Adult Safeguarding Policy

Adult Safeguarding Policy for Community First

Introduction:
This policy is designed to ensure that Community First has all the right controls in place to protect and safeguard adults.

Community First believes in protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of Community First to work together to promote the welfare of adults and to safeguard them from abuse and neglect. Employees, trustees and volunteers should be made aware of how and where to access this policy.

This policy and related procedures are applicable to the Chief Executive Officer, trustees, employees and volunteers of Community First. Failure to comply with the policy and related procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

It relates to any person who is aged 18 years or over and is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing, abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and or support as an adult.

Care Act 2014 Definition of an Adult at Risk of Abuse:
Where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there)
(a) has a need for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
(b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
(c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Safeguarding Boards:
In safeguarding adults, Community First is committed to the principles of the local Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults procedures in their area:

Wiltshire:	Wiltshire Safeguarding Adults Board https://www.wiltshiresvpp.org.uk/p/adults/about-safeguarding-adults
Swindon:	Swindon Safeguarding Partnership (https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/)

Key Principles of Adult Safeguarding:
In the safeguarding of adults, Community First is guided by the six key principles set out in The Care Act 2014 and Making Safeguarding Personal initiative. Community First aims to demonstrate and promote these six principles in our work:

Empowerment – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Recognising the signs of abuse:
Employees and volunteers are well-placed to identify abuse, the adult may say or do things that let you know something is wrong. It may come in the form of a disclosure, complaint, or an expression of concern. Everyone within the organisation should understand what to do, and where to go to get help, support and advice.

Types of Abuse:
The Care Act 2014 defines the following ten areas of abuse. These are not exhaustive but are a guide.

- **Physical abuse -** Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **Domestic Violence/ Domestic Abuse -** Including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.
- **Exploitation-** Including sexual and/or criminal exploitation.
- **Sexual abuse -** Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography. Witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into.
- **Psychological abuse -** Including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse -** Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Modern slavery -** Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and those who coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
- **Discriminatory abuse -** Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment because you are, or are perceived to be different due to (for example) race, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse - Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to long-term ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes or practices within an organisation.

- **Neglect and acts of omission -** Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Radicalisation to Terrorism:
The Government through its PREVENT programme has highlighted how some adults may be vulnerable to exploitation and radicalisation and involvement in terrorism.
Signs and indicators of radicalisation may include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters.
- Articulating support for violent extremist causes or leaders.
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element.
- Possessing violent extremist literature.
- Using extremist narratives to explain personal disadvantage.
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues.
- Joining extremist organisations.
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour.

Early sharing of information is the key to providing an effective response where there are emerging concerns. To ensure effective safeguarding arrangements no one should assume that someone else will do it.

Safe Recruitment & Selection:
Community First is committed to safe employment and safer recruitment practices, that reduce the risk of harm to adults with care and support needs from people unsuitable to work with them. Community First has policies and procedures that cover the recruitment of all Trustees, employees and volunteers and ensures that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff, volunteers and Trustees who will work or come into contact with vulnerable adults including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

Social Media:
All employees and volunteers should be aware of Community First social media policy and procedures and the Dignity at Work Policy.

Training and Awareness:
Community First will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to its Trustees, Employees, Volunteers and any relevant persons linked to the organisation who requires it (e.g. contractors).
For all employees who are working or volunteering with adults at risk this requires them as a minimum to undertake awareness training that enables them to:

- Understand what safeguarding is and their role in Safeguarding Adults.
- Recognise an adult potential in need of safeguarding and take action. Understand how to report a safeguarding concern.
- Understand dignity and respect when working with individuals.
- Have knowledge of the Safeguarding Adults Policy.

Similarly, employees and volunteers may encounter concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children/young people. For more information about children's safeguarding, refer to Community First Children and Young People's Safeguarding Policy.

Mental Capacity:
The Mental Capacity Act 2005 defines someone who is lacking capacity, because of an illness or disability such as a mental health problem, dementia or a learning disability, who cannot do one or more of the following four things:

- Understand information given to them about a particular decision
- Retain that information long enough to be able to make the decision
- Weigh up the information available to make the decision
- Communicate their decision.
- Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice; https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f6cc6138fa8f541f6763295/Mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice.pdf
- Community First will need to involve an advocate if the person lacks capacity to make decisions about a safeguarding concern.

Support and guidance will be sought from Wiltshire or Swindon Ault MASH Teams.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing:
Community First expects all employees, volunteers and trustees to maintain confidentiality. Information will be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

However, information should be shared with the Local Authority if an adult is deemed to be at risk of harm or if they are in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed the police should be contacted. For further guidance on information sharing and safeguarding see Community First's GDPR Policy.

Whistleblowing:
Community First is committed to ensuring that employees, trustees and volunteers who in good faith whistleblow in the public interest, will be protected from reprisals and victimisation. Please refer to the Whistleblowing policy.

Roles & Responsibilities
Trustees

- A named Trustee (Chair of the HR Committee) takes delegated responsibility for leading on Safeguarding issues and the Board should satisfy itself that:
- The roles outlined in this policy are being undertaken appropriately.

- An appropriate Safeguarding induction, support and training programme is implemented.
- Recruitment procedures safeguard vulnerable adults.
- There is adequate financial support for the services and activities offered so that the service can operate effectively and safely.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

- These are senior members of staff, and all staff, volunteers and service users should be made aware of who our Designated Safeguarding Leads are, their roles and when they are available.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads have the following responsibilities:
- To ensure that this policy is always implemented and adhered to.
- To be familiar with and have an understanding of all relevant legislation.
- To liaise with the 'Safeguarding Vulnerable People's Partnership'.
- To ensure that safeguarding is part of Community First's working culture.
- To arrange appropriate training and support for all relevant workers and volunteers.
- To provide support during and after incidents involving safeguarding and referrals.
- To provide the HR Committee, Chief Executive and Board of Trustees with appropriate information on the number and outcomes of incidents or concerns involving safeguarding.
- Offer support, advice and guidance to the Designated Safeguarding Officer's where necessary and appropriate and conduct frequent review meetings with the safeguarding team as well as ensuring that internal safeguarding paperwork is correctly completed and logged.

Designated Safeguarding Officers are the first point of contact for all staff and volunteers to go to for advice if they have a concern.

Procedures

Whenever there is cause for concern follow these steps:

- It is not Community First's role to decide whether abuse/ neglect has or has not taken place. Any reasonable grounds for suspecting abuse/ neglect must be reported to Social Services, or the Police for them to investigate.
- If in doubt, raise concerns with your Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Avoid acting alone except in emergencies.
- Follow Community First's Lone Working, Home Visits and Confidentiality procedures.

Reporting Concerns:
Any employee, trustee or volunteer who becomes aware that an adult is or is at risk of, being abused must raise the matter immediately with a Designated Safeguarding Officer, **If the adult requires immediate protection from harm, contact the police and or Adult Social Care.**

Is there a Person in a Position of Trust Involved?
In any instance of safeguarding, consideration must be given as to whether an allegation has been made against a person in a position of trust (PiPoT) and who may be a risk to others. This can be anyone from a formal employee or volunteer, to an informal carer.

Making an Alert
The alerted person must contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer at the earliest opportunity. This is a checklist for maintaining good practice in responding, reporting and recording disclosures.

Responding

- Ensure that you remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.
- Listen carefully to what you are being told.
- Ensure a caring response is given.
- Reassure the person that you are treating the information seriously.
- Reassure the person that what has happened is not their fault.
- Ensure that any forensic evidence is preserved.
- Explain that you are required to share the information with the Designated Safeguarding Officer and inspectors at the commission for social care inspection (if in a regulated service).
- Reassure the person that any further investigation will be conducted sensitively and with their full involvement wherever possible.
- Reassure the person that the service will take steps to support and where appropriate, protect them in the future.
- Do not stop someone who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make a written record of what the person has told you, taking into account that this report might be required as part of any legal action or disciplinary procedure.
- Do not promise to keep the information secret or make promises you will be unable to keep.
- Do not contact the alleged “abuser” or alleged “victim” (depending on the source of the information).
- Do not be judgemental e.g. why didn’t you try to stop them?
- Do not discuss the content of the disclosure with others outside of the investigation. However, other people may need to be informed that an allegation has been made in order to ensure the safety of the Vulnerable Adult.
- Do not “sit” on the information over the weekend until you are next on duty etc. report this information immediately.
- Do not interrogate the person for more details (a factual investigation may take place later, so it is important to avoid unnecessary stress and repetition for the person concerned).

Reporting
If you see, hear about or suspect abuse:

- Take urgent action as appropriate to protect the Vulnerable Adult from immediate danger.
- Report to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Act within the wishes of the Vulnerable Adult where possible with consent, unless they do not have mental capacity and it is in their best Interests.
- Avoid asking investigation questions, e.g. who, what, where, when, why?
- Avoid making comments about what has happened.
- Support and reassure the adult throughout.
- Recording basic facts ensuring that your writing is legible.
- As necessary following discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Officer, complete the internal Adult Safeguarding concern record form or Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Referral Form.
  Wiltshire;
  https://adultslas.wiltshire.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/referrals/safeguarding
  Swindon;
  https://www.proceduresonline.com/swindon/adults/chapters/adult_mash_dols/p_adult_sg.html

Recording and Record Keeping:

- A written record must be kept about any concern regarding an adult with safeguarding needs. This must include details of the person involved, the nature of the concern and the actions taken, decision made and why they were made.

- All records must be signed and dated. All records must be securely and confidentially stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) in the restricted safeguarding files and if emailed should be password protected.

Preserving Evidence

- Whilst your first concern will be the immediate wellbeing of the victim, your efforts to preserve evidence may be vital to the investigation of the incident.
- Any subsequent contact can destroy the evidence. Therefore do not touch anything unless it is for the immediate wellbeing of the victim or the preservation of the evidence.
- In any instance where the victim is seriously injured and is taken to hospital, inform the hospital staff that a sample of blood should be taken before any blood transfusion. This sample will assist the investigation of the incident in respect of DNA analysis. Clearly the decision to take this sample rests with the medical practitioner.
- Do not allow the victim to come into contact with the alleged perpetrator or any person who has had contact with the alleged perpetrator, as contamination of evidence can occur which will destroy the evidence. Do identify the scene(s) of the incident and remove all persons from the location preventing any further entry until the police attend.

- Strongly discourage the victim from washing, drinking, cleaning teeth, or going to the toilet when any sexual offence is suspected, until they have been examined.
- Essential handling of potential evidence should be kept to an absolute minimum, with any such handling/movement being carefully carried out, recorded and a police officer notified.
- Preserve anything used to warm or comfort the victim e.g. a blanket.
- Make a written record of any injuries to the victim and alleged perpetrator using the Community First form and also any referral agency paperwork as and when required.
- You can comment on the condition and attitude of the people involved in the incident. Consider a body map if appropriate.

What happens once a report of alleged abuse has been made?
If you report abuse, to Adult MASH then the process as set out under the policy and procedures for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults in Swindon and Wiltshire takes over. The primary responsibility for co-ordinating an investigation into the abuse of a vulnerable adult lies with in Wiltshire Council https://www.wiltshiresvpp.org.uk/p/adults/about-safeguarding-adults and Swindon **https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/info/13/adults**

They will work in close partnership with the police and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The police have Vulnerable Adult Units set up in all their divisions to investigate incidents and allegations of abuse in the same way as they have separate but linked Child Protection and Domestic Violence Units.

Important Contacts:

Youth Services and Corporate Development Manager – Steve Crawley steve@youthactionwiltshire.org 07818 077764 or 01380 729813

Youth Action Wiltshire Young Carers Service Team Lead– Niki Andrews niki@youthactionwiltshire.org 07984 181214 or 01380 720671

Community First Designated Safeguarding Officers Contact Details:

Damien Maloney (Outdoor Education) dmaloney@oxenwoodcentre.com 07921 574491 or 01380 732806

Gayle Harper (Building Bridges) gharper@communityfirst.org.uk 07767 101284 or 01380 722475

Stuart Ilbury (Carers Together Wiltshire) silbury@communityfirst.org.uk 07742072235 or 01380710299

Ben Jarvis (Youth Action Wiltshire) ben@youthactionwiltshire.org 07967 657996 or 01380 729813.

Community First Leadership Group Safeguarding Lead - Steve Crawley
steve@youthactionwiltshire.org - 07818 077764 or 01380 729813

Chief Executive - Lynn Gibson lgibson@communityfirst.org.uk - 07905 679031 or 01380 732811

Lead Trustee Chair of Human Resources Committee
Name: Merope Sylvester (Chair of HR Committee)
Email address: mjsylvester@hotmail.com
Telephone number: 07768 721 814

Whistleblowing

Whistle-blowing https://protect-advice.org.uk/
Free, confidential whistleblowing advice on 020 3117 2520

Date last reviewed	**July 2026**	**Date of next review**	**July 2027**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the HR Committee with any proposed amends ratified by the trustees.

Appendix Useful Contact Information

Wiltshire

Advice and Contact Team Adult MASH

Telephone: 0300 456 0111

Email: AdviceandContact@wiltshire.gov.uk

Emergency Duty Service Out Of hours

Telephone 0300 456 0100

Swindon

Adult Safeguarding Team Swindon

Telephone: 01793 463 555

Email: adultsafeguarding@swindon.gov.uk

Emergency Duty Service Out Of Hours

Telephone 01793 436699

In an emergency always dial 999 Non-emergency – 101