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**Policy on Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Harm**

**Code of Behaviour**

**You must:**

* treat all children, young people and adults with respect
* model good practice that you wish others to follow
* ensure there is always more than one adult present during activities with children and young people or have another adult at least within sight or hearing of the activity. *Remember not all young people who try to get into licensed premises are over 18, so they may claim to be adults, but actually be children in the eyes of the law*
* respect people’s right to privacy; encourage those you meet to trust you and feel comfortable to point out behaviour or attitudes that they dislike, then respond if possible if they are telling you they don’t like something you’re doing or saying
* remember that actions, including physical contact, towards children, young people and adults can be misinterpreted, even if good intentions were behind the actions
* challenge unacceptable behaviour and report allegations/suspicions of abuse or harm according to the proper procedures

**You must not:**

* have unacceptable physical or verbal contact with anyone
* be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour nor make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures to or about anyone
* exaggerate or trivialise issues of abuse
* rely on your good name or that of your organisation to protect you
* take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more sensible approach

Chaplaincy volunteers are safely recruited as a measure to keep all as safe as possible. All Chaplaincy volunteers are invited to self-declare any past criminal activity or previous situations in which a child may have been harmed in their care. References are taken before anyone starts volunteering as a Chaplain and checked as part of the annual review. Chaplain induction and ongoing training covers safeguarding issues. The following guidelines must be followed.

**1.0 Introduction**

**1.1 Why a Safeguarding Policy?**

Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy has a responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and adults we encounter who are at risk of harm. The need for written guidelines is important in ensuring that this is done with understanding and clarity. Contact with adults at risk of harm may occur in our front-line work, especially Street Angels. It is less likely that you will encounter children while volunteering for Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy, but some employees in the workplaces we visit are under 18, and we know that not all young people who attempt to visit licensed premises are over 18. The Children Act 1989 defines a child as someone under 18. In the case of special educational needs and disability, the term ‘child’ includes young people up to the age of 25. Children live in Watford town centre and attend school here, and children visit our town centre for entertainment and shopping both with their families and without accompanying adults, so you need to familiarise yourself with this policy in order to behave appropriately whatever situations may arise.

**1.2 Aims**

The aims of this policy are to

* Create a safe and friendly environment in which everyone is valued and able to fulfil their personal potential
* Ensure that children and adults at risk of harm know and understand that they will be listened to and supported - their welfare is paramount
* Designate a named person to be responsible for safeguarding issues throughout Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy
* Put in place training programmes to ensure that employees and volunteers recognise symptoms of abuse and are aware of how to act on their concerns in an appropriate manner
* Have clear procedures and mechanisms for dealing with safeguarding issues
* Work with all relevant agencies to ensure best practice

**2.0 Awareness of Abuse**

2.1 Abuse may be described as an act, or failure to act, which causes distress or harm to a child or adult.

2.2 Abuse may be perpetrated through deliberate intent, negligence, or ignorance, and may be perpetrated by individuals or organisations.

2.3 Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts.

2.4 Abuse takes many forms - below are four categories of abuse.

* *Physical*: inflicting physical harm, or failing to prevent injury, including deliberately causing ill health (which may involve withholding or overdosing medication)
* *Neglect*: failure to protect someone in your care from exposure to danger, including cold and starvation, or persistent failure to provide care, food, shelter or clothing, resulting in the significant impairment of the victim’s health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive. Also includes neglect or failure to respond to basic emotional needs.
* *Emotional*: persistent emotional maltreatment, bullying, discrimination, harassment, or exploitation likely to cause severe adverse effect on emotional and behavioural development. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category is used where it is the sole or main form of abuse and can include witnessing the abuse of another person.

* *Sexual*: involves forcing or enticing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the victim is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve inappropriate use of sexual language and innuendo; harassing someone to engage in sexual activity; physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-consensual viewing of or production of pornographic material; showing pornographic material to or making it with children; or encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour.

**3.0 What to do if you suspect abuse or an allegation is made:**

3.1 You must report any concerns about the safety of a child as soon as possible to Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy’s Safeguarding Coordinator who will then consult with the Diocese of St Albans Safeguarding Adviser. In any circumstances, if someone is at immediate risk of significant harm, call 999 and inform the police before contacting Safeguarding personnel.

3.2 You should not discuss your suspicions with anyone involved in the allegation. For advice at any stage, you can contact Social Services, or our safeguarding training provider thirtyone:eight on 0303 003 1111 (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

3.3 You should not undertake any investigation yourself; this is the responsibility of the local authority and the Police.

3.4 When someone discloses information to you about the abuse of a child:

 a. Let them know you have to pass on any information to the Safeguarding

Coordinator. Do not promise confidentiality as you may not be able to provide that.

b. Allow the person who is disclosing to you to speak, and start from an assumption that they are telling the truth; do not ask any leading questions.

 c. Make a detailed written record of whatever is said.

d. If it is immediately necessary, contact Social Services or the Police or seek medical care for the victim, wherever possible in consultation with your Safeguarding Coordinator. If emergency services are called, give them any forensic evidence you have, and inform them that you suspect abuse.

3.5 If abuse is alleged against an adult, the adult victim is entitled to choose in whom to confide (see 5.8). You may follow the procedure outlined above with the permission of an adult victim, or without the permission of an adult victim if any of the circumstances outlined in 5.8 apply. In any case, you can listen, offer information and signposting to relevant specialist agencies so the person confiding in you can make an informed choice.

**4.0 Role of the Safeguarding Coordinator**

4.1 Once you have made a referral your Safeguarding Coordinator will act on the Chaplaincy’s behalf in communicating suspicions or allegations of neglect or abuse to the relevant authorities as necessary, including if necessary seeking legal advice from Social Services.

The Safeguarding Coordinator may share limited information on a need-to-know basis with the Lead Chaplain, Trustees and Street Angel Team Leaders, carefully observing the need to handle this information with discretion and respect.

Under no circumstances will the Safeguarding Coordinator attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse; neither will he or she discuss the concerns with anyone involved in the allegation. The role of the Safeguarding Coordinator is to collate and clarify the precise details of any allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the statutory authorities as necessary. It is the statutory authorities’ task to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children’s Act 1989.

4.2 All prospective workers and volunteers will be asked to read this policy and sign to say they have done so.

**5.0 Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Harm**

5.1 It is important to note that protection guidelines for adults at risk of harm differ from those that apply to children. Adults have the right to make their own decisions unless there are clear grounds to over-ride which may result from lack of capacity, if a wider public interest is involved, or in cases listed in 5.8. The law in relation to adults offers far fewer opportunities or responsibilities in relation to intervention. The norm is clearly one of negotiation.

5.2 All adults should have the greatest possible control over their lives, be able to live as independently as they wish and be encouraged to make informed decisions about their lifestyles, including choosing to take risks, expressing wishes and personal priorities and planning for the future. People have the right to make what others might regard as unwise and eccentric decisions.

5.3 A vulnerable adult according to the 1997 Consultation Paper *Who decides?* issued by the Lord Chancellor’s Department, is a person ‘who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation’. The Care Act 2014 applies to any adult who has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs), and 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 risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

5.4 In addition to the forms of abuse listed in 2.4, abuse of adults may include coercive or psychological control, financial or material abuse, discrimination, modern slavery, institutional abuse, or persistent harassment (‘stalking’).

5.5 Not all conduct that most people may regard as abuse is unlawful and the state may have neither the right nor the power to intervene.

5.6 Self-neglect on the part of an adult will not of itself require these protection guidelines to be instigated unless the situation involves a significant act of commission or omission by someone else with established responsibility for the care and support of that individual.

5.7 Everyone has the right to expect that encounters with Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy staff and volunteers will be free from abuse. We respect the people we encounter, their money and possessions. The people we serve can expect that information about them or which they share with Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy will be treated with care and only shared with discretion.

5.8 Even if an adult does not want you to act on their disclosure of abuse, nonetheless you may do so in the case of risk to a child; an active police investigation; significant risk of suicide or harm to a third party; the need to safeguard an adult who has been abused or is at risk of further abuse where that adult lacks the capacity to make an informed choice.

5.9 Respecting the wishes of the person making the disclosure to the extent that is possible, volunteers should mention disclosure conversations in their regular reports to Street Angel Team Leaders and the Lead Chaplain, not least so that volunteers can receive support for hearing what can be very distressing accounts of abuse.

**6.0 Sexual Assault Guidelines**

6.1 When we come across an adult who says they have just been assaulted, our starting point is to believe what the victim says and offer comfort, a place of safety, a listening ear. Treat the person with understanding and ensure their well-being. If possible let them speak to a person of the same gender. The victim may be any gender - treat any victim with the same respect. Thank the person for their courage speaking to you.

6.2 Be aware of your surroundings. If the assault has just happened, the perpetrator could still be in the area. Attend to your own safety and the safety of other volunteers as well as that of the victim.

6.3 If it is OK with the person disclosing assault (see our policy on Safeguarding adults) then contact the police. To protect evidence encourage the victim to refrain from washing, changing clothing or visiting the toilet – but don’t stop them if they choose to do so. If the assault involved oral sex then encourage the victim to refrain from drinking and clearing out the mouth as this too could destroy evidence.

6.4 With the permission of the adult making the disclosure, you may follow the procedure in Section 3 above. If any of the circumstances in 5.8 apply, you may follow the procedure in Section 3 without the permission of the person disclosing abuse.

**7.0 Safeguarding within Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy**

7.1 Staff and volunteers have the right to be protected in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 from any adverse consequences when reporting concerns about abuse in our services.

7.2 Staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report any concern about the potential for abuse within the Chaplaincy to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

7.3 If it is suspected that a staff member or volunteer has abused another staff member, volunteer, or service user, inform the Safeguarding Coordinator. The circumstances will be investigated fully. If necessary, Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy will refer details of the circumstances to the Police so that details of the alleged perpetrator may be added on a provisional basis to the Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) list, pending the outcome of disciplinary procedures. Upon full investigation, when the allegations are shown to be clearly groundless, Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy will take action promptly to have this person’s name removed from provisional POVA listing. If, following full investigation of the circumstances, Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy determines that the perpetrator should be dismissed on the grounds of abuse, the perpetrator’s details will be referred to the Secretary of State for inclusion on the POVA list.

7.4 The Lead Chaplain will need to have information about the complaint and its progress and resolution in readiness for further action, such as preparing responses to foreseeable publicity. The Lead Chaplain will inform the Trustees.

2018