

**Safeguarding Policy**

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## Part A: Vulnerable Adult Protection

### Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of staff, volunteers, trustees and partners working on behalf of and with Keep Talking Services in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults.

Keep Talking Services is committed to the principles that all adults have the right to live free from fear of harm and abuse and have their rights and choices respected regardless of their age gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious belief or sexual orientation.

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To provide staff with an overview of safeguarding and supporting vulnerable adults.
- To explain the responsibilities of Keep Talking Services and its staff, volunteers, trustees and strategic partners in relation to vulnerable adults.
- To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where abuse of vulnerable adults arise.

### Definition – A Vulnerable Adult

For the purpose of this document a vulnerable adult is defined as a person who is 18 years of age or over and who is or 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 serious exploitation.

### Statement of Values

The following values will inform and guide all work with vulnerable adults:

- **Privacy** - the right of individuals to be left alone or undisturbed, and free from intrusion or public attention into their affairs.
- **Dignity** - all people will be treated with respect. Each individual's unique characteristics and intrinsic value will be recognised.
- **Independence** - the right to act and think without reference to another person.
- **Choice** - the opportunity to make both small and more significant life choices, with assistance as appropriate to understand context and options; the opportunity to make choices in the individual's own interest, exercising the choice to take risks.
- **Rights** - the maintenance of all entitlements associated with citizenship, including full participation in the life of the community.
- **Fulfilment** - the realisation of personal aspirations and abilities in all aspects of daily life; the development of competence in valued, meaningful skills and attributes.

### Accountability

#### Board of Trustees

Overall accountability for safeguarding children within Keep Talking Services lies with the Board of Trustees. The Board has a responsibility to ensure that there is an overall policy and procedures in place to protect vulnerable adults. The Board has a responsibility to monitor all adult safeguarding within the Trust.

## Chief Executive

This responsibility in the Trust is delegated to the Chief Executive, Alexander Richardson, who has executive responsibility for safeguarding and ensuring that the Board's responsibilities are fulfilled. A record of concerns raised will be kept and reported bi-monthly to the Board of Trustees. The CEO must ensure:

- that there are organisation wide arrangements in place to protect and care for the adult at risk who may or may not have mental capacity
- policies and procedures are developed for the protection of the adult at risk and for ensuring there are comprehensive training programmes available at different levels for all grades of staff.
- regular performance and monitoring reports for the Board are prepared
- all safeguarding adults' investigations and liaise with external agencies as required; provide expert advice to all staff and external agencies as requested.
- collect data and maintain accurate records of all safeguarding alerts and training records.

## Role of line managers

The role of the line manager is to support the member of staff, trustee, volunteer or partner involved with the incident and to ensure the correct procedures are followed.

The line manager should inform the Chief Executive of all incidents of reported abuse against vulnerable adults and a proposed action agreed with the staff member dealing with the incident.

## The Role of Staff, Volunteers, Trustees and Strategic Partners

All staff, volunteers, trustees and partners working on behalf of and with Keep Talking Services have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults. While working for Keep Talking Services they may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy will support an individual to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

## Definition - What Do We Mean by Abuse

Abuse is a violation of a person's human rights or dignity by someone else. There are many kinds of abuse; some are listed below:

- **Physical Abuse-** This may include hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Sexual Abuse-** This may include rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological Abuse-** This may include emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation,

coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

- **Financial or Material Abuse-** This may include theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect or Acts of Omission-** This may include ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health care, social care, education services or misuse of medication, adequate nutrition or heating.
- **Institutional abuse-** This can sometimes happen in residential homes, nursing homes or hospitals when people are mistreated because of poor or inadequate care, neglect and poor practice that affects the whole of that service.

Any of these forms of abuse can be either deliberate or be the result of ignorance, or lack of training, knowledge or understanding.

### Responding to allegations of abuse

When dealing with initial allegations of abuse the interests and welfare of the vulnerable adult are paramount, all employees must:

1. Listen carefully and ensure the vulnerable adult knows that you are taking what s/he says seriously
2. Stay calm
3. Reassure the person that s/he is doing the right thing in telling you
4. Explain what you are going to do next
5. Do not appear shocked, horrified, disgusted or angry
6. Show sympathy and concern but do not make comments or judgments
7. Do not give sweeping reassurances
8. Do not confront the alleged perpetrator. If the alleged perpetrator is a colleague do not mention the allegation to any person other than your line manager
9. Do not press the individual for details
10. Do not promise to keep secrets
11. Write a factual and chronological account of what you have heard and learned.

### Reporting allegations of abuse

All staff should be clear that every allegation/suspicion of abuse involving a vulnerable adult must be treated seriously and reported to Alex Richardson and contact is to be made either by email ([alex@keeptalkingservices.com](mailto:alex@keeptalkingservices.com)) or to contact directly on 07766375388. This includes situations where the alleged perpetrator is a colleague or another vulnerable adult. If it is difficult to approach management or if the alleged perpetrator is the manager, then an email can be sent directly to the chair of trustees Angelica Gorman who can be contacted on [angelica@keeptalkingservices.com](mailto:angelica@keeptalkingservices.com)

In the unlikely event that it is not possible to report concerns to management within the Trust, the relevant social care team, the police or the Commission for Social Care Inspection (if the abused person lives in a residential unit) should be approached

If the vulnerable adult is in hospital at the time the alleged abuse first comes to light, then the hospital social work team should be notified in the first instance. This includes vulnerable adults being treated in Accident and Emergency Departments.

## **Training**

Training will be provided, as appropriate, to ensure that staff are aware of these procedures. Specialist training will be provided for the member of staff with vulnerable adult responsibilities.

## **Staff Recruitment and Vetting**

Keep Talking Services operates procedures that take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults, including arrangements for appropriate checks on new staff, volunteers and trustees where applicable.

## **Part B: Whistle blowing policies**

### **Introduction**

Keep Talking Services is committed to delivering high quality services to its clients and the community. To this end we expect high standards from our trustees, employees and volunteers. In order to maintain high standards, a culture of openness and accountability is vitally important.

The aims of this policy element are as follows:-

1. Encourage an environment where all are able to raise concerns about malpractice within the organisation without fear of reprisal;
2. Reassure all concerned that concerns will be taken seriously;
3. Provide information about how to raise concerns appropriately and
4. Explain how Keep Talking Services will respond

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all trustees, employees, former employees, volunteers and contractors engaged by Keep Talking Services.

### **What is Whistle blowing?**

Whistle blowing occurs when a concern is raised about danger or illegality that affects others, e.g. clients, members of the community or Keep Talking Services itself and relates to one of the specified areas below. The individual blowing the whistle need not be directly affected by the danger or illegality, making whistle blowing different from a grievance or a complaint.

Employees, consistent with principles of confidentiality are forbidden from disclosing or making use of, in any form whatsoever, of confidential information they encounter in the course of their work for the Trust. However, the law allows employees to make a 'protected disclosure' of certain information. In order to be 'protected', a disclosure must relate to a specific subject matter (listed below) and the disclosure must also be made in an appropriate way.

If, in the course of employment, an employee becomes aware of information which he reasonably believes tends to show one or more of the following, he must use the Trust's Disclosure Procedure set out below:

1. That a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed;
2. That a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he is subject
3. That a person is engaged in fraud or corruption, financial maladministration, unauthorised use of public funds or not following financial and contract procedure rules
4. That a person is engaged in the physical, emotional or sexual abuse of clients or members of the community
5. That a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
6. That the health or safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered;
7. That the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged;
8. That information tending to show any of the above is being, or is likely to be, deliberately concealed.

### **Disclosure Procedure**

Information which an employee reasonably believes tends to show one or more of the above should promptly be disclosed to his/her manager so that any appropriate action can be taken. If it is inappropriate to make such a disclosure to the manager, for example where the employee suspects the manager already knows about the malpractice and appears to be 'turning a blind eye', or where they suspect their manager may be involved. In those cases, the employee should report their concerns to the Chief Executive or if s/he is implicated, to a member of the Board of Trustees.

The whistleblower is the witness to events, not a complainant and so does not need to wait for proof of malpractice before raising concerns.

When reporting a concern the employee should provide as much information and detail as possible. In particular they should provide the full names of the people involved or who know about what is happening, including the names of all individuals involved, dates of events and any relevant documentation.

Employees will suffer no detriment of any sort for making such a disclosure in good faith in accordance with this Procedure. However, failure to follow this Procedure may result in disclosed information losing its 'protected status'. For further guidance in relation to this matter or concerning the use of the Disclosure Procedure generally, employees should speak in confidence to the Chief Executive

Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.

### **Protection for the Whistleblower**

All concerns raised under this procedure will be treated seriously the individual may be invited to give a written statement or give evidence at a hearing. It will not be possible to guarantee anonymity or confidentiality as this may hinder an effective investigation or conflict with the Trust's legal obligations to report the matter to regulators or other external authorities.

Keep Talking Services will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect any individual who has raised a concern in good faith. Any employee who is found to have victimised or harassed an employee who has raised a concern will face disciplinary action.

### **Allegations not made in Good Faith**

Concerns that are raised frivolously, maliciously, for personal gain or where they are known to be untrue may result in disciplinary action.

### **Blowing the Whistle outside the Organisation**

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases staff should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally. In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate to raise concerns outside the organisation to the 'prescribed regulator'; this is The Charity Commissioners for England and Wales. This should only be done where an employee is raising a genuine concern in good faith and has sound evidence that the internal processes for raising concerns through the Disclosure Procedure will be subverted. Employees are advised to discuss their concerns with a legal advisor or Public Concern at Work before reporting them outside the organisation.

### **Contact details for The Charity Commissioners for England and Wales:**

Charity Commission Head of Operations  
2nd Floor  
20 Kings Parade Queens Dock  
Liverpool  
L3 4DQ  
Tel: 0870 3330123  
Fax: 0151 703 1556

### **Contact details for Public Concern at Work:**

Public Concern at Work  
3rd Floor  
Bank Chambers  
6 - 10 Borough High Street  
London  
SE1 9QQ

Tel: Whistleblowing Advice Line 020 7404 6609  
Tel: General enquiries 020 3117 2520  
Fax: 020 74038823  
Email: UK advice line - [whistle@pcaw.org.uk](mailto:whistle@pcaw.org.uk)

### **Review and Operation of this Policy**

The Chief Executive, Alexander Richardson has overall responsibility for the operation of this policy. A record of concerns raised will be kept and reported bi-monthly to the Board of Trustees.

**Part C: Reviews and Service Development**

1. All policies are reviewed at least annually, or to learn lessons from the outcomes of particular allegations or as required if legislation requires action. Any amendments made are agreed and signed off by the Chief Executive Officer.
2. The outcomes of any allegations are used in the development of the service.
3. The process for Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness lead by the Chief executive will include an annual Trust wide audit to test the awareness of policy, the recognition, response and reporting of abuse/neglect.

Reviewed on: 12/04/2023

Next review date: 12/04/2024

Signed Alex Richardson

