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| River House Trust | |
| Safeguarding Policy | |
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| Adopted by the Board of Trustees to take effect from (date): | 16/5/23 |
| Next due for review on (date): | 5/24 |

Introduction

People may be considered vulnerable whenever their health or normal function is compromised, they are less able to take care of themselves, or are less able to protect themselves against harm or exploitation. An individual's vulnerability may change when their normal lifestyle or situation changes. This might be due to illness or disability and can occur at any age. An individual's level of vulnerability may also fluctuate due to short-term changes in physical or mental ill-health.

Using these definitions some River House service users might be considered vulnerable for all or most of the time, some might be considered vulnerable for some of the time, and others might be considered not to be vulnerable.

Our designated Safeguarding Officer is Precious Kildare, our Homeshare Manager.

All employees and volunteers have a responsibility to protect vulnerable service users from abuse, regardless of the setting in which the services they provide take place. The director will provide support to other employees or volunteers raising concerns.

Concerns regarding children or young people under 18 must be dealt with following our Child Protection Policy.

Definition

A vulnerable adult is anyone aged 18 or over who cannot protect themselves from abuse because of age, illness, disability or mental health problem.

A key document is 'No Secrets', issued by the Dept. of Health in 2000 and updated in 2015.

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-secrets-guidance-on-protecting-vulnerable-adults-in-care>)

which states that everyone has the right:

- To live their life free from fear, violence or harm;
- To be protected from harm or abuse;
- To live an independent lifestyle and the right to make choices, some of which may involve a degree of risk.

Definitions of abuse

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a

financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

A consensus has emerged identifying the following main different forms of abuse:

physical abuse including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

sexual abuse including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.

psychological abuse including 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 including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

neglect and acts of omission including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating; and

discriminatory abuse including racist, sexist, homophobic, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

As care providers, employees and volunteers may witness or suspect abuse. It is your responsibility to report such cases. Even if you are not sure whether abuse has taken place, as an advocate of a vulnerable adult you should refer the matter to the director see Appendix 1 for procedure.

Signs of potential abuse

Studies have indicated that there are warning signs, which we should be aware of, which may indicate that abuse has occurred. However, these signs do not necessarily mean that abuse has taken place.

Physical / sexual abuse

A history of the following:

- Unexplained falls
- Physical injuries
- Bruises or burns
- Bruises on the upper arms
- Cluster of bruises on the chest
- The presence of old and new bruises at the same time
- Burns in unusual places
- Changes to personal hygiene habits
- Excessive repeat prescription or under use of medication
- Frequent consultation with GP
- Changes in behaviour
- Changes in mood / mental state

- Presenting a self-injurious behaviour
- Withdrawal / reluctance to engage with others.

Psychological abuse

The service user may present as:

- Anxious, withdrawn and/or reluctant to engage or may be agitated
- Isolated in one room
- Changes in mood / mental state
- Presenting self-injurious behaviours
- Unkempt
- Change in behaviour
- Professionals and other visitors having trouble gaining access where previously there had been none
- Carers or relatives insisting on being present during interviews with the service user

Exploitation

- Reluctance to discuss financial circumstances
- Recent poverty
- Unexplained inability to pay bills, buy food or other essentials
- Missing belongings or money

What to do if you suspect abuse because you have:

- Directly witnessed an incident where a vulnerable adult has been abused
- Been told that abuse has occurred either by the person who has been the subject of abuse or another person
- Seen evidence or signs of abuse

If any of the above apply, as an employee or volunteer you must report this **immediately** to the director by following the procedure (Appendix 1).

The director will then decide on whether to refer the incident to the appropriate authorities.

*If that is the case, then the **Confirmation of Referral to Social Services** form will be completed and scanned over to the Social Services team. If social services haven't confirmed receipt of referral – follow up in 24 hours (recurring until a response is received).*

If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious physical injury, you may be required to contact the emergency services straight away. You should then inform the director.

As a witness you will be required to give an account of the incident. You should be very clear about:

- What has happened
- When it happened
- Who it happened to and which persons were involved.

It's good practice to make a written account of the incident as soon as possible, recording names, contact details, times, places, and sequence of events.

Employees or volunteers

Those suspected of abusing vulnerable adults will be:

- Subject to our complaints and / or disciplinary procedures.
- May also be referred to the police.
- May be referred to the *Home Office Disclosure & Barring Service* which ensures that those who have harmed or mistreated vulnerable adults in their care cannot work with vulnerable adults again.

Recruitment

All staff and volunteer roles are regularly reviewed in the context of working with vulnerable adults.

Disclosure & Barring Scheme (DBS) checks

Where appropriate, staff and volunteer roles will be subject to DBS checks.

Under the previous CRB checks system all roles were subject to a check. DBS officials have advised us that this is no longer appropriate for all roles.

Training

We take the protection of vulnerable adults very seriously. Training in these issues will be offered, on a regular basis, to appropriate staff and volunteers.

Whistleblowing

We have a stand-alone whistleblowing policy which applies to all aspects of our work, including the protection of vulnerable adults. This states:

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1999 requires that River House Trust has a “Whistle Blowing Policy” which sets out the organisation’s acknowledgement and acceptance of its obligations under the Act and its procedures for dealing with a public interest disclosure. This procedure is primarily for concerns where the interest of others or the organisation itself is at risk. This means that in reasonable belief of the member of staff making the disclosure that one or more of the following as examples is being undertaken:

- *A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed*
- *A person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which they should be subjected*
- *The health or safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered*
- *Information likely to show any matter falling within any of the above has been, is being, or is likely to being deliberately concealed*

Further information

Please visit <https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding>

Appendix 1

Procedure for raising a *Protection of Vulnerable Adults* alert

1. An employee or volunteer who believes that a vulnerable adult is at risk should alert the director right away by contacting Chris Woolls on 020 8741 5733 or 07918 714 214 or chris@riverhouseuk.org If he can't be reached then please contact Raj Satra on 020 8741 5733 or raj@riverhouseuk.org

2. If the alert raised is resolved immediately no further action need be taken.
3. The director may arrange to see and interview the employee or volunteer and take any further action necessary.
4. The employee or volunteer will be kept informed of issues relevant to their care relationship with the service user.
5. Records will be maintained by the director until the case is closed. These records will be retained within the service users file regardless of the outcome.



Safeguarding Adults Notification

This form to be used by the staff member / volunteer when notifying the Director of a Safeguarding concern (or completed by Director when notified of a concern).

Name of vulnerable adult.....

Address.....
.....

Date of Birth.....

Reason(s) for notification: give an account of concern(s) and relevant background information.

.....
.....
.....
.....continue on separate sheet if necessary

Person making notification

Name.....

Address.....
.....

Telephone number.....

Project.....

Signature..... Date.....

ACTION TAKEN – indicate action taken together with date(s)

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Safeguarding

CONFIRMATION OF REFERRAL TO SOCIAL SERVICES

To: Social Services Department
Address.....
Post code.....

From: Director
Name.....
Address.....
.....
Telephone number.....

This is to confirm the Safeguarding referral made to you on (date)..... at approximately (time)..... am / pm, when I spoke with (name of Social Services Officer).....

The referral concerned the following vulnerable adult;
Name.....
Address.....
Telephone number.....

The reason for the referral (state concerns and background information):
.....
.....
.....

Signed..... Date.....

Copy must be saved on file

PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THIS CONFIRMATION OF REFERRAL

To.....

This is to acknowledge receipt of the Confirmation of Referral regarding:

.....(name of vulnerable adult).

Signed..... Position..... Date.....