**Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin**

**Safeguarding Policy**

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| Index Ref | PP15 |
| Date Approved by Board | 9 July 2018 |
| Date of Staff Consultation | 04 July 2018 |
| Number of Pages |  |
| Number of Appendices | 0 |
| Issue Number | 2 |
| Date of First Issue | 2014 |
| Date of Next Revision | 01 April 2019 |
| Date of Last Revision | 01 July 2018 |

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# Background

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin (HWT&W) aims to create an environment where children and vulnerable adults are valued and safe, where their welfare is paramount, and their right, without exception, to protection from abuse and neglect. There are several aspects to protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect. These include procedures for dealing with concerns, safe recruitment practices, and guidance about appropriate behaviours. Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin (HWT&W) has a responsibility to ensure that abuse or neglect of adults or children at risk when suspected or discovered by its staff, directors or volunteers, is recognised and responded to appropriately.

# Policy

HWT&W organisation recognises the vulnerability of children and some adults Staff, directors and volunteers will place paramount importance on promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, and recognise their public and professional responsibility to protect them from any form of abuse. This includes accepting responsibility for ensuring that all concerns about children and vulnerable adults safety or wellbeing which come to our attention will be followed up and dealt with as quickly and sensitively as possible.

There will be times where a staff, Directors and/or volunteers identify an immediate risk to the safety and wellbeing of people using services whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable to abuse, neglect or harm. **These matters will be referred immediately to the Telford and Wrekin Adult Social Care Services****Safeguarding Team and/or the police. This applies to both Adult and Children’s Safeguarding concerns.** Safeguarding issues or concerns regarding children will also be shared with Ofsted if the issue relates to a social care setting, and concern may be shared with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) if the issue relates to a health setting.

HWT&W will work within the West Midlands Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures (adults and children) which ensures compliance with The Care Act 2014 and supports promotion of "**safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**".

HWT&W will uphold the key principles of safeguarding that include:

* ensuring members of staff, directors and volunteers are fully aware of the law and statutory requirements in order that vulnerable adults and children receive the protection of the law and access to the judicial process.
* provide appropriate assistance and sign-posting to relevant agencies, including advice, protection and support to vulnerable adults whose right to independence or choice is being compromised.
* supporting those who do not have the capacity to make decisions for themselves to be safe and protect themselves and their assets.

HWT&W will:

* undertake safe recruitment practices (staff and volunteers);
* give guidance about appropriate behaviours during induction;
* ensure any staff member, director or volunteer whose work involves direct contact with adults at risk and/or children in care or health settings receives safeguarding training including ‘Child Protection’, and awareness of procedures including how to deal with concerns.

## Legal Framework

Healthwatch will comply with all relevant adult protection legislation and implement strategies and policies in line with this legislation to protect vulnerable adults from abuse and enable members of staff, services users, volunteers and visitors to feel confident to report concerns. This includes but is not limited to:

* The NHS and Community Care Act 1990.
* The Mental Health Act 1983
* The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1989.
* The Registered Homes Act 1984

## ‘Adults at Risk’ and Safeguarding

The Department of Health definition of a vulnerable adult is “a person who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason mental or other disability, age or illness and who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation”.

An adult at risk is defined as “an adult who has needs for care and support”.

The safeguarding duty of the local authority applies to an adult at risk who:

* “is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect” and
* as a result of [*their*] care or support needs is unable to protect themselves from [*that*] risk or experience”.
* the definition includes self-neglect.

Telford & Wrekin Council Adult Social Care Services team also includes “whether or not their needs are met, or they meet the local authority's eligibility criteria for care and support services”.

## Safe Recruitment

Enhanced DBS checks will be undertaken for all staff and Board directors. DBS checks will be undertaken for all volunteers when and if necessary and appropriate for their role.

## Responsibilities

It is the Managing Director responsibility to ensure that all safeguarding concerns are properly reported to the appropriate person or agency.

The Managing Director will ensure that all actions taken are carefully recorded in CIVI-CRM as soon as possible.

In the absence of the Managing Director, the Engagement Manager(s) will deputize.

## Safeguarding Training

Awareness and understanding of this policy will form part of the induction process for all new members of staff, Directors and volunteers. HWT&W will ensure all members of staff, directors, and volunteers are clear on what constitutes abuse of a vulnerable person and will be trained to recognise signs and patterns of abuse – physical, sexual, psychological or emotional, financial, discriminatory, institutional/organisational, domestic violence, modern slavery, and neglect/self-neglect.

All staff members, and any Board director or volunteer whose work involves direct contact with adults at risk will be required to attend Safeguarding training-basic awareness course (*as currently provided by SPIC - Shropshire Partners in Care*) as soon as possible after commencement of their duties.

All staff members, and any Board director or volunteer whose work involves contact with children will be required to attend “Child Protection” course (for volunteers) provided by T&WC, to enable them to understand their role and responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people.

A comparable course completed within 6 months of recruitment may been accepted as a substitute.

Safeguarding training will be one of the mandatory role-specific training requirements for all Enter & View Authorised Representatives.

Attendance at the trainings will be recorded on the training record held in the personnel record/volunteer record of the person concerned.

Safeguarding training /awareness should be updated every three years following completion of the initial course, or earlier if there is a change in the law.

Training needs will be kept under review to ensure compliance with the latest legislation and best practice guidance, including Healthwatch England (HWE) guidance.

## Confidentiality

Healthwatch is committed to adopting a responsible approach to confidentiality that meet’s appropriate laws and acknowledges that vulnerable people whom we come into contact with and/or support, have a right to confidentiality. This should not be confused with secrecy where there is a perceived risk of danger to the individual concerned. Healthwatch work focus includes sensitive issues and potentially vulnerable people, and these approaches are therefore very important. Confidentiality and sensitivity are therefore an important part of staff and volunteer induction training.

Staff, Board directors and volunteers will be instructed on Information Governance (IG) - that information should only be shared in line with the IG policy, and this Safeguarding policy regarding adults and children at risk, and on a “need to know” basis. This should be with the consent of the person concerned, except where a vulnerable person may be at risk, and in such circumstances, neither staff, directors, nor volunteers should give any guarantee of absolute confidentiality, and indicate that information will be shared with the appropriate authorities in such circumstances.

Training on confidentiality, and data protection will be given to staff, directors, and volunteers as part of induction, and refresher training when needed or when laws change (such as GDPR). Staff will also receive IG training regarding information security - the safe collection, storage and sharing of sensitive information, whether written or electronic, including the use of email for confidential or sensitive information.

## Raising Safeguarding Concerns

If a member of staff, Director or volunteer (the “discoverer”) during their work for HWT&W suspects or discovers any allegation of abuse or neglect of an adult at risk, or a child or young person, they should report this to their Team Manager/line manager, and a signed and dated record created in the incidents log. This should then be reported to the Managing Director.

### Emergencies

If the vulnerable person/adult at risk appears to be in immediate danger, or it appears that a crime has been committed, the discoverer should contact their Team Manager (usually the Engagement Manager) and call the emergency services immediately. They or the Team Manager should then inform the Managing Director, Chair or other director within HWT&W at the earliest opportunity and report all relevant details. The Managing director will contact T&WC ‘*Adult Social Care Services (Adult Access Team)’* as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the member of staff should preserve any evidence including any notes written.

### Non-Emergencies

1. If the vulnerable person is not in immediate danger and no crime has been committed, and the ‘discoverer’ is a staff member or director, they should contact the Managing Director at the earliest opportunity and report all relevant details.
2. If the ‘discoverer’ is a volunteer and there appears to be no immediate danger and no crime committed, they should contact their Team Manager (usually Engagement Manager) at the earliest opportunity and report all relevant details. The Team Manager should then contact the Managing Director at the earliest opportunity.
3. The Team Manager (Engagement Manager) or Managing Director where it is practicable and appropriate, will ask the adult concerned:
4. Whether they see the issue as a cause for concern or not, and
5. What they would want to happen, if anything.
6. The Team Manager (Engagement Manager) or Managing Director will decide about whether or not to raise the matter as a safeguarding concern/issue and will contact T&W ‘*Adult Social Care Services (Adult Access Team)’*, or the relevant Social Services if the Managing Director thinks it should be raised to them, or to seek advice.