

## POLICY STATEMENT

Home-Start is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of all who use its service. We recognise that we have a responsibility to protect the welfare of adults at risk through our support for families and to ensure they are protected from harm. Home-Start has no statutory remit or role to investigate but acknowledges a responsibility to pass on to the appropriate statutory agency concerns in relation to the safety or welfare of an adult at risk so that these concerns can be assessed.

Where there are concerns about the safety or welfare of an adult at risk this policy and these procedures will be followed and information will be shared with the relevant agencies in order to protect them.

## DEFINITION OF AN ADULT AT RISK

- Someone over the age of 18 who has a need for care and support
- Someone who is currently experiencing, or is at risk of, neglect or abuse
- Someone who is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect, or the risk of it.

This may include a person who:

- Is elderly or frail
- Has a mental illness, including dementia
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Has an addiction to drugs or alcohol, or whose use of drugs or alcohol is causing them harm
- Is homeless
- Is experiencing domestic abuse, which could include coercive control, or is deemed at risk of experiencing it in the near future.
- Is a victim of modern slavery
- Is being sexually exploited by gangs, or an individual. Or, is at risk of being exploited due to several known risk factors
- Is victim of forced marriage, or is liable to be forced into marriage against their will in the near future
- Is an asylum seeker

### Adult Abuse may involve

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Female Genital mutilation
- Radicalisation
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect

## PRINCIPLES

This policy and following procedures are based on the following principles.

All adults at risk in Home-Start, irrespective of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to:

- Have their money, goods and possessions treated with respect and to receive equal protection for themselves and their property.
- Guidance and help in seeking assistance as a consequence of abuse.
- Be supported in making their own decisions about how they wish to proceed in the event of abuse and to know their wishes will only be over-ridden if it is considered necessary for their own safety or the safety of others.
- Be supported in bringing a complaint under any existing complaint procedure.
- Be supported in reporting the circumstances of any abuse to independent bodies.
- Have alleged, suspected or confirmed cases of abuse that come to light through Home-Start support dealt with as a priority.

It is the responsibility of all within Home-Start to report any concerns about abuse. Each local authority will have its own system, resources and reporting procedures which Home-Starts must be familiar with. Alternatively, adult abuse can be reported directly to the police.

**Home-Start will take all possible steps to ensure that adults with whom it works are kept safe through:**

- Clear procedure for raising concerns about an adult at risk
- Clear procedure for recording concerns in the file of a supported family
- Safe recruitment processes for all trustees, staff and volunteers including the obtaining of criminal records checks as appropriate
- Procedures to structure the management of an allegation of abuse against trustees, staff or volunteers
- Effective induction, training and support for trustees, staff and volunteers to ensure they are aware of and understand the importance of implementing this policy and the related procedures
- The senior member of staff should hold responsibility for the safeguarding of adults at risk within a local Home-Start
- Mandatory Confidentiality & Data Protection Policies
- All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

### **Disclosure of Information**

- Home-Start recognises the importance of sharing information to protect an adult at risk and normally any disclosure of confidential information to any other person may only be undertaken with the express permission of the person.
- Where it is considered necessary for the welfare and protection of an adult at risk, the person will be kept informed unless to do so would put his or her welfare and safety at risk of harm.
- In recognition of its commitment to pass on concerns, Home-Start will maintain effective working partnerships with organisations working with adults at risk within the community and will maintain current information on and work within the requirements of the local procedures followed by statutory and voluntary agencies.

### **Procedure when there are concerns**

- If anyone associated with Home-Start has concerns about the welfare of an adult at risk, they must raise those concerns and inform the senior member of staff without delay.
- If an adult discloses that they are being, or have been, abused this information must be taken seriously and the information must be passed to the designated person for dealing with their concerns without delay.
- The first priority should always be to protect the safety of all adults and children at risk and it is the responsibility of all within Home-Start to act on any suspicion or evidence

of abuse or neglect. Follow the Mandatory Safeguarding & Protecting Children policy if there are concerns about a child's welfare.

### **Escalation procedure**

Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the actions, inaction, or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard an adult at risk.

To safeguard and protect vulnerable adults, all practitioners have a duty to act assertively and proactively to ensure that an adult's welfare is the focus of safeguarding activity.

If a practitioner disagrees with a decision or response from any agency or service regarding a safeguarding or welfare concern, they must firstly consult with their line manager.

If the practitioners are unable to resolve differences through discussion and/or meeting within a time scale which is acceptable to both of them, their disagreement should be considered under the Escalation or Professional disagreement procedures published in their local multi agency agreements.

### **Allegations against staff and volunteers**

It is important that any concerns for the welfare of an adult at risk arising from abuse or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately to the senior member of staff or, if they are implicated in the concerns, to the trustee responsible for safeguarding.

It may be that the employee will be suspended with pay during an investigation or a volunteer asked to cease volunteering pending the outcome of the investigation.

**This policy will be reviewed annually and more frequently if appropriate**

**This policy adopted: May 2021**

**Date policy to be reviewed: May 2022**

**Signed (Chair)**



**Name: Andy Walkden**