



# **The Together Project CIO**

## **Safeguarding Policies & Procedures**

*Policy last reviewed: March 2023*

Registered charity number 1192175

This policy has been set out by The Together Project CIO. It applies to all colleagues, trustees, contractors, trustees, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of The Together Project.

The purpose of this policy is:

- to protect children who use The Together Project's services
- to protect vulnerable adults who use The Together Project's services
- to provide colleagues, contractors, trustees and volunteers with the principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

## **OUR USER GROUPS**

By 'child', we mean a person under the age of 16.

By 'vulnerable adult', we mean "an adult 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." (Taken from 'No Secrets' Department of Health Guidance 2000).

By 'team member', we mean a member of The Together Project's team of volunteers, colleagues, contractors and trustees.

## **INTRODUCTION**

As one of its major activities, The Together Project seeks to serve the needs of children and vulnerable adults, promoting holistic development. The charity aims to ensure that they are welcomed into a safe, caring environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere.

It is everyone's responsibility at The Together Project to promote the protection of children and vulnerable adults. In following the policy our team members are always expected to maintain a sense of proportion, apply common sense to situations and protect our service users' welfare as a priority. It is also The Together Project's duty to ensure that team members are not placed in situations where actions may be misinterpreted and abuse alleged. It is not intended that the policy should restrict team members from normal and appropriate ways of working, but each individual working for or on behalf of The Together Project must always consider how an action or activity may be perceived as opposed to how it is intended.

The organisation has developed this Safeguarding Policy to support The Together Project's team in putting into practice our commitment to children and vulnerable adults' welfare, safety and protection of their rights. Any breach of any part of this policy could result in disciplinary action being taken.

## **EQUALITY**

The Together Project is committed to anti-discriminatory practice and strives to ensure all children and vulnerable adults using our service have the same protection regardless of age, gender, disability, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.

## OUR APPROACH

This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:

- recruitment, training and support
- risk management
- COVID-19
- code of conduct
- grievance
- safeguarding concern report template

This policy is informed by:

- The Children Acts (1989); (2004)
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child (1989)
- The Care Act 2014
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Human Rights Act 1998

We will seek to keep children and vulnerable adults safe by the following means:

### **Recruitment**

- All members of The Together Project's team who will, or may have reason to, come into direct contact with children and/or vulnerable adults as part of their role, or who will be in a particular position of influence such as a trustee, will be subject to DBS checks, carried out every two years.
- Two independent references will be taken prior to the commencement of a role.

### **Training**

- Comprehensive training tailored to their appointed role/activity will be delivered to our team members. Those who directly deliver or provide support at services working with children and vulnerable adults will be required to undertake an assessment once they have completed their training programme, which they must pass in order to be approved for the role.
- Those who are working directly with people living with dementia will also be required to become a Dementia Friend to help team members understand the condition better.

### **External organisation safeguarding policies**

- The Together Project will adhere to other organisations' safeguarding policies (e.g. nurseries, schools, care homes/assisted living schemes) for any visit or activity.

### **Online/virtual event/activity**

- A specific set of protocols will be issued for each online activity, incorporating platform-specific guidelines.

### **In-person event/activity**

- We will ensure that we provide a safe physical environment for children, vulnerable adults and team members by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance and carrying out a comprehensive risk assessment in collaboration with any partner organisation with which we may be working.
- Children will remain the responsibility of their accompanying parent/guardian/teacher at our in-person or online events/activities and will not be left unattended with The Together Project's team at any time. An exception is in circumstances where this is part of the pre-arranged project design and the relevant team member has received full training and enhanced DBS clearance. In these instances, a separate set of procedures will be created.
- For activities taking place in residential care settings (e.g. care homes, nursing homes), at least one member of the setting's staff must be present in the activity space at all times when The Together Project's team and parents/guardians/teachers and children are on site. No vulnerable adult should be left unattended by the setting's staff at any point during the activity or during arrival/departure times.
- Residential care settings are required to assess the suitability of each resident to attend the activity, particularly with regards to any challenging behaviour they may present around children.
- For activities taking place in non-residential settings (e.g. day centres, community spaces) or in residential settings without care provision (e.g. retirement housing), any participants classed as vulnerable adults must be accompanied by either their own carer or by a representative from the partner organisation with which The Together Project is working to facilitate the activity. No vulnerable adult should be left unattended by the carer/representative at any point during the activity or during arrival/departure times.
- For non-residential settings, The Together Project will work with a partner organisation whose service users are older people. The partner organisation will be responsible for ensuring the suitability of each person they refer to attend the activity, particularly with regards to any challenging behaviour they may present around children.
- The Together Project's teams must work within their role descriptions and not take on additional tasks such as accompanying vulnerable adults or children to the bathroom or assisting with personal care. Any requests of this nature made by either a service user or a partner organisation must be reported to The Together Project's safeguarding lead.
- Personal contact details/personal social media account details must not be shared between The Together Project's team members and vulnerable adults or children. Any attempts by a vulnerable adult or a child to initiate personal contact (such as a social media 'friend request') must be ignored or rejected and reported to the safeguarding lead.

### **Photography consent**

- Written permission must be obtained via signed consent forms for any filming or photography of any child or vulnerable adult (completed by an appropriate representative for the vulnerable adult where necessary).
- Any filming or photography publicly shared on social media by third parties (of themselves or of those in their care) tagging The Together Project, or using other hashtags linking the post to The Together Project's activities, will be considered as consent to share by The Together Project on our own digital platforms. The Together Project will always undertake an assessment as to the suitability of each piece of content before sharing.

## **Reporting safeguarding concerns or complaints**

The Together Project is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable individuals, including children and adults. This procedure outlines the process for reporting disclosures or concerns related to safeguarding or welfare. It also outlines the escalation structure for reporting concerns or disclosures. We expect all staff, volunteers, contractors and Trustees to be aware of this procedure and to follow it whenever a safeguarding issue arises.

The Together Project recognises that safeguarding concerns can come from a variety of sources, including the individual themselves, family members, volunteers, staff members or members of the public. Anyone who has a concern or disclosure related to safeguarding or welfare should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within one working day (or the next working day, if it is a weekend or Bank Holiday) by email, phone or in-person.

If the situation is an emergency, the person reporting the concern must report it to police and/or Social Services immediately.

The report should be made using the Safeguarding Concern Report form and should include as much detail as possible, including the nature of the concern or disclosure, any relevant dates, times or locations, and the names of individuals involved. The form should be completed at the time or immediately following disclosure but after all necessary emergency actions have been taken.

If the concern or disclosure is made in person or on the phone, the person receiving the report should listen carefully, remain calm, and not ask leading questions. They should reassure the individual that the information will be taken seriously and treated in confidence, where possible, but that relevant information will be shared with third parties (such as the police or social services) on a 'need to know' basis.

If the concern or disclosure is made via email, the person making the report must also copy in the Deputy Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy, in their absence) will acknowledge receipt of the report. If receipt is not acknowledged within one working day (or the next working day if it is a Bank Holiday or weekend), the person making the report must attempt to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the Deputy by telephone. If they are unable to reach them, the concern must be reported to the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding.

If the person reporting the concern attempts to do so by phone but is unable to reach the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the working day, they should contact the Deputy and/or the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding.

If the concern or disclosure involves a member of staff, contractor, volunteer, service user or Trustee, the report should be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the concern or disclosure involves the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the report should be made to the Trustee responsible for safeguarding.

If the concern or disclosure about a vulnerable adult occurs or is disclosed within that person's place of residence (e.g. at their care home during a Songs & Smiles session), it should be reported immediately to a member of staff directly responsible for that person's welfare (e.g. a carer at the care home).

All concerns or disclosures will be taken seriously, and appropriate action will be taken to protect the welfare of those involved. This may include contacting external agencies, such as social services or the police, and keeping the individual or individuals involved informed about the progress of any investigations.

## **When the report has been made**

When the Designated Safeguarding Lead receives the Safeguarding Concern Report and is satisfied it contains all the necessary information, they will review it to decide upon the best course of action. The nature of the incident will determine the next steps, but as a minimum it will be shared with trustees and, if the incident involves a vulnerable adult living in a care setting, the setting's management team. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the board of trustees will jointly assess whether the setting remains a suitable activity partner.

Where appropriate, a follow-up review takes place within an allotted timeframe.

## **Escalation**

If the internal review deems it necessary to escalate with external authorities, the Designated Safeguarding Lead reports it to the Children's Social Care team or the Safeguarding Adults team at the local authority in which the incident took place. If the event relates to a safeguarding issue at a care setting, the concern may also be raised with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for further investigation.

The Together Project is based in the London borough of Waltham Forest and the contact details for the two safeguarding teams are at the end of this document. For incidents occurring outside the borough, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must research and contact the appropriate local authority.

If there is a concern about an imminent threat to life or wellbeing, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the police and/or social services immediately.

## **Contact details**

*Designated Safeguarding Lead:* Louise Goulden, [louise@thetogetherproject.org.uk](mailto:louise@thetogetherproject.org.uk) / 07811 320578

*Deputy Safeguarding Lead:* Alexa Sutheran, [alexa@thetogetherproject.org.uk](mailto:alexa@thetogetherproject.org.uk) / 07709 499720

*Trustee responsible for Safeguarding:* Stephen Burke, [stephen.burke@unitedforallages.com](mailto:stephen.burke@unitedforallages.com) / 07714 334510

*Waltham Forest Safeguarding Adults Team:* 020 8496 3000

*Waltham Forest Multi Action Safeguarding Hub (responsible for children's safeguarding concerns):* 020 8496 2310

## **Safeguarding Leads: Roles & Responsibilities**

The Safeguarding Leads are essential roles within The Together Project, responsible for ensuring that we have a robust safeguarding policy and procedure in place and that all staff, volunteers, contractors and Trustees understand and adhere to this policy.

This document outlines the key responsibilities, skills, and knowledge required for the three Safeguarding Lead roles.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead Responsibilities**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

1. Developing and reviewing The Together Project's safeguarding policy and procedure in collaboration with the board of trustees and relevant stakeholders.

2. Ensuring that all staff, volunteers, contractors and trustees are aware of our safeguarding policy and procedure, and that they receive regular training on safeguarding.
3. Ensuring that all staff, volunteers, contractors and trustees are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and that they understand the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect.
4. Ensuring that all concerns or allegations of abuse or neglect are reported and managed appropriately in line with The Together Project's safeguarding policy and procedure.
5. Ensuring that appropriate risk assessments are carried out to identify any potential safeguarding risks to children and vulnerable adults.
6. Working closely with external agencies, such as social services and the police, to ensure that safeguarding concerns are dealt with effectively.
7. Maintaining accurate records of safeguarding concerns and actions taken in response to these concerns.
8. Ensuring the Deputy Safeguarding Lead and Trustee responsible for safeguarding are fulfilling their responsibilities.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead Skills and Knowledge**

The safeguarding lead should possess the following skills and knowledge:

1. Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written, to ensure that all staff, volunteers, and trustees understand The Together Project's safeguarding policy and procedure and that they are communicated effectively and clearly.
2. An understanding of the legal framework and guidance relating to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
3. The ability to identify and manage safeguarding risks and to work effectively with external agencies to safeguard vulnerable individuals.
4. A commitment to continuous professional development to keep up-to-date with changes in safeguarding legislation and guidance.
5. An understanding of the impact of abuse and neglect on children and vulnerable adults, and the ability to provide appropriate support and advice to staff, volunteers, and trustees.
6. The ability to maintain confidentiality and handle sensitive information appropriately.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead Training**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead must undertake the Designated Safeguarding Lead training for Vulnerable Adults and for Children by The Together Project's approved training provider, which must be updated annually.

### **Deputy Safeguarding Lead**

The Deputy's role is to stand in for the Designated Safeguarding Lead when they are unavailable (e.g. due to sickness or annual leave). They are responsible for;

1. Ensuring they are fully aware of our safeguarding policy and procedure, their safeguarding responsibilities and that they understand the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect.
2. Ensuring that all concerns or allegations of abuse or neglect are reported and managed appropriately by themselves in line with The Together Project's safeguarding policy and procedure in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
3. Working closely with external agencies, such as social services and the police, to ensure that safeguarding concerns are dealt with effectively in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
4. Maintaining accurate records of safeguarding concerns and actions taken in response to these concerns in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **Deputy Safeguarding Lead Training**

The Deputy Safeguarding Lead must undertake the Safeguarding training for Vulnerable Adults and Children by The Together Project's approved training provider, which must be updated annually.

### **Trustee Responsible For Safeguarding**

The trustee responsible for safeguarding's role is to have oversight of the role carried out by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and to approve all policies, procedures and guides relating to Safeguarding. They are also the person to whom safeguarding concerns relating to the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be reported to.

They are responsible for;

1. Ensuring they are fully aware of our safeguarding policy and procedure, their safeguarding responsibilities and that they understand the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect.
2. Ensuring that all concerns or allegations of abuse or neglect are reported and managed appropriately by themselves in line with The Together Project's safeguarding policy and procedure in the absence of the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead OR if the matter relates to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
3. Working closely with external agencies, such as social services and the police, to ensure that safeguarding concerns are dealt with effectively in the absence of the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead OR if the matter relates to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
4. Maintaining accurate records of safeguarding concerns and actions taken in response to these concerns in the absence of the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead OR if the matter relates to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
5. Ensuring the Designated Safeguarding Lead is fulfilling their role to the required standard and that The Together Project's policies, procedures and guides relating to Safeguarding are comprehensive and checked annually.

### **Trustee Responsible For Safeguarding**

The Deputy Safeguarding Lead must undertake the Safeguarding training for Vulnerable Adults and Children by The Together Project's approved training provider, which must be updated annually.



## **A Guide To Spotting Signs of Abuse**

The Together Project is committed to safeguarding vulnerable older adults and children. We recognise that it is our responsibility to identify and report any concerns or allegations of abuse or neglect to ensure that appropriate action is taken to protect those at risk.

This guide outlines the signs of abuse that staff, volunteers, contractors and Trustees should be aware of when working with vulnerable older adults and children. These signs may be witnessed firsthand, disclosed directly by the individual concerned or disclosed by someone who has been in contact with the individual.

### **Identifying Signs of Abuse in Vulnerable Older Adults**

1. Physical Abuse - unexplained injuries, bruises, burns, cuts or fractures, refusal to seek medical treatment, and unusual or inconsistent explanations for injuries.
2. Emotional Abuse - changes in behaviour, such as increased anxiety or agitation, withdrawal from social activities, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, and fear or anxiety around certain individuals.
3. Financial Abuse - unexplained changes in bank accounts, sudden or unexpected withdrawals of large sums of money, disappearance of valuable items or personal possessions, and sudden changes to a will or other legal documents.
4. Sexual Abuse - unexplained sexually transmitted infections, bruising or injuries around the genitals, and emotional or behavioural changes.
5. Neglect - dehydration, malnutrition, untreated medical conditions, poor personal hygiene, and unsafe or unsanitary living conditions.

### **Identifying Signs of Abuse in Children**

1. Physical Abuse - unexplained bruises, burns, cuts, or fractures, reluctance to change clothing, and injuries that are inconsistent with the child's explanation.
2. Emotional Abuse - changes in behaviour, such as increased anxiety or agitation, withdrawal from social activities or school, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, and fear or anxiety around certain individuals.
3. Sexual Abuse - sexually transmitted infections, bruising or injuries around the genitals, and emotional or behavioral changes, disclosures of sexual activity under the age of consent.
4. Neglect - dehydration, malnutrition, untreated medical conditions, poor personal hygiene, and unsafe or unsanitary living conditions.

### **Reporting Concerns or Allegations of Abuse**

If anyone working or volunteering for or on behalf of The Together Project is concerned that abuse may be taking place, they must report this immediately using the Safeguarding Reporting Procedure. Further information on The Together Project's approach to safeguarding can be found in our Safeguarding Policy.