Tom Harrison House
"Honour, Hope, Healing"

THH PP24 – Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

Tom Harrison House is committed to protecting adults and children who may be at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm.

This policy sets out how safeguarding concerns must be recognised, reported and acted upon.

The aim is to make the process clear and straightforward for staff: act immediately where someone may be in danger; report the concern promptly; record the facts; escalate the matter to the appropriate safeguarding lead; and ensure any required external referral is made.

Workers are not expected to investigate safeguarding concerns themselves or decide whether a formal safeguarding referral is required before reporting the concern.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, agency staff, contractors, sessional workers, students and others working on behalf of Tom Harrison House.

It applies to safeguarding concerns involving current clients, former clients where relevant to THH activity, children, visitors, staff or volunteers, and any other person who may be at risk in connection with THH services or activities.

Safeguarding Principles

THH will take safeguarding concerns seriously, respond promptly and proportionately, place the safety and welfare of the person at the centre of the response, share information only where necessary and appropriate, ensure concerns are reported to the correct external authority where required, keep clear and accurate records, and ensure staff know who to report concerns to.

What May Be a Safeguarding Concern?

- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse or exploitation;
- emotional or psychological abuse;
- financial or material abuse;
- neglect;
- discriminatory abuse;
- coercive or controlling behaviour;
- domestic abuse;
- organisational or institutional abuse;
- exploitation;
- self-neglect where safeguarding thresholds may be met;
- abuse or neglect involving a child; or
- any other situation where a person may be at risk of harm or abuse.

Workers do not need to determine whether the concern meets a formal safeguarding threshold before reporting it.

If in doubt, report it.

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Immediate Danger or Serious Risk

The THH Report to Management Form must never delay action required to protect somebody from immediate harm.

Where there is an immediate risk to life or safety, appropriate emergency action must be taken first. This may include calling emergency services, seeking urgent medical assistance, removing someone from immediate danger where it is safe and appropriate to do so, contacting Police, or contacting the appropriate safeguarding authority directly where urgent action is required.

The concern must then be reported to management and recorded as soon as reasonably practicable.

Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the worker's Line Manager or another appropriate manager.

The manager must ensure the concern is passed without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Where the Line Manager is unavailable, directly involved in the concern or otherwise inappropriate to approach, the worker should report directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Lead, another senior manager or the CEO.

The worker should complete the THH Report to Management Form as soon as reasonably practicable.

The form provides THH's internal record of the concern. It does not replace any safeguarding referral or notification which may need to be made to an external authority.

Recording the Concern

The person making the report should record their name and role, the date and time of the concern, incident or disclosure, the date and time it was reported, who was involved, where the matter occurred, what was seen, heard or disclosed, any immediate action already taken, who has already been informed, and any other relevant factual information.

The record should distinguish clearly between what the worker directly saw or heard, what another person told them, and any opinion or interpretation.

Where a person makes a disclosure, their own words should be recorded as accurately as possible.

Responding to a Disclosure

Where somebody discloses abuse or harm, workers should listen calmly, take the disclosure seriously, avoid showing shock or disbelief, avoid asking leading or unnecessary questions, not promise absolute confidentiality, explain that the information may need to be shared to help keep people safe, record what was said as accurately as possible, and report the concern immediately.

Workers should not attempt to investigate the allegation themselves. Their role is to listen, record and report.

Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

The CQC Manager is the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The CEO is the Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

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The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for receiving and reviewing safeguarding concerns, considering immediate safety needs, deciding what safeguarding action is required, seeking advice from safeguarding authorities where appropriate, ensuring external referrals are made where required, ensuring relevant managers and the CEO are informed as appropriate, coordinating internal safeguarding actions, ensuring safeguarding records are maintained securely, and monitoring follow-up actions.

The Deputy Safeguarding Lead will act where the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable or where involvement of the Designated Safeguarding Lead would be inappropriate.

Where the concern involves both the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Safeguarding Lead, it must be reported to the Chair of Trustees and, where necessary, directly to the relevant safeguarding authority or Police.

The CEO retains overall organisational responsibility for ensuring safeguarding arrangements are effective.

Management Responsibilities

Managers who receive a safeguarding concern must take the concern seriously, ensure any immediate risk is addressed, notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay, ensure the concern is recorded, avoid carrying out their own informal investigation unless specifically asked to do so, support any immediate management action required, and maintain confidentiality.

A safeguarding concern must not be left unresolved simply because the receiving manager believes it may ultimately prove unfounded. The safeguarding lead will determine the appropriate next steps.

External Safeguarding Referrals

Some safeguarding concerns will require referral to an external authority. Depending on the circumstances, this may include Local Authority Adult Safeguarding, Local Authority Children's Services, the Local Authority Designated Officer where an allegation concerns a person working with children, Police, emergency services, Care Quality Commission, a commissioner or funding authority, or another statutory or regulatory body.

The worker making the initial report is not expected to decide which external authority should be contacted.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Lead, relevant manager or CEO will ensure that any required referral is made.

Where urgent circumstances require direct contact with an external authority before a safeguarding lead can be reached, the worker should take appropriate action and inform management as soon as possible.

Adults at Risk

For the purposes of adult safeguarding, particular consideration must be given where an adult has needs for care and support, is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and because of those needs is unable to protect themselves from the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Workers are not expected to apply this legal test themselves before raising a concern. Their responsibility is to report what they have seen, heard or been told.

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Wherever appropriate, the adult should be involved in decisions about safeguarding action and their wishes should be taken into account, while recognising that action may still be required where there is a serious risk to them or others.

Children

Any concern that a child may be experiencing or at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation must be reported immediately.

The same reporting principles apply: protect from immediate harm → report immediately → record the facts → safeguarding lead determines the next steps.

A child safeguarding concern must never be delayed while staff attempt to gather further evidence or establish whether the concern can be proven.

Concerns About Staff, Volunteers or Others Working for THH

Where a safeguarding concern involves a member of staff, volunteer, contractor or another person working on behalf of THH, the concern must still be reported through the safeguarding process.

The person who is the subject of the concern must not be involved in deciding how the matter is handled.

Management will determine whether additional procedures are required, including disciplinary action, suspension or temporary restriction of duties, referral to Police, referral to a regulatory or professional body, referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service, or another appropriate action.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Safeguarding information must be handled sensitively and shared only with those who need it for the purpose of protecting people, managing the concern or meeting legal and regulatory obligations.

Confidentiality must not be used as a reason for failing to report a safeguarding concern.

Where information sharing is necessary to protect someone from harm, relevant information may be shared with appropriate internal or external persons.

Where there is uncertainty about the appropriate sharing of identifiable client information, advice should be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, where relevant, the Caldicott Guardian.

Record Keeping

Safeguarding records must be accurate, factual, dated, securely stored, accessible only to appropriate persons, and clearly linked to any actions, referrals or decisions taken.

The central Report to Management process may record that a safeguarding concern has been raised and the status of actions, but sensitive safeguarding detail should only be recorded or shared where necessary.

Learning and Follow-Up

Following a safeguarding concern, management should consider whether any immediate risk remains, further support is required, a risk assessment needs to be created or reviewed, procedures need to

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change, additional staff guidance or training is required, or wider organisational learning should be identified.

Safeguarding concerns should be reviewed through the appropriate management route until required actions are complete.

Failure to Report

A worker must not deliberately ignore, conceal or fail to report a safeguarding concern which they reasonably believe should be brought to management's attention.

A serious failure to report may result in disciplinary or other appropriate action.

Monitoring and Review

Safeguarding arrangements will be reviewed periodically by the Management Team. This should include consideration of safeguarding concerns raised, outstanding actions, recurring issues, training requirements, any procedural weaknesses identified, and whether improvements are required.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where legislation, guidance, organisational arrangements or experience indicate that an earlier review is required.

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