

Title	Safeguarding Policy
Document Owner	Corporate Director – Operations
Policy Approval Details	WHG Board October 2016
Next Review Date	August 2019
Corporate Aim	Create great neighbourhoods where people and communities flourish

1. Purpose and Aims

- 1.1 whg has a duty to protect our customers from harm or neglect in line with legislation. Protecting the welfare of customers is also central to our mission of being dedicated to the success of our people and places.
- 1.2 All colleagues have a responsibility to take action if they have concerns that an adult or child is at risk of abuse or neglect. This Policy sets out how colleagues must report safeguarding concerns and the responsibilities of designated colleagues for ensuring an appropriate and timely response.
- 1.3 Safeguarding can be defined as keeping children, young people and vulnerable adults safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and exploitation.
- 1.4 The term children or young person is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years in accordance with the Children Act 1989.
- 1.5 A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services because of:
 - a physical disability
 - a physical or mental illness
 - a learning difficulty
 - a reduced physical or mental capacity due to older age
 - a dependency on alcohol, illegal drugs or medication.
- 1.6 Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. Friends, strangers, family members and professional staff can all be guilty of abuse. It may consist of a single or repeated act. Abuse is not acceptable and may be a criminal offence. Abuse may be:

- physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, psychological or financial (adults)
- an act of neglect or failure to act
- when a child, young person or adult at risk is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent
- discriminatory motivated by prejudice
- institutional where organisations offer little or no choice from unfair practices
- linked to domestic abuse and modern slavery
- linked to self neglect. This could include where a person is not providing adequate care to themselves or maintaining their property so their health and wellbeing is at risk.

1.7 This Policy has been developed in line with the Working Together to Safeguard Children, Children’s Act 2004, Care Act 2014 and Modern Slavery Act 2015. Advice has been sought from Walsall Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) and Walsall Council’s Adult Protection Team.

2. Policy

- 2.1 All colleagues have a duty to report suspicions, allegations, actual incidents and/or disclosures where children, young people and adults at risk are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm, even if the colleague is unsure of their suspicions. These should be reported to one of the Designated Officers listed, whether or not they have been reported, directly to adult or children’s services or the police. This applies equally to complaints or accusations of historic as well as recent incidents.
- 2.2 Colleagues must pay due attention to confidentiality at all times in line with whg’s Data Protection Policy.
- 2.3 whg will raise awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and provide regular, adequate and appropriate training with colleagues and Board Members.
- 2.4 The **Corporate Director – Operations** maintains and reviews procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse. Information will be disseminated to Designated Officers and managers. We will ensure an effective information-sharing protocol with key partners including representation on Children’s and Adults’ Safeguarding Boards, where appropriate.
- 2.5 **The Head of Health and Wellbeing** is responsible for ensuring the operational effectiveness of the Policy and procedures, including an annual review of referrals actioned and lessons learnt. They will represent whg at Children’s and Adults’ Safeguarding Partnership

Boards as required to ensure current legislation and good practice can be incorporated into whg's procedures.

- 2.6 **Managers** will be kept up to date with changes in Policy and legislation in relation to the welfare and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk and will be responsible for the dissemination of relevant information to their teams.
- 2.7 The **Director of Human Resources** is responsible for ensuring whg recruits all colleagues safely, ensuring that appropriate questions and checks are undertaken at application, interview and throughout employment.
- 2.8 The **Corporate Director – Operations** and **Director of Human Resources** have responsibility for ensuring that all colleagues whose role requires them to work with children, young people or adults at risk are checked appropriately through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). All colleagues shall disclose any relevant information to Human Resources.
- 2.9 Individual **Contract Managers** have responsibility for ensuring that sub-contractors have a Safeguarding Policy in place, and that necessary DBS checks are carried out in accordance with their work with whg.
- 2.10 **Designated Safeguarding Officers** will be involved in reporting disclosures or concerns of abuse involving customers, including contacting or advising the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) (Children's Services) or the Adult Safeguarding Unit.
- 2.11 **The Director of Human Resources** is responsible for reporting any concerns or allegations involving colleagues to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). These agencies, MASH, Adult Safeguarding Unit or LADO, offer advice in relation to referrals and investigation and ensure that cases are handled in accordance with safeguarding regulations.
- 2.12 The Board has a duty of care which includes taking the necessary steps to safeguard and take responsibility for children and vulnerable adults. They must always act in their best interests and ensure they take all reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them. As part of its duties to manage risk and to protect the reputation and assets of whg, the Board is responsible for putting in place appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures.
- 2.12 More detailed guidance on the following is available for colleagues:
 - a guide to indicators of abuse
 - lead and designated officer responsibilities
 - guidance on reporting allegations, disclosures and incidents

- guidance on reporting involving whg colleagues

3. Performance Measures and Targets

- 3.1 Performance will be measured in part through compliance with the WCSB Audit and the Housing LIN Adult Safeguarding matrix, ensuring compliance in every area of both.
- 3.2 Referrals received and recorded by Designated Officers will be collated and reported annually to monitor trends and undertake an analysis of learning points and any changes to practice.

4. Monitoring and Review

- 4.1 The Policy will be reviewed every three years, with the following exceptions where the review can be brought forward:
- Any significant changes in legislation, policy and best practice within the sector
 - Any serious Case Review findings for organisations outside of Walsall
 - Any serious incidents or Case Reviews within Walsall and specifically relating to whg.

5. Associated Documents

- Walsall Adults' Safeguarding Board & Walsall Safeguarding Children's Board
- Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- whg Modern Slavery Act Statement

Modern Slavery Act 2015

The Care Act 2014

The Children Act 1989 and 2004

The Human Rights Act 1998

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)