

## **Safeguarding Statement**

“Gateway into the Community believes that it is always unacceptable for a young person or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind. As such, our staff and volunteers are committed to following our safeguarding policy and procedures, ensuring that our commitment to practice protects members”.

## **Safeguarding Procedure**

### **1. Organisation commitment**

Gateway into the Community:

- Have a clear organisational commitment to safeguarding. This is reflected in our safeguarding policy. Our safeguarding statement (please see above) is on the notice board within the office and the Den.
- Encourage the involvement of children, vulnerable adults and their families in the planning and development of our service. Those members who wish to become involved in consultations on new developments are welcomed and several members also act as trustees for the organisation.
- Have a culture that puts children’s and vulnerable adults’ interests first, making sure they are kept safe, healthy, listened to and their views are taken into account. Most members already choose the activities they take part in and make suggestions for new ones.
- Have public liability insurance, with sufficient coverage for all activities undertaken.

### **2. Organisation responsibilities**

Gateway into the Community:

- Have child and vulnerable adult protection policies and procedures for what to do if there are concerns about someone’s welfare. This information is reviewed regularly during management committee meetings. This is done at least every 12 months.
- Have a procedure for ensuring the policy and procedures are communicated to staff/volunteers/members and their families. This is covered as part of staff induction and is detailed in the Gateway into the Community Employee Handbook.
- Ensure that information for members on the procedure and route for expressing concerns about the service are available. Staff and volunteers are answerable to the management committee, who are, in turn, answerable to the Charity Commission.

### **3. Clear line of accountability**

Gateway into the Community have:

- A designated person to take responsibility for safeguarding. Julia Ferguson (Chief Executive).
- The designated person will deal with concerns or allegations of abuse and step by step guidance on how to report concerns.
- An alternative person to take responsibility in the absence of the designated person: Jo Robinson (Development Manager). The chair of the management committee may also be consulted if the allegation is against a member of staff.

### **4. Safe recruitment and selection**

Gateway into the Community have:

A rigorous recruitment and selection process for all staff and volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults including:

- Advertising their commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
- An interview process to ensure suitability
- DBS checks prior to starting
- Verification of references prior to starting

### **5. Safer working practice**

Gateway into the Community have:

- Policies and procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers. Gateway use Northumberland Safeguarding Children Board's guidance and Northumberland Safeguarding Adults Committee's guidance.
- A written code of behaviour which outlines good practice when working with children and vulnerable adults and safer working practices.
- A whistle blowing policy, which is well publicised and which allows adults, children and young people to express concerns about conduct of staff/volunteers without fear of consequences.
- Gateway into the Community employs Peninsula, an independent agency who provide support and guidance on employment and health and safety.

## **6. Staff training and safeguarding**

Gateway into the Community have a training plan which:

- Identifies individual training needs.
- Ensures an appropriate level of training for the designated person and all staff/volunteers in recognising signs of abuse and neglect and knowing how to respond to concerns.
- Julia and Jo are trained in Safeguarding for children and young people Level 4 as designated persons. They have both attended Safeguarding adult training as have several of the other staff. Julia has also attended training in safeguarding disabled children. Other staff are given the opportunity to attend safeguarding training as often as is possible, in addition to the in-house training which everyone receives.
- Julia's role includes responsibilities for health and safety

## **7. Safeguarding children**

Gateway into the Community have policies which look at:

- Risk assessments of activities
- Taking children away on trips
- Safe use of the internet and other technology such as videos, digital equipment and websites
- Use of photographs/images
- Dealing with bullying and discrimination
- Dealing with accidents and emergencies

## **8. Safeguarding Adults**

Gateway into the Community have policies which look at:

- Positive risk taking with adults
- Mental Capacity
- Dealing with accidents and emergencies
- Bullying and discrimination
- Safe use of internet and other technology etc.

## **9. Interagency working**

Gateway into the Community have:

- Effective working arrangements with other organisations where appropriate (statutory and non-statutory, local and county-wide). We used the Multi-agency staff guidance from both the adults' services and children's services departments when writing our policies and procedures

- Sources of information, advice and support, locally and county-wide. For example, we are members of the Northumberland Voluntary Services Network and Tynedale Youth Form and attend regular sessions.

## **10. Information sharing**

Gateway into the Community has guidance for staff/volunteers, which is available to members and their families and carers on request:

- When and how to share information
- Effective recording and safe storage of confidential information
- Data protection requirements
- Members' rights to confidentiality and its exceptions are displayed on the notice board at the office
- All staff and volunteers sign a confidentiality agreement and the policy and procedures is explained to them at induction

## **Safeguarding of Adults using Gateway into the Community's services and their protection from Significant Harm:**

Everyone has the right to live his or her life free from fear, violence or harm.

Everyone has the right to be protected from harm or abuse.

All adults have the right to an independent lifestyle and the right to make choices, some of which may involve a degree of risk.

Mistreatment and abuse of any citizen is not acceptable. Doing nothing is not an option.

Our actions can help make a difference. We have a duty of care to our members.

**This policy is to safeguard all adults who are aged 18 and over, who are receiving a service from Gateway into the Community due to their disability. The policy and procedures on safeguarding adults aim to ensure that people who use our services are safeguarded from physical, financial or material, psychological or sexual abuse, neglect, discriminatory abuse or self harm or inhuman or degrading treatment, whether this be through deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance, in accordance with our written codes of practice.**

**Julia Ferguson, the Chief Executive 07906058423**, is the designated person responsible for the safeguarding of all members of Gateway into the Community. In her absence Joanne Robinson, development manager, or the chair of the management committee of Gateway into the Community take over as designated person.

### **What is Abuse?**

Abuse may:

- Consist of a single act or repeated acts
- Be an act of neglect or an omission to act
- Be intentional or unintentional or result from lack of knowledge

### **The Main types of Abuse are**

- **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 abused person has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting; it can include non-contact abuse such as indecent exposure, photography, video, internet pornography
- **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
- **Discriminatory Abuse**, including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, cultural norms, religion, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment
- **Institutional Abuse**, where the organisation of a care setting does not meet the needs of individuals or creates an abusive or neglectful culture
- **Self Neglect or Self Injurious Behaviour** Although self neglect is not included in the "No Secrets" definition of abuse, in such cases this policy will apply where there is deemed to be significant risk to life.
- **Domestic Abuse** This policy is concerned with vulnerable adults i.e. adults who are at risk because of their disability. However incidents reported by the police through the domestic violence protocols will be addressed under the adult protection processes if it is considered that a vulnerable adult may be at risk of abuse.
- **Random Criminal Acts** by strangers are not usually included within the definition of abuse. It may sometimes be appropriate, however, to use the Policy to ensure that the vulnerable person receives the support that they need.

**Any intervention to protect an adult must be carried out with the consent of the adult concerned, unless they are unable to give consent or their consent is overridden by our duty to protect others.**

However it is important to report any of the following directly to the Chief Executive, however trivial it may seem:

- Bruises or other marks which are unexplained or where the explanation is confused or inconsistent or not compatible with the injury
- Unexplained changes in emotional state e.g. fearfulness or withdrawal
- Sudden onset of severe behavioural difficulties
- The person saying that someone has hurt them or touched them in a way that they did not like
- The person saying that someone is misusing or cheating them out of their money
- Or any other concern that the adult raises that you feel could be abusive

A person's health and immediate safety is the first consideration. If there is an immediate threat to the person, then the police should be called. If there is a need for medical attention, the person should be taken to the Accident and Emergency Department, by ambulance if necessary. In line with the Accident and Emergencies policy and procedures, if there has been no reason to suspect abuse prior to the discovery of injury or ill health you ask if the person wants their parents/carers to be contacted. If, however, the adult has made an allegation against parents/carers, you

follow this procedure and report the matter to the Chief Executive immediately without reference to parents/carers.

You may be told about the abuse by the member, him or herself, by someone else who knows or works with them, or you may notice signs that abuse or neglect is taking place.

If it is another worker who has noticed that something is wrong, check that they have made a report to the Chief Executive or are going to do so (and make one yourself). If someone tells you about abuse they have experienced or are experiencing:

- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief
- Listen carefully to what is being said
- Demonstrate a sympathetic approach by acknowledging regret and concern that what has been reported has happened
- Do not ask detailed or probing questions: you do not want to jeopardise any official investigation
- Ensure that any emergency action needed has been taken
- Tell the person that you must report such concerns to the coordinator
- Confirm that the information will be treated seriously
- Give them information about the steps that will be taken
- Reassure them that they will be consulted before any action is carried out.

It is important that staff and volunteers make a written record, as soon as possible, of any suspicions, noting carefully what was observed and when and containing factual information only. If there is a physical injury it should be described in detail or sketched. This should be done on an Incident Report form. This form should be signed and dated. If you suspect a crime has been committed then try to preserve any evidence until after a decision is made about whether the police will be contacted.

The Chief Executive has the responsibility for making any decisions to pass on information to the appropriate authorities and whether to consult with parents/carers first. In most incidents this would be the normal procedure, and the Chief Executive will record any decisions to the contrary, with a full explanation as to how they were reached. This decision will be taken on the same day as the incident/situation arises.

If staff or volunteers feel, however, that the information has not been dealt with appropriately, particularly if an accusation has been made against a member of staff, they have the right to contact either the chair of the management committee of Gateway into the Community or the team responsible for Adult Safeguarding. The helpline

**Onecall** is now the single point of contact. For any concerns ring **Onecall 01670 536400**. You can also email **onecall@northumbria-healthcare.nhs.uk** or out of hours call the emergency duty team on 03456 005252. When you phone **Onecall** you may ask to talk to the relevant care manager for advice at the Learning Disability Team at Dene Park House. The normal procedure, however, would be to discuss the situation with the Chief Executive before taking further action and try to reach an agreement on the further action. You will not be penalised/ pressured if you feel that you need to make a report yourself, as we all carry a duty of care to our members. See whistle blowing policy in Staff Handbook.

Once a referral is made to Northumberland's Adult Safeguarding Team they will take on the responsibility for the investigation and decision-making process. Their policies and procedures are followed and Gateway into the Community staff must support them in carrying out their responsibilities. Their policies and procedures can be consulted on Northumberland County Council's website.

If the incident/ situation involves a member of staff, disciplinary procedures (see staff handbook) will be invoked. This may mean an immediate suspension if a serious accusation is made. Also, if it is appropriate, a report will be sent to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Gateway into the Community will work to empower vulnerable adults by involving them as fully as possible. It is important that any action we take is because we feel it is in the best interests of the vulnerable adult and takes into consideration their mental capacity and our duty of care to them and to others who may be affected.

## Child Protection Policy and Procedure

Children have a right to be protected from abuse. This can be through neglect or physical injury or it can take the form of sexual or emotional abuse.

Members of staff and volunteers have a legal **duty of care** to protect children who use the project's services from **Significant Harm**. It is important to report any of the following directly to **Julia Ferguson, Chief Executive, 07906058423**, however trivial it may seem:

- Bruises or other marks which are unexplained or where the explanation is confused or inconsistent or not compatible with the injury.
- Unexplained changes in emotional state e.g. fearfulness or withdrawal.
- Sudden onset of severe behavioural difficulties.
- The child saying that someone has hurt them or touched them in a way that they did not like.

It is important to listen to the child. Once you have established, however, that there is a cause for concern, the child should not be questioned further as this could interfere with official investigations. This does not mean you stop listening if the child wants to carry on talking.

The child's health and immediate safety is the first consideration: if there is a need for immediate medical attention the child must be taken to the Accident and Emergency Department. Contact the Chief Executive or the other named person who will contact Northumberland Child Care Services who will make the decisions about contacting the parents.

It is important that staff and volunteers make a written record, as soon as possible, of any suspicions, noting carefully what was observed and when. The record should contain factual information only. If there is a physical injury it should be described in detail or sketched. This should be done on an Incident Report form.

The Chief Executive has the responsibility for making any decisions about whether to pass on information to the appropriate authorities and whether to consult with parents/carers first. In most incidents consultation would be the normal procedure, and any decisions to the contrary should be recorded with a full explanation as to how they were reached.

If staff or volunteers feel, however, that the information has not been dealt with appropriately, particularly if an accusation has been made against a member of staff, and that the child is still at risk of Significant Harm, staff have the right themselves to

contact either the chair of the management committee of Gateway into the Community or the team responsible for child protection at Northumberland County Council. The helpline **OneCall** is now the single point of contact. For any concerns ring **OneCall 01670 536400**. You can also email **onecall@northumbria-healthcare.nhs.uk** or out of hours call the emergency duty team on 03456 005252. When you phone **OneCall** you may ask to speak to the relevant person in the Disabled Children Team at Dene Park House for advice. The normal procedure, however, would be to discuss the situation with the Chief Executive before taking further action.

Once a referral to Northumberland Child Care Services has been made, it is their responsibility to take charge of the investigation and decision-making process. Their policies and procedures are followed and Gateway into the Community staff must support them in carrying out their responsibilities. Their policies and procedures can be consulted on Northumberland County Council's website.

An explanation of Gateway into the Community's Confidentiality Policy for members is displayed in the office. This is important because it explains to the members the consequences of disclosing anything to a staff member or volunteer. If a child or their parent/carer does start to disclose to you it is important that you are aware of this policy and that you make them aware that we cannot promise confidentiality if there is a child at risk of harm. Also check please the Data Protection Policy to ensure that information about individuals is kept securely and appropriately.

If there has been no reason to suspect abuse prior to the discovery of injury or ill health and a child has not made an allegation against their parents/carers, try to contact parents prior to attendance at the Accident and Emergency Department, in line with the Accident and Emergencies Policy and Procedure.

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