

Safeguarding Policy

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Index

	Page	Section
Safeguarding Policy		
Introduction	3	1
Principles	4	2
Responsibilities	4	3
Definitions	5	4
Good Practice Guidelines	5	5
Recruitment and Selection	5	6
Management Training	6	7
Responding to Allegations or Suspicions	6	8
Allegations against staff	8	9
Confidentiality and information sharing	8	10
Access to Advice and support	9	11
Monitoring and review	9	12

Aspire Executive Safeguarding policy

1. Introduction and Statement

Aspire Executive is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all vulnerable adults, children and young people to whom we provide services directly or indirectly and with whom we come into contact.

It is our aim to help to create a safe and positive environment and improve outcomes for vulnerable adults, children and young people. This will be a priority in determining how we provide services and engage with local communities. Although overall responsibility for children's services and social services in Buckinghamshire lies with Buckinghamshire County Council, Aspire Executive has a duty to protect and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults, children and young people.

Whilst acknowledging that we will have varying levels of contact with children and vulnerable adults, this guidance aims to help employees, self-employed drivers, passenger assistants and others make informed responses to issues and concerns as and when they arise.

The aim of this document is to provide an overarching framework for Aspire Executive as a whole, to ensure consistency and good practice in how issues concerning the protection of children and vulnerable adults should be responded to, if they occur. Whilst best practice in the field of Child Protection is better established, similar practices should be followed to ensure the protection on vulnerable adults.

We will seek to ensure:

- Clear and prompt communication, internally and with other agencies
- We work in partnership with other agencies such as Buckinghamshire County Council, Wycombe District Council, Chiltern and South Bucks District Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council and Thames Valley Police.
- We provide relevant information in a timely manner whenever an investigation is made by a responsible authority concerning the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults

2. Principles

This guidance is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of vulnerable people, including children and young people, is paramount
- All vulnerable adults, children and young people have the right to protection from harm whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, and sexual identity
- Although it is the responsibility of social workers within the referral and assessment team to investigate in conjunction with the police according to agreed protocols whether or not abuse has taken place, it is everyone's responsibility to report concerns according to agreed procedures
- All incidents of poor practice and allegations or concerns should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Confidentiality should be upheld in line with data protection, GDPR and human rights legislation but must not be a barrier to effective information sharing between professionals.

3. Responsibilities

All staff should understand their responsibility to act on any information they receive that may indicate a child has been or is at risk of being harmed. For the purposes of this guidance, the following responsibilities will apply to all Aspire Executive employees, self-employed drivers, passenger assistants, volunteers and agency workers.

All employees:

- To accept a duty of care towards all vulnerable adults, children and young people we come into contact with.
- To promote and safeguard the welfare of vulnerable adults, children and young people we come into contact with.
- To respect, listen and promote the rights of vulnerable adults, children and young people
- To take all child protection concerns seriously
- To respond promptly and appropriately to any allegations or concerns that are raised about the welfare of vulnerable adults, children or young people.

4. Definitions

Abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or neglect that leads to injury or harm. It commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and where there is an imbalance and an abuse of power.

Abuse can happen to a child or vulnerable adult regardless of their age, gender, race or ability. Some people are potentially more vulnerable, for example because of a mental or physical disability, however having a disability does not automatically make an adult vulnerable. Individuals may become vulnerable when they are receiving personal care and health services. Bullying, racism and other types of discrimination are also forms of abuse.

The abuser may be a family member, someone known to the child or vulnerable adult, or may be a stranger. An individual may abuse a vulnerable adult or child directly or may fail to prevent harm to that vulnerable person. Abuse can occur in any situation, in a family environment or in a community setting. Abusers may also be children or vulnerable adults themselves.

5. Good Practice Guidelines

Good practice guidance is intended to: -

- Promote the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults,
- To minimize the risks of a child being harmed,
- Reduce the opportunities for abuse taking place, to help prevent unfounded allegations being made

Aspire Executive seeks to promote a positive culture in which children and young people are listened to, consulted and involved in service development and in which staff act as positive role models.

6. Recruitment and Selection

Aspire Executive “safer recruitment policy” is designed to minimize the opportunities for unsuitable people to gain access to work with children and young people. All drivers and passenger assistants and those who come into regular contact with children and vulnerable adults must hold a relevant DBS badge and Buckinghamshire County Council Client Transport and relevant licensing authorities. This ensures suitability through rigorous vetting procedures.

7. Management and Training

Staff and self-employed drivers and passenger assistants engaged in roles that have direct contact with children and young people, will be made aware of relevant policies and procedures relating to child protection and will be provided with safe practice guidance. Staff who work with vulnerable adults will receive suitable training to ensure that safeguarding obligations are met. Ongoing management and training will ensure that staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and have the opportunity to discuss and review performance standards and development needs.

8. Responding to Allegations or Suspicions

It is possible that where staff and volunteers come into contact with vulnerable adults, children and young people in the course of their duties, issues may arise that require an appropriate response.

Concerns may arise in a variety of ways, including:

- A member of staff may be concerned that a vulnerable adult or child they come into contact with in the course of their work has been or is at risk of being abused
- A vulnerable adult, child or young person discloses abuse to a member of staff
- A member of staff may be concerned about a practice of a colleague
- A complaint is made about a member of staff by a child or an adult

There is a responsibility on all staff to report any concerns in order that the appropriate agencies can make inquiries and take any action necessary to protect a vulnerable adult, child or young person.

In all of the above situations, staff should: -

- Raise their concerns with Mansoor Akbar (director responsible for safeguarding) on Aspire Executive
- Aspire Executive will report the incident to M.A.S.H. (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) via telephone, first response team on 01296 383962 or e-mail cypfirstresponse@buckscc.gov.uk
- For the Adult Safeguarding Team Contact 0800 137 915 or e-mail safeguardingadults@buckscc.gov.uk
- At the same time or as soon as possible after the referral is made (within 24 hours), the director should ensure that appropriate support is provided to the member of staff and ensure that the appropriate actions have been taken.
- If there is any concern about appropriate action, this must be shared with the director and relevant advice sought without causing unnecessary delay

- Any referral must be notified to Bucks County Council Client Transport immediately. A central, confidential record of all referrals made will be kept.

Any allegation or concern must be taken seriously and reported to the appropriate agency and confirmed in writing. The information should include the following if known:

- Name, age and date of birth of the child or vulnerable adult (if known)
- Home address and telephone number (if Known)
- Nature of allegation(s) focusing on factual information including dates and times
- Description of any injuries or behaviour
- Witnesses
- Account of what happened including any explanation(s) offered
- Account of any conversation with the vulnerable person.
- Any contact with parents/carers
- Name, address of alleged abuser (if known)
- Name of person contacted
- Date of contact
- Name and contact details of person(s) lodging the concern and making referral

If a vulnerable adult, child or young person discloses abuse, the following general guidance should be followed: -

- Listen to the vulnerable adult or child without interrupting
- Try to respond calmly and reassure the vulnerable adult or child that they have done the right thing in talking to you **but do not** promise to keep what they tell you a secret
- Do not promise anything that you cannot keep, for example, that everything will be ok
- Try to clarify information in order to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said
- Make sure any questions are kept to a minimum but if questions are necessary, ensure they are open and not leading
- Do not make judgements, assumptions or give opinions

9. Allegations against staff

Any concerns about a member of staff must be reported to a manager or director of Aspire Executive within 24 hours of the concerns being identified.

It is important that a referral is made to appropriate authority (BCC/Licensing Authority) and the Police (if appropriate) as soon as possible so that any action does not jeopardise either an investigation or the person involved.

Any concerns that involve potential poor practice of a member of staff or an allegation of abuse against a member of staff should be dealt with as a potential misconduct issue.

Consideration will be given to temporary suspension or transfer to other duties pending an investigation. The employee should not be suspended until the relevant authority has been contacted. Any allegation against a driver or passenger assistant will, however result in immediate suspension of the individual until a satisfactory resolution has been sought from the relevant authority in most cases
Buckinghamshire County Council Client Transport.

Whatever the decision or action, the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult must come first.

10. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

If concerns around the protection of a child or vulnerable adult are raised, confidentiality must not be guaranteed. If an allegation is made that indicates that a vulnerable adult or child is being harmed or is at risk of harm, then the person making the allegation should understand that the information will be shared with the appropriate agencies on a need to know basis.

When sharing information with other agencies, that information is likely to be personal and sensitive, and Aspire Executive must take care to meet its obligations under the data protection act. Individuals should be advised that Aspire Executive intends to share information with another agency in order to safeguard the welfare of a child or adult, unless to do so would put a child or adult at risk of harm.

Where there is doubt about the appropriateness of sharing information with other agencies, the management and directors of Aspire Executive will discuss with the relevant authority prior to initiating any investigation.

11. Access to advice and support

As part of our duty of care towards the vulnerable adults, children and young people who come into contact with us, we will ensure that all vulnerable people are directed towards appropriate advice and support.

We will ensure that staff who come across abusive situations in the course of their work know where to get advice and support.

Any employee who is the subject of an allegation relating to the protection of children or vulnerable adults will be provided with information and given access to advice and support.

12. Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness and impact of this guidance will be monitored and review by Aspire Executive management team every 12 months or more regularly if legislation and/or good practice changes.

There will be annual checks to ensure that: -

- Any incidents and/or allegations or abuse are referred to the correct authority
- Detailed procedures and systems specifically related to particular services are understood and are being followed
- All new staff receive safe practice and child protection awareness training if it is appropriate to their role
- Minimum standards for safe recruitment are being met and all necessary pre-employment checks are carried out for staff working directly with or providing services to vulnerable adults, children and young children.

Mansoor Akbar (Director)

Date: 1st September 2019