

Safeguarding policy

Policy statement

Friends of the Elderly believes that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that everybody should be protected against harm and abuse. It is our policy to do all we can to achieve this.

We acknowledge our duty of care to safeguard, protect, and promote the welfare of everyone who comes into contact with the charity, and are committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance, and best practice.

Living a life that is free from harm and abuse is a fundamental right of every person. We firmly believe we all need to act as good neighbours and citizens in looking out for one another and seeking to prevent the circumstances which can lead to abusive situations and put people at risk of harm.

We understand that safeguarding is about protecting people's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. And it is about people and organisations working together to ensure that we promote the wellbeing of those who have care and support needs. We are committed to this, including, where abuse or harm occurs, having regard to people's views, wishes, feelings, and beliefs in deciding on any action.

It is our policy to ensure that we have the right culture, policies, procedures, training, and awareness to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, to respond promptly and appropriately where abuse or neglect occurs, and to identify and act on lessons learned to enable us to continually improve.

1 Our commitment to keeping everyone safe

Under the Care Act 2014 we have a specific duty for the care and protection of the older people we care for and support, many of whom are vulnerable and more at risk of abuse or harm. We also believe that safeguarding and our duty of care extend to all those who come into contact with our charity, from volunteers, friends and families of care home residents and day care clients, to grant recipients, visitors, health professionals, contractors, and of course our staff.

This policy sets out the organisation's approach to safeguarding, which is a key priority across the charity, from our Board of Trustees, through management and central support functions, to all those working in our care homes, day care, and grant services.

2 Our approach

Our approach is grounded in the principles of safeguarding, as enshrined in the Care Act.



Within this framework, it is our policy to:

- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them making choices and having control about how they want to live.
- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to people with care and support needs.
- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible.
- Promote an approach that focusses on improving life for the adult using our services.
- Raise awareness so that everyone involved with the charity plays their part in preventing, identifying, and responding to abuse and neglect.
- Provide information and support in accessible ways to help our care home residents, day care clients, their families, and our staff to understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe, and what to do to raise a concern about someone's safety or wellbeing.
- Investigate the root cause of any abuse or neglect and disseminate lessons learned.

In the context of the care that Friends of the Elderly provides, safeguarding relates particularly to those who are at greater risk of harm and abuse due to their care and support needs. People with care and support needs, such as older people, people with disabilities or living with dementia, are at a higher risk of abuse or neglect. They are statistically less likely to identify abuse themselves or to report it.

3 Our response to concerns

We are committed to responding effectively if concerns are raised. Staff are encouraged to report any concerns they may have. When abuse does take place, we aim to deal with it swiftly, effectively, and in ways that are proportionate to the issues. Safeguarding policies at service level provide detailed procedures for how this is achieved and all staff undergo mandatory safeguarding training annually to ensure they are aware of what constitutes abuse and recognise what signs to look for in order to take appropriate action.

We also try to ensure the adult in need of protection is empowered, and supported to make their own decisions wherever possible. Where they have difficulties with this, they must still remain at the centre of the safeguarding process. The right of the individual to be involved and heard is a critical element in ensuring personalised care and support.

4 Our people – fit and proper for their work

Board members and volunteer members of the safeguarding monitoring group are subject to the Trustee and Senior Volunteer Vetting Procedure prior to appointment. Trustees must also meet the requirements of the Fit and Proper Persons (Directors) policy and procedure.

All staff undergo checks appropriate to their role before commencing work with Friends of the Elderly. It is our policy that all workers have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check at the level appropriate for their position. These are renewed in accordance with our DBS Policy, which applies to the board of trustees, senior management, and all central support teams, as well as those directly involved in providing care and support.

It is the responsibility of our human resources department to verify that anyone seeking to work with the charity, in whatever capacity, is a fit and proper person for the position.

5 Our safeguarding culture – a golden thread

Keeping the people we support safe and ensuring their welfare is of paramount importance to all our staff on a daily basis, from domestics and activity co-ordinators, carers and service managers, to our central support teams. As one of our values, ‘keeping everyone safe’ is also reflected at board level and, as part of setting the ‘tone at the top’, safeguarding is the first business item at every board meeting.

Trustees view safeguarding as a key governance function and as such are committed to their duty, stated by the Charity Commission, to “*ensure their charity provides a safe environment and protects staff, volunteers, and anyone who comes into contact with it from abuse or maltreatment of any kind*”.

This means that we think about all the different people who come into contact with Friends of the Elderly when it comes to safeguarding, as well as our care home residents and day care clients.

Our staff, for example, who work so hard to look after others, can themselves be affected by issues such as stress, bullying, or discriminatory or exploitative behaviour, whether within the workplace or without. We have policies in place to support members of staff and mitigate these risks, providing a range of ways to raise concerns and protect people. Relevant policies include Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy (**HR10**), Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (**HR009**), Raising a concern (Whistleblowing) (**HR003**). Our Wellbeing Pledge is about

promoting the wellbeing of colleagues, keeping everyone safe and respecting each other's needs, encompassing physical as well as emotional, mental and occupational health.

Staff are also encouraged to be alert to signs of abuse among other groups that come into contact with the charity, for example children or family members who might be visiting a relative, volunteers, and recipients of the charity's grants for older people experiencing financial hardship. Our safeguarding training ensures that staff and volunteers are aware of the possible need to act if they suspect that anyone is at risk.

Our supporters, who help by donating or raising money through a range of activities, are greatly valued and we do our best to also protect them through procedures that help keep them, their personal and financial data, and themselves safe. We follow best practice when it comes to fundraising, are registered with the Fundraising Regulator, and have policies that govern our activities, such as Fundraising from vulnerable adults, and Ethical fundraising policies.

No matter their role, everyone at Friends of the Elderly strives to ensure safeguarding is the golden thread running through all that we do.

6 Safeguarding monitoring group

The board of trustees has established a safeguarding monitoring group called the Safeguarding Adults Sub-Committee. The group's membership includes independent experts in safeguarding, adult social care, mental capacity, and deprivation of liberty; relatives of those who use our services; board members; and senior and service managers.

It is the group's remit to monitor the level of risk of harm and abuse, scrutinise the charity's safeguarding procedures and practices, and provide assurance to trustees that they are implemented, and effective. The group also looks at safeguarding concerns in detail, analysing trends and carrying out in-depth case reviews. This provides assurance that procedures are being followed, and lessons to be learned and areas for improvement identified.

7 Our policies and procedures

Care homes, regulated by the Care Quality Commission, have comprehensive safeguarding and related policies and procedures to ensure that services are safe, effective, caring, responsive, and well-led. Policies are available to all care home staff through our online platform, Quality Compliance Systems (QCS). The safeguarding policy is tailored to each service location, respective local authority, and care home, with the registered manager as the named person with overall responsibility for ensuring the policy and procedures are followed. Together with procedures relating to the Mental Capacity Act, deprivation of liberty, and behaviour that challenges, the safeguarding policy provides all care home staff with a detailed practical guide to keeping people safe, and reflects all relevant legislation and regulations.

Day care services are unregulated. We nevertheless hold our day care services to the same standards as our care homes. They have their own comprehensive set of detailed policies and procedures, including for safeguarding, mental capacity, deprivation of liberty, and dealing with behaviour that challenges.

Grants service: Our grants team provide small grants to older people experiencing financial hardship. Their contact is generally through third party referrers; however, they are sometimes contacted directly by older people, or become aware of situations that might indicate someone is at risk of harm.

Support functions and Central Office staff do not generally have the same level of contact with vulnerable older people as our services. However, they need to be aware of the potential signs of someone being at risk, and what and how to report any concerns that might arise from information provided by a family member or colleague. There is therefore a separate safeguarding procedure for Central Office staff, all of whom are required to complete the charity's online safeguarding training annually.

Trustees are responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures for safeguarding and related areas are in place. They delegate oversight of this to the safeguarding monitoring group.

The **safeguarding monitoring group** reviews procedures to ensure appropriate policies are in place, adhered to, and effective.

8 Our training

Staff and volunteers have training tailored to their roles and responsibilities, but all staff undergo mandatory safeguarding training annually. This ensures that everyone:

- is aware of types of abuse
- can recognise signs of abuse or neglect
- knows how to raise concerns if they think someone is at risk of harm
- knows what to do if they encounter abuse or neglect
- is able to contribute to preventing abuse and neglect

Care home staff complete a comprehensive induction process and competency assessments before they are allowed to start working with our residents. Mandatory training includes safeguarding adults, Mental Capacity Act, behaviours that may challenge, and deprivation of liberty.

Day care staff complete an induction process that also includes mandatory safeguarding, Mental Capacity Act, behaviours that may challenge, and deprivation of liberty training.

The **board of trustees** completes safeguarding training annually, tailored to trustees' overarching responsibility for safeguarding as a core function of governance.

The **safeguarding monitoring group** undertakes regular training sessions on safeguarding and related matters, including the Mental Capacity Act, and Deprivation of Liberty.

Volunteers undergo an induction process, an important part of which is a safeguarding workbook. Training in other areas is tailored to volunteers' level and scope of activities.

9 Safeguarding awareness

We are committed to promoting awareness of safeguarding. We do this in the following ways:

- Regularly discussing safeguarding and related matters at all levels of the organisation, from meetings of care home teams, registered managers, day care service staff, to the senior management team, the safeguarding monitoring group, board committees, and the board itself.
- Distributing a safeguarding newsletter issued quarterly by the safeguarding monitoring group to all services, staff, care home residents, day care clients, and their relatives.
- Providing a dedicated safeguarding page on our website that describes what safeguarding is, types of abuse, and how people can raise concerns, both with Friends of the Elderly and relevant bodies such as the Care Quality Commission and local authority safeguarding teams.
- Other awareness-raising activities, including online sessions such as webinars, for relatives of people we support, and for care providers on behalf of organisations such as the National Care Forum.

Related procedures

Distressed behaviour/ behaviours that may challenge policies and procedures.
Safeguarding policies and procedures for care homes, day care services, and central office.
Mental Capacity Act policy and procedure.
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards policy and procedure.
Raising a concern at work/ whistleblowing policy and procedure.
Anti-bullying and anti-harassment policy.
Disclosure and Barring Service policy .
Trustee and senior volunteer vetting procedure.

Forms

Policy document	
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Author(s)	Charity Secretary
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