

## Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

### **1. Purpose and Scope**

1.1 This document sets out VOICE: local's policy position in relation to the Safeguarding of Children and of Vulnerable Adults both those who use Healthwatch Bolton Service's directly and those who contact us for advice and support. The document also sets out the support system that is in place for VOICE: local staff and volunteers who may recognise and be required to respond to safeguarding situations in the course of their duties.

1.2 This document applies to all staff, volunteers, trustees, trainees, consultants and contractors - termed as 'personnel' in this document – who undertake, work, duties or tasks on behalf of Healthwatch Bolton.

### **2. Definitions**

2.1 **A vulnerable adult** is defined as:

- a person aged 18 years and over "who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness"
- is experiencing, or 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 or neglect.

2.2 **The safeguarding of children** relates to:

- Children and young people below the age of 18
- 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
- Undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

2.3 **The term 'abuse'** relates to:

- "A violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons" (No Secrets 2000).
- Abuse is behaviour towards a person that causes him or her harm, distress, endangers life or violates their rights.
- Categories of abuse include, physical, psychological, sexual, emotional, financial, domestic and organisational abuse, neglect and modern slavery.

This Policy was created on: 26/8/2014 , Approved by the Board of Trustees: 11/09/2014, Reviewed January 2016, reviewed and amended August 2017 , affirmed with minor amendments 12 November 2018

Amended and approved 21/1/2020

Review Date: Dec 2022 – reviewed on 7/12/22 with amendments

Next Review Date: Apr 2025

### **3. Principles**

3.1 VOICE: local recognises that we have a particular role to play in terms of protecting adults and children who, for many different reasons, may be vulnerable.

3.2 We have a duty and a role in ensuring that any concerns or situations shared with us which may have safeguarding implications are reported to and acted upon by the relevant authorities.

3.3 VOICE: local is committed to the implementation of

- Bolton Council Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure, the most up to date version of which can be found here : <http://www.proceduresonline.com/bolton/asg/>
- Bolton Council Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure and to any periodic revising of these Policies and Procedures.

3.4 VOICE: local recognises its role within the Bolton Council Procedures as an 'alerting' organisation and is committed to ensuring that alerts are reported following recognised procedure and within stipulated timescales.

3.5 In line with our duties VOICE: local has its own internal procedures (see below) for dealing with cases where safeguarding may be a concern. These Procedures should be seen as a first step and as dovetailing with the wider safeguarding programmes in Bolton.

## **4 Policy**

### **4.1 Scope**

This Policy covers five distinct circumstances where VOICE: local staff and volunteers may become involved in a safeguarding issue. **All instances of concern shall be treated in the same way, by following the procedure detailed at section 5 of this document.**

1. Where an allegation of abuse is made or a safeguarding issue raised by the alleged victim against an alleged perpetrator or institution.
2. Where an allegation of abuse or a safeguarding issue is raised by someone other than the alleged victim against an alleged perpetrator or institution.
3. Situations in which we encounter individuals who appear to be in a state of self neglect or lack the ability to meet their own basic needs.

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4. Instances where an absence or failure of services has potential safeguarding implications for the person/s involved.
5. Where an allegation of abuse or a safeguarding issue is made against a member of VOICE: local personnel.

#### **4.2 Activating the Safeguarding Procedure**

VOICE: locals safeguarding procedure is designed to provide an organised framework for raising safeguarding concerns with decision-making at appropriate levels within the organisation. **All staff must follow the procedure when faced with an issue that they consider to be or think may be in the realms of safeguarding.** The VOICE: local Safeguarding procedure can be found at section 5 of this document.

***Notwithstanding the above all staff are authorised to make a direct call to the emergency services (999) (outside of the normal procedure) if they feel the person they are dealing with is in immediate danger.***

#### **4.3 Confidentiality and Consent**

VOICE: local recognises that conflicts may arise between maintaining confidentiality, discharging our responsibilities under the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and our duty of care to our personnel. In most cases we will raise our concerns directly with the victim /referrer explaining our duty to report safeguarding issues. However the organisation has a duty to report a safeguarding allegation or concern even if it has not been possible to gain consent to make an alert from the alleged victim.

It is also recognised that personnel may be asked to provide information to the Safeguarding Team as part of an ongoing investigation not triggered by an alert from us. In all such instances the Chief Officer must be consulted before details are divulged.

#### **4.2 Vetting and Training**

All staff and volunteers who have direct contact with Healthwatch Bolton clients are required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

VOICE: local is committed to providing initial training for staff and volunteers on the principles of safeguarding for vulnerable adults and children and the implementation of Healthwatch Bolton's Safeguarding Procedures.

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Refresher training for staff and volunteers will be undertaken on an annual basis or following a change of procedure or as otherwise required.

#### **4.3 Policy Review**

VOICE: local commits to reviewing its Safeguarding Policy and Procedure at least bi-annually.

### **5 Safeguarding Procedure**

#### **1 Point of Disclosure**

1.1 A concern may arise either as a result of a direct disclosure or (more commonly) as a result of an individual reporting a broader problem or issue concerning their experiences of accessing health and social care. In either case the procedure to follow is;

1.2 The staff member/volunteer should;

- a. Make clear to the reporter/victim that s/he has a concern.
- b. Make clear to the reporter/victim that s/he may have an obligation to report the concern.
- c. Explain the reporting process that will be followed to the reporter/victim (ie report initially to senior manager and the potentially to LA safeguarding team).
- d. Take contact details for the reporter and alleged victim (including an address and a dob if possible.)
- e. Make clear notes of the discussion.
- f. If at all possible obtain consent to discuss with other relevant organisations (although we are not dependent on consent if an issue is recognised a safeguarding issue).

1.3 Report the incident as soon as possible to the Lead Officer or a designated deputy. If the Lead Officer is absent, on leave, or unavailable then the incident should be reported to the Chair of Trustees. If the Lead Officer and Chair of Trustees are both unavailable then the staff member involved in the disclosure should alert the relevant safeguarding authority, following steps at 2.3 and 2.4 and the Lead Officer should be copied into all correspondence.

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1.4 It is important that if staff, the Operations Manager and Chair of Trustees are not going to be available eg. on holiday, then this must be notified to the Operations Manager and chair of Trustees as appropriate

## **2) Decision-making, reporting and escalations**

2.1 The Lead Officer and/ or their designated deputy will discuss the concern with the staff member/volunteer who has referred the matter. The Lead Officer may also decide to discuss the matter with the Chair of Trustees.

2.2 The Lead Officer will make decisions on reporting, referrals and escalations of the issues raised based on VOICE: locals responsibilities in law, the duties of local Healthwatch and the best interests of the person about whom the concern is raised.

2.3 If a safeguarding issue is identified then reports will be made, in writing (email) and in a timely manner, to the relevant Safeguarding Teams (see contacts list overleaf), as directed by the Lead Officer.

2.4 All safeguarding referrals will be reported to the Chair of Trustees.

## **3) Follow-up and Monitoring**

3.1 In keeping with Healthwatch Bolton's practice in regards to following up issues raised, the staff member making the report will request assurances about the next steps from the relevant safeguarding team and request to be kept updated as to the progress of the concern.

3.2 Where possible and appropriate, the relevant staff member will contact the original reporter to explain these next steps.

## **4) Record keeping,**

4.1) Staff involved in a potential safeguarding case will keep accurate records as follows:

- Log of contacts
- Summary of the issues, identifying the potential safeguarding concerns and
- Reporting Officers must be careful to record concerns in a way that replicates, as closely as possible, the words of the reporter.
- Log of the steps taken.

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- Log of responses.

4.2) All records relating to safeguarding issues will be kept securely in accordance with the requirements of the GDPR 2018

4.3) The Lead Officer will provide a report of all Safeguarding alerts, escalations or enquiries to the Board Trustee on a quarterly basis at the normally held Board Meetings.

4.4) Any trends, issues or omissions obtained from these reports are to be addressed through Healthwatch Bolton's internal procedures and external work with relevant providers, commissioners and other public authorities.

#### **CONTACT LIST:**

Bolton Safeguarding Team: 01204 337000

If you are worried a child is at risk call 01204 331500, option 2. Monday- Friday between the hours of : 9-5pm

You can find out more here <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/safeguarding-protecting-children>

If you need to make an urgent referral about an adult or child who is at risk of abuse or neglect. Outside of normal office hours please call 01204 337777. This number is for our out of house service and this service is only manned from 5pm to 9am Monday to Friday and then 5pm Friday to 9am Monday.

Police/Ambulance emergency: 999

**GMMHT Out of Hours (Bolton, Salford and Trafford)** – 01204 390302. Web: <https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/out-of-hours-helpline-crisis/>

**Early Intervention Team (social care)** – 01204 336423

**Samaritans** – 116 123 (national Freephone number)

**One Point (Bolton) Counselling Services:** 01204 917744. Web: <https://www.1pointbolton.org.uk/Pages/Contact.aspx>

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**CQC** – Report a concern at: <https://www.1pointbolton.org.uk/Pages/Contact.aspx>

**CQC (national number):** 03000 616161

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