

Safeguarding Policy

1.0 SCOPE

Purpose

- 1.1. This document sets out whg's policy towards the Safeguarding of customers.

Legal and regulatory framework

- 1.2 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.
- 1.3. 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.
- 1.4. Safeguarding is defined as keeping children, young people and vulnerable adults safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and exploitation.
- 1.5. 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.
- 1.6. 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.
- 1.7. Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. Friends, strangers, family members, and professional colleagues 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.
- 1.8. 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.
- 1.9. Advice has been sought from Walsall Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) and Walsall Council's Adult Protection Team and with reference to the Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Adults With Care and Support Needs in the West Midlands.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 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. This is the case even if the colleague is unsure of their suspicions or the information they have been given. Issues should be reported to one of the Designated Officers listed, whether or not they have already 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 but be mindful that sharing data connected to abuse and crime supersedes Data Protection legislation.
- 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 for colleagues and Board Members.
- 2.4. The Corporate Director of Business Strategy and Assets 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 Corporate Director of People and Learning 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 of People and Learning has 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 the Human Resources Team.
- 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 Corporate Director of People and Learning 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. There are a number of sources of further guidance set out in the appendices:
 - a guide to indicators of abuse is provided in Appendix 1.
 - Lead and Designated Officer responsibilities are set out in Appendix 2.
 - guidance on reporting allegations, disclosures and incidents is set out in Appendix 3.
 - guidance on reporting incidents involving whg colleagues is set out in Appendices 4 and 5.

3.0 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- 3.1. Performance will be measured in part through compliance with the WCSB Audit, ensuring compliance in every area.
- 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.

4.0 TRAINING AND DISSEMINATION

- 4.1. On induction all colleagues undertake a mandatory CORE training module on Adults and Children's safeguarding. The safeguarding training module is updated annually and is a mandatory CORE module for all colleagues.

5.0 MONITOR AND REVIEW

- 5.1 The Policy will be monitored by the Corporate Director of Business Strategy and Assets and reviewed every three years by the Policy Group, and approved by whg Board, 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.

6.0 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- 6.1 Documents, policies and procedures associated with this policy are:
 - Walsall Adults Safeguarding Board and Walsall Safeguarding Children's Board
 - Code of Conduct
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Disciplinary Policy
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Domestic Abuse Policy
 - Self Neglect/Hoarding Policy
 - 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)

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Legal advice	None
Consultation	Walsall Safeguarding Board/Rob Gilham Designated Safeguarding Officers
Approved by	whg Board September 2019
Review Date	March 2023
Corporate Plan aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver high quality homes and services for our customers• Be an exceptional place to work that's attracts, develops and retains talent
Equality Assessment	N/A
Key changes made	Policy updated to reflect changes in job roles and include new safeguarding officers. Procedure reviewed and updated.