



**Centre 33**  
2a Spicer Street, St Albans, Herts AL3 4PQ  
(Registered Charity No 1146438)  
Patron: The Right Worshipful Mayor of the City and  
District of St Albans



## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### Introduction

Staff and volunteers at Centre 33 help people who are homeless or socially disadvantaged and who can be vulnerable to abuse. Centre 33 is committed to protecting people's health, wellbeing and rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Centre 33 endeavours to challenge discrimination and promote the right to equal protection regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, faith, gender, sexual orientation, disability, social or immigration status or any other element of diversity.

This policy is to help those who work at Centre 33 recognise the signs of potential abuse and to take appropriate action if they suspect that someone is being abused. It establishes a framework to support volunteers and clarifies the expectations of Centre 33.

All volunteers have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures.

The policy seeks to ensure that Centre 33 undertakes its responsibilities with regard to protection of Adults who may be Vulnerable and to respond to concerns appropriately.

### Professional boundaries

Centre 33 expects its volunteers to protect the professional integrity of themselves and of the organisation.

Examples of professional boundaries:

- Appropriate language and dress
- Keep personal life separate from supporting Visitors (especially social media)
- No physical, emotional or financial relationships with Visitors

### Definitions

**Adult** anyone who is not a Child

**Child** anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday

**Safeguarding** protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect

**Visitor** any Adult who uses the services that Centre 33 offers

**Vulnerable** unable to take care of oneself or protect oneself from harm or neglect or from being exploited.

### Vulnerable groups

(Homelessness does not always make people Vulnerable but may exacerbate other conditions and lessen an individual's ability to care for and protect themselves. Homeless people are not automatically classed as "vulnerable adults" and therefore volunteers do not need to be DBS checked as a matter of course.)

- Homeless
- Frail
- Mental illness
- Physical or sensory disability
- Learning disability
- Severe physical illness
- Substance misuser (including alcohol)

## Types of abuse:

- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Neglect/ self-neglect
- Modern slavery
- Violence
- Discriminatory abuse
- Institutional abuse

Abuse can happen anywhere and can be single or repeated acts. An abuser can be anyone that who comes into contact with a Vulnerable Adult and often is someone well known or close to them, or someone who is employed to care for them. Abuse often results in a violation of human and civil rights.

## Safeguarding Children

Children are not permitted in Centre 33 at any time when Visitors are present, and a person known to be a Child shall not be accepted as a Visitor, either alone or with family. Generally, Children are not permitted to volunteer with Centre 33, but Children may provide voluntary services to Centre 33, usually away from the Centre's premises, subject to the prior approval of the trustees and to the production of satisfactory evidence of support and supervision by a responsible adult.

## Confidentiality

Centre 33 has clear principles of confidentiality in relation to their service users. However, there may be occasions when it is appropriate to share information about Visitors in order to protect their best interests and, therefore, volunteers and trustees should never give assurance of absolute confidentiality. It is now a legal requirement that agencies and professionals work together around safeguarding issues.

## Sharing information

Information may be shared on a 'need to know' basis and when it is in the best interests of our Visitors. In particular, Centre 33 is a member of the St Albans Multiagency Protocol (STAMP) which brings together all the agencies which support homeless people (including those of local government and the health service) with the aim of responsible sharing of information where needed for the protection of individual rough sleepers or of those working with the agencies.

Volunteers should always try to obtain informed consent from Visitors before sharing information. However, if this is not possible it may be necessary to override this requirement – especially if other adults are at risk.

Volunteers should discuss with a Trustee when deciding whether to share information without consent.

## Safeguarding concerns

In the case of concern:

1. Make sure the Vulnerable Adult concerned is not in immediate danger. If necessary seek urgent medical treatment.
2. Contact the police if you think a crime has been committed or if someone is in immediate danger.
3. Raise a 'safeguarding alert' by informing any Trustee.
4. Make a written report recording your concerns and detailing anything you have seen including dates, times, people involved and any observed injuries.
5. A volunteer should not try to investigate the matter themselves, and should not confront the suspected abuser or tell them that an allegation has been made, or will be made.

Centre 33's first priority is to ensure the safety and protection of an Adult at risk. It is the responsibility of all volunteers to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect and to pass on their concerns to one of the Trustees.

## Procedure after identifying a concern

Once a safeguarding alert has been raised, the Trustees will decide how to proceed with the concern. An incident may fall within internal safeguarding procedures or may need to be reported to local authority safeguarding teams.

Action must be taken as soon as possible to minimise any risk of harm or exploitation to individuals concerned. In the absence of a Trustee, it may be necessary to raise an alert to the Local Authority rather than doing nothing. In the first instance this will often be via the local Safeguarding Adults Board helpline (0300 123 4042).

A copy of this safeguarding policy is on the Centre 33 website and written copies are kept in the Centre. Concerns about a colleague or volunteer should be reported to any Trustee. A list of Trustees and contact numbers is kept in the Centre.

All safeguarding concerns should be fully investigated by the Trustees and/or Safeguarding Adults Board.

Where it is suspected that a criminal act has taken place, the Police should be involved immediately as they may conduct their own investigations.

If the suspected abuser is another volunteer, suspension or other action may be taken by the Trustees.

Both internal and external investigations should be as wide as possible, drawing on evidence from all relevant sources.

Volunteers and Trustees should be mindful of client confidentiality during the investigation. They should also look out for any consequences of the investigation on other Visitors, and take action as appropriate to manage emerging risks or support needs.

**Safeguarding Adults Boards** consist of experts from various care fields such as health professionals, police, social care services, housing, the Crown Prosecution Service, Care Quality Commission and voluntary agencies. These boards are responsible for investigating incidents, monitoring the performance of agencies and services, raising awareness, providing training, sharing good practice and suggesting improvements. Hertfordshire County Council has mechanisms in place to respond to adult safeguarding concerns and these can be found on the Local Authority's website – [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/adult-social-services/report-a-concern-about-an-adult/hertfordshire-safeguarding-adults-board/hertfordshire-safeguarding-adults-board.aspx](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/adult-social-services/report-a-concern-about-an-adult/hertfordshire-safeguarding-adults-board/hertfordshire-safeguarding-adults-board.aspx).

**Herts Adult Services can be contacted on a 24 hour hotline on 0300 123 4042**

## Action Plan

The investigation should result in an action plan to stop the abuse and/or to manage the risks that have been identified. The Care Act statutory guidance requires volunteers to listen to and take account of the wishes of a competent Visitor even if the Visitor's wishes places them in jeopardy.

## Specific responsibilities

Trustees have responsibility to ensure that new volunteers complete an application process which includes taking up satisfactory references and a declaration about criminal offences, and have an induction which includes safeguarding. The Trustees of Centre 33 are responsible for ensuring that all volunteers have read and understood this safeguarding policy. All new volunteers will be asked to read this safeguarding policy prior to starting work at the Centre.

## Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on: 27 November 2017

Reviewed on: January 2024.....