

Local Friends Policies

Safeguarding

Policy Statement

Everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. *Local Friends* will not tolerate abuse or exploitation by anyone working for us or alongside us in any capacity.

We commit to addressing safeguarding issues throughout our work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children and at risk adults (sometimes called ‘vulnerable adults’) from any harm that may be caused as a result of their coming into contact with us. This includes harm arising from:

- anyone working for us in any capacity; and
- the design and implementation of our activities.

Local Friends does not work directly with children, but we help people who may be themselves in contact with children, so our activities may indirectly bring us into contact with children, and we may as a result become aware of safeguarding concerns relating to them.

Therefore, a secondary purpose of this policy is to enable our workers to recognise safeguarding concerns relating to people we come into contact with, and take appropriate steps to report those concerns and ensure they are acted upon.

Description

We follow the NHS guidance in understanding safeguarding in general as protecting people’s health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

In our context, we take safeguarding to mean:

- protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our people or activities; and
- notifying the relevant authority if we identify safeguarding concerns relating to people we come into contact with, following up the notification to ensure it is acted upon.

Prevention

We will:

- ensure our workers have access to this policy and receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role;
- do our best to ensure all our workers understand their responsibilities within this policy;
- ensure our workers understand how to report safeguarding concerns and who to report them to;
- design and undertake all our activities in a way that protects people from harm that may arise from their coming into contact us, including the way in which information about individuals is gathered, stored and communicated;
- implement appropriate safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying workers; and
- follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

Anyone who works for *Local Friends* in any capacity will:

- contribute to creating and maintaining a safe environment for everyone they come into contact with, by any means, through their work for Local Friends;
- avoid any activity which may lead to suspicion of abuse or any kind;
- bring to the attention of their line manager any concerns they may have concerning the safety or wellbeing of anyone they come into contact with through their work for Local Friends.

Reporting

We will:

- provide a range of safe, appropriate and accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns;
- investigate any reported safeguarding concerns promptly and thoroughly; and
- follow up any report of safeguarding concerns which are made to any external body, so that we are satisfied that they have been acted upon.

Response

We will:

- take appropriate action after investigating any reported safeguarding concern, including a thorough risk assessment;
- not tolerate any worker putting at risk the safety or wellbeing of anyone connected with Local Friends;

- notify our partners of the results of any safeguarding investigation; and
- notify the Police if there is the possibility that an offence may have been committed.

Appropriate Care

We will ensure that appropriate care is taken when recruiting and deploying workers. A responsible person will confirm the suitability of all *Local Friends* workers and all people being visited by *Local Friends* workers.

Any worker reporting a safeguarding concern is protected by the Disclosure of Malpractice Policy.

A criminal record or other evidence of inappropriate behaviour in the past is not a barrier to working for *Local Friends*. However:

- any involvement with *Local Friends* is dependent upon full disclosure at the outset of all such past activities and allegations;
- the deployment of such a worker will only happen after a full risk assessment has been undertaken;
- any such deployment may involve additional limitations or checks which would not normally be required; and
- it is possible that *Local Friends* may not be able to offer any role in such a situation, as all cases are dealt with on an individual basis.

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