contribution to our organisation.

Volunteers, as well as paid staff, will adhere to the Code of Conduct at all times as a representative of the organisation.

SAFEGUARDING OFFICER:

The Council`s Safeguarding Officer is the Clerk supported by the Chair of the Council as deputy. They will be available to all staff, volunteers and service users to speak to when they have any concerns, issues or complaints regarding the safety, well-being or conduct of service users, volunteers and/or staff.

The Safeguarding Officer and deputy will have access to appropriate training to support them in these roles.

They will liaise with appropriate local and national agencies, contribute to appropriate policies, maintain records and keep confidentiality, adhere to and promote this policy within the organisation, and support or provide access to support for individuals suffering harm or abuse.

AWARENESS of HARM and ABUSE in our ORGANISATION:

Harm is caused by accidents, deliberate abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, financial), neglect (deliberate or not) or factors such as bullying, prejudicial attitudes or a failure to enable a person to participate in activities that are open to most of their peers.

All incidents of harm to anyone involved in our service will require an appropriate response to safeguard the individual(s), to reduce risk and improve our service.

Deliberate acts of harm (sexual, emotional, physical, financial), exploitation and neglect are abuses against the person and will incur disciplinary proceedings and require reports and referrals to social services, the police, other professional bodies and the DBS, where appropriate.

To encourage everyone involved in our organisation to understand that safeguarding is everybody's business, we will hold forums; agenda trustees meetings; provide opportunities for discussions about issues and concerns, policy and procedures to reflect, review and to continue to learn and improve in our safeguarding responsibilities.

RISK of HARM:

Where there is risk of harm to our service users, staff and/or volunteers, the Safeguarding Officer and Deputy are empowered to act accordingly:

- a) To log all conversations regarding the issue;
- b) To sign and request signatures on reports and statements;
- c) To seek advice from expert sources;
- d) To share concerns (with consent where required and appropriate) internally with the Community Councillors (NOTE: IF THIS OCCURS, ALL DISCUSSIONS ETC. WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL AND WILL REMAIN SO);
- e) To share concerns and make referrals to external agencies such as Social Services, the Police or NSPCC as appropriate to the circumstances;
- f) To make referral to the DBS regarding staff or volunteers in regulated activity whose conduct is harmful to service users and when they are removed from regulated activity.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

All reports and logs (including personnel records) will be kept securely and confidential according to our data protection policy and confidentiality statement, unless it is necessary to share this material with the agencies named above. Information will only be shared on a "need to know" basis.

COMMUNICATION and REPORTING CONCERNS:

The Council will communicate this policy to all staff, volunteers, service users and their families/carers and Community Councillors, using appropriate methods, formats and language so that the message is understood by all.

We support and encourage all our service users, volunteers, staff and Community Councillors to speak up when they have:

- a) A concern – a worry, issue or doubt about practice or treatment of a service user or colleague, or their circumstances;
- b) A disclosure – information about a person at risk of or suffering from significant harm;
- c) An allegation – the possibility that a volunteer, member of staff or Community Councillor could cause harm to a person in their care; and to report them to the Safeguarding Officer or Deputy.

WHISTLE BLOWING (Disclosure in the Public Interest):

The Council encourage all staff, volunteers and Community Councillors to report things that are not right, are illegal or if anyone at work is neglecting their duties, putting someone`s health and safety in danger or covering up a wrongdoing.

In the first instance they should speak with the Safeguarding Officer or their Deputy.

Although the Council would prefer the Community Councillors and staff to use the internal processes whenever possible to make any reports as above, this does not prevent them from making a report or referral to any of the agencies mentioned in the “RISK of HARM” section above, in their own right as a private individual.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

No DBS checks are necessary for the caretaker or cleaner as they do not directly work with or supervise anyone who fall under the “at risk” category.