

Safeguarding Policy

Management Information

Owner	Safeguarding Manager
Version Number	6
Replacing/Updating	5
Date of consultation with Employee Champions	17/12/20
Date of sign off by CEO	December 2020
Date procedure approved by Board/Committee	Nov 20 Mar 21 – Board Ratification
Next Review Date	Mar 22
Circulation	All Employees, trustees, volunteers and residents

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1.0 Safeguarding Policy Aims

This safeguarding policy focuses on the workplace responsibilities of staff and volunteers, although responsibilities to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and vulnerable adults extend to an individual's personal and domestic life. We understand a particular emphasis and duty is placed on Save the Family as we provide accommodation and support to vulnerable families

Through this policy we aim to:

- Establish a clear and consistent understanding of what safeguarding children and adults involves and why it is important.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers understand that a failure to act can put children and adults at risk.
- Establish and embed recognised good practice with clear actions for staff and volunteers who receive a disclosure about actual, suspected or alleged abuse of a child or adult who is receiving a service from Save The Family.
- Establish and embed good practice with clear actions for staff and volunteers to take when they have low, medium or high level concerns about the welfare of a child or adult who is receiving a service from Save The Family
- Promote the welfare of all our residents, by taking a proactive approach to enable children and adults to have good outcomes as individuals and as a family

2.0 Save the Family's Mission Statement:

To provide a safe and supported community for homeless and vulnerable families where safeguarding is paramount.

To keep families together and help them to create a positive future for themselves.

Save the Family has a values framework, CREATE, Compassion, Respect, Empowerment, Aspiration, Trust and Excellence, which underpins the trauma informed approach we take in working with families.

Save the Family has a strong commitment to the welfare and safeguarding of all residents across all aspects of service delivery.

3.0 Safeguarding Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Every member of staff, volunteer, trustee and visitor has a responsibility to follow agreed safeguarding policies and procedures, particularly with regard to sharing all the information or concerns that they have about residents, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, with the Safeguarding Manager or one of their deputies and following their instructions to share any information to outside partner agencies including, but not limited to, I ART, EDT and the Police and Emergency Services.

Best practice in terms of safeguarding procedures for staff and visitors will be kept under regular review and may be changed without reviewing this full policy. Staff will be expected to familiarise themselves with the process and to raise any queries with line managers. Line managers will refer to agreed procedures in supervision and check for understanding of the practical application with all line management mentees on a regular basis. These will be displayed in prominent positions around the site as reminders and prompts.

4.0 Safeguarding Duty

All Save the Family staff, trustees and volunteers have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of both children and vulnerable adults whatever their role in the organisation. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Save the Family recognises that everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe no single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. All information about individual residents and families must be shared with line managers. Any information which could be seen to have any significance for safeguarding should be shared with the safeguarding panel. The safeguarding panel consists of five managers who between them should have the full picture for every individual child or adult and family unit at any time. The safeguarding panel will then be able to make informed decisions about what action needs to be taken to safeguard individuals, families and the community living at Cotton Hall.

Where there are concerns about the welfare of a child, the duty of care to that child will always take precedence over any obligation to the alleged perpetrator or any other individual.

Safeguarding Definitions

Safeguarding includes child protection and any circumstances where vulnerable adults are at immediate risk of significant harm.

Safeguarding also includes the much wider responsibility to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults which involves taking a proactive approach to assessing risk and the longer-term impact of the circumstances and current experience of children and vulnerable adults while living at Cotton Hall. As such good safeguarding practice permeates every aspect of the services we provide to families, both frontline and behind the scenes service delivery.

Safeguarding Children

The Children Acts 1989, 2004 and 2010 define a 'child' as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Therefore, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means 'children' and 'young people'.

We use the definition of safeguarding found in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) legislation:

- Promoting the welfare of children
- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Vulnerable Adults

A vulnerable adult is defined as anyone aged 18 or over, who has needs for care and support, whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs, and is experiencing abuse or neglect, or is at risk of abuse or neglect; and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse and neglect.

Most of our adult residents would be seen to meet these criteria, even though they might not present as being what might be understood as being vulnerable on a day to day basis.

Being homeless is a recognised support need and adults who are homeless are at higher risk of:

- Maltreatment
- Poor physical and emotional health
- Poor life outcomes
- Early death

Therefore Save The Family recognises that all the adults receiving a service from us would be recognised as being vulnerable. For the purposes of this policy wherever we will use the word 'adults' we are referring to all our adult residents and recognising their vulnerabilities and their heightened risk of being subject to abuse, neglect or maltreatment from individuals or organisations and public services.

In particular, Save The Family recognises that some individuals will deliberately target the adults in a family in order to gain their trust and possibly an element of control over them, in order to be trusted access or an element of control over their children.

Save The Family recognises that every family referred to the charity will usually be assessed as having more than one additional need on the Cheshire West and Chester Continuum of Need Model. If a referred family is not receiving any statutory social work they would usually present at Partnership Plus and will be offered support to address their additional needs through the Cheshire West and Chester Team Around the Family approach. This approach, referred to as TAF, will be explained fully during the referral process and the relevant consents gained, including consent to share information with partner agencies.

5.0 Types of Abuse

Abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- **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; children watching pornographic materials.
- **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, inheritance, 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 educational services or health and social care, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory Abuse**, including racist abuse, sexist abuse that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- **Institutional Abuse**, including the mistreatment of people brought about by poor or inadequate care or support, or systematic poor practice that affects

the whole support setting. It occurs when the individual's wishes and needs are sacrificed for the smooth running of a group, service or organisation.

- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), which** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity.
- **Bullying**, which is usually defined as behaviour that is: repeated. intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally. often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.
- **Cyber Bullying**, a form of bullying or harassment using electronic means. Cyberbullying and Cyber-harassment are also known as online bullying.
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**, the cutting, or partial or total removal, of the external female genitalia for cultural, religious, or other non-medical reasons.
- **Radicalisation**, a process by which an individual, or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo or contemporary ideas and expressions of the nation.
- **Trafficking**, the act of buying or selling people, or of making money from work they are forced to do, such as sex work.
- **Modern Slavery** refers to the institutions of slavery that continue to exist in the present day.
- **Sexually Harmful Behaviour**, (Hackett 2014 Children and Young People with Harmful Sexual Behaviours). The current definition of Sexual Abuse in Working Together to Safeguard Children is also relevant as it recognises that abuse can be perpetrated by children as well as adults.
- **Domestic Abuse**, any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
- **Stalking**, the wilful and repeated following, watching and/or harassing of another person. Unlike other crimes, which usually involve one act, stalking is a series of actions that occur over a period of time.
- **Child Criminal Exploitation**, the act of using children to perform tasks for others resulting in them gaining accommodation, food, gifts, status or a sense of safety, money or drugs; often including brain washing, violence and threats of violence by those exploiting the child.

To ensure that staff and volunteers are kept updated with the current understanding about different types of abuse and the symptoms associated with them, Save the Family will provide mandatory Safeguarding training (approved by the LSCB) for all staff and volunteers to enable them to act quickly when they suspect abuse has or is taking place.

Residents will also be provided with training to raise their awareness of abuse and support them in recognising when it is taking place. Training will also be provided on Prevent agenda to raise awareness of the signs of radicalisation.

6.0 Becoming Aware of Safeguarding Concerns

Staff may become aware of a safeguarding concern in a variety of ways. This may be through:

- 1) a child or adult disclosing an incident.
- 2) It may be through a direct observation or report;
- 3) an anonymous report;
- 4) a report from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) about a member of staff or a volunteer.
- 5) Witnessing a significant event on site

However,

- 6) Most concerns arise because a member of staff notes a pattern or trend of occurrences that on their own would not be worthy of concern.

It is not the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to decide whether a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been abused. It is however the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to immediately report any concerns, no matter how small, about the safety or welfare of a child or adult or family unit to our Safeguarding Manager via the Safeguarding Deputy managers or the Safeguarding Panel. They will be able to piece together a wider range of information which may indicate a pattern or trend which has implications for safeguarding. They will then consider any necessary course of action or referral to the partner agency to protect the individuals or families involved and promote their welfare.

7.0 Safer Recruitment

We are aware of our responsibility to make it as difficult as possible for anyone with an unhealthy interest in working with children or vulnerable adults to be employed or volunteer for Save The Family, as defined by the Bichard Inquiry (2004):

“For those agencies whose job it is to protect children and vulnerable people, the harsh reality is that if a sufficiently devious person is determined to seek out opportunities to work their evil, no one can guarantee that they will be stopped. Our task is to make it as difficult as possible for them to succeed...”

Save the Family has a safer recruitment process and a robust approach will be taken at each step of the process to ensure that the necessary checks are carried out and that all

candidates and employees are fully aware of the requirement to abide by the safeguarding policy and to fully co-operate with employment enquiries and checks.

In particular, Save the Family will always:

- Show a clear commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults at every stage of the recruitment process including job advertisements and interviews.
- Include a written question about any criminal convictions, cautions or other legal restrictions on their working with children or any pending cases that could affect their suitability to work with children at shortlisting stage.
- Only shortlist candidates who meet all the essential criteria stated in the person specification.
- Expect internal candidates to meet the same standards as external candidates.
- Only use telephone interviews at the initial stages of the interview process.
- Use face to face interviews, presentations and practical activities within the final stages the process.
- Only use prepared questions in interviews that include safeguarding scenarios and question a candidate's motivations as well as their ability to work with vulnerable families.
- Check the identity of all candidates before face to face interview using photographic ID
- Ask for explanations of any gaps in employment or educational history and check the validity of these for any successful candidates before offering them the post.
- Only accept original copies of relevant qualifications before face to face interviews and keep a record of these.
- Apply for a DBS check for all staff, trustees and volunteers
- Always check the references provided and ask specific questions about their proven skills and suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults;
- Take up additional references if recruiting from abroad, and if a DBS is not available, a 'fit persons' check should be sought where available.

Induction and Probationary Periods

All new members of staff will be subject to an induction process and a probationary period of 6 months. During this time they will be expected to complete mandatory training in several key areas and specifically in approved safeguarding training for children and adults. They will receive monthly face to face supervisions which will have safeguarding practice as one of the main discussion points. Significant or persistent breaches of safeguarding practice or procedure where appropriate training and/or instruction was provided or the staff member could have been reasonably expected to have sufficient knowledge and experience from their previous employment to have acted in a more appropriate

manner, may result in this probationary period being extended or their contract of employment being terminated.

Past employees:

When Save The Family is approached for references for past employees, volunteers or residents, we will provide the same level of detailed information about skills and strengths, as well as areas needing professional development or support and disciplinary matters that we would want to receive during our own recruitment process.

8.0 Management and Training of Staff/Volunteers

Save the Family recognises the importance of providing robust leadership and line management and regular support to its staff and volunteers in order to ensure that excellent standards of practice and professional development are maintained, regularly reviewed and kept up to date with statutory guidance and recognised good practice, particularly in relation to safeguarding.

Each staff member will take part in a one to one supervision with their line manager at least once every 6-8 weeks. This will include a review of case management, and discussion of any safeguarding matters including any safeguarding concern forms completed. Audit checks will be carried out on case files and TAF action plans to ensure they are up to the required standard by line managers, operations mentor manager and the safeguarding manager. Constructive feedback will be given and any areas for improvement noted and monitored within individual supervision sessions. Patterns and trends will be tracked and monitored by the safeguarding manager and addressed in team meetings, peer supervisions and internal training sessions. The Safeguarding Manager will audit supervision notes and that there are clear links between audit feedback and supervision discussions.

In order to keep all staff up to date with current developments and understanding of safeguarding practice and knowledge, Save The Family will provide opportunities for both internal and external safeguarding training will be provided for all Save the Family employees utilising a range of providers including the Local Authority's specialist safeguarding training workshops, e-learning and recommended reading. All staff will be expected to make the most of the training opportunities that are best suited to their role and to be able to evidence in supervision how they are embedding their learning into their everyday practice.

Training offered and attended will be tracked and monitored by the Safeguarding Manager and reported on at regular intervals to the Board of Trustees and the Families Committee

Protected time is provided to all staff to complete accredited safeguarding online training which is discussed in supervision and staff supported to embed into their daily practice. All volunteers are provided with free access to the same accredited training and the opportunity to discuss any arising issues of practice with the volunteer coordinator or the safeguarding manager. Staff and volunteer attendance at training is monitored and certificates retained on HR records for staff and by the Volunteer Coordinator for volunteers.

9.0 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Save the Family has a GDPR compliant data protection policy in place and all staff members and volunteers are expected to be familiar with this and consider the implications of this at all times in their everyday practice. However, this does not mean that we cannot share information inside or outside the organisation without first having specific permission. Rather the legislation provides a framework to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately. There are several conditions in the legislation including safeguarding which allow the sharing of personal information without first gaining specific consent.

UK government guidance including Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 specifically refers to information sharing and states that the child's best interest must always be the overriding concern. Similarly, staff have to balance the common law duty of confidence and the Human Rights Act 1998 against the effect on individuals or others of not sharing the information.

Wherever possible, we will seek consent and be open and honest with the individual from the outset as to why, what, how and with whom, their information will be shared. you gain consent to share information, it must be explicit, and freely given. There may be some circumstances where it is not appropriate to seek consent, because the individual cannot give consent, or it is not reasonable to obtain consent, or because to gain consent would put a child's or young person's safety at risk.

Our referral process specifically gains consent to share information with colleagues and partners and this is a necessary and integral part of the everyday work staff do to safeguarding children and adults living on site.

Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children, which must always be the paramount concern. Staff should also not assume that someone else will pass on information that they think may be critical to keeping a child safe. Staff should never be in a position of being the only member of staff who knows a particular piece of information about any child or adult living at Cotton Hall Farm.

Concerns of child abuse must be discussed immediately with the member of staff who has the lead role for safeguarding. Concerns should always be acted upon and any decision on whether to share information or not should always be recorded. Any

information shared should always be accurate, up to date, shared appropriately and securely: only with the person or people who need to know and limited to information relevant to purpose.

Effective sharing of information with Team Around the Family partners is essential for early identification of need, assessment and service provision to keep children safe. Serious case reviews (SCRs13) have highlighted that missed opportunities to record, understand the significance of and share information in a timely manner can have severe consequences for the safety and welfare of children.

Save the Family will be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care (e.g. they are being supported as a child in need or have a child protection plan). Team members will also be alert to sharing important information about any adults with whom that child has contact, which may impact the child's safety or welfare.

When decisions are made to share or withhold information, a record should be kept of why that decision was made and who has been given the information and why.

10.0

Whistle Blowing Policy

Save the Family has in place a Whistle Blowing Policy to reassure staff that it is safe for them to raise concerns about safeguarding amongst other matters without fear of harassment or victimisation.

11.0 Policy Review and Dissemination

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it is kept up to date with developments in understanding of safeguarding and recognised good practice and will be approved by the Board of Trustees. It will be brought to the attention of all team members and volunteers and made available for ease of reference. Steps will be taken to involve residents in the review of the policy and to ensure they are aware of its requirements.