



Safeguarding policy

Purpose

The Company's safeguarding policy applies to all employees at all levels of the business, as well as agency workers and volunteers.

The purpose of the policy is to protect children and service users from harm and to provide all employees, workers and volunteers with information about the safeguarding policy adopted by the Company.

The policy is particularly important in the regulated activity/work that the Company does with children and service users.

In England and Wales this is referred to as regulated activity and in Scotland this is referred to as regulated work. In this policy this will be referred to as regulated activity/work.

The Company has a responsibility to promote the welfare of children and service users and to keep them safe.

The Company complies with all the legal obligations placed upon it by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (England and Wales) and the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 (Scotland).

The policy covers the arrangements for safeguarding during the recruitment and selection process and safeguarding issues that arise during employment in circumstances where children or service users are placed at risk, or where they could have been placed at risk.

The policy also sets out the reporting obligations for all employees and the procedure that should be followed to report abuse if this occurs to one of the Company's service users.

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Recruitment process

Advertisements for job roles at the Company will specify clearly whether the work involves regulated activity/work together with the basis of that work.

Offers of employment will be made conditional on the receipt of a satisfactory disclosure checks. These will be conducted by the Disclosure and Barring Service in England and Wales and Disclosure Scotland in Scotland.

The check will confirm that the applicant is suitable to carry out the role and has not been barred from performing this work.

If the background check reveals that an applicant is not suitable, the offer of employment will be withdrawn by the Company and the applicant will not be employed.

Existing employees

Existing employees may be required to provide a satisfactory disclosure check where their work becomes a regulated activity/work, or the Company requires them to start carrying out regulated activity/work. Existing employees cannot conduct any regulated activity/work until they have undertaken a satisfactory disclosure check.

The disclosure check will be conducted by the Disclosure and Barring Service in England and Wales and Disclosure Scotland in Scotland.

The check will confirm that the employee is suitable to carry out the work and has not been barred from performing this.

If employees are unable to provide a satisfactory disclosure check, or refuse to undertake a disclosure check, the Company will consider the options for redeployment into any available job roles that do not involve regulated activity/work.

If existing employees become added to the children and adults barred lists by either disclosure body, the Company will consider the options for redeployment into any available job roles that do not involve regulated.

activity/work. All employees who are added to the barred lists are required to inform

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their line manager of their inclusion on the list at the earliest opportunity. A failure to do so may be deemed a disciplinary matter to be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

In both cases, if this is not possible, the Company may need to consider dismissal of the employee because of the statutory ban imposed by the disclosure. The Company may be unable to continue to employ the employee in any capacity if the continued association with the employee cannot be maintained, causes reputational damage to the employer or other reasons that harm its position in the marketplace.

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What is abuse?

Given the risk of abuse to children and service users, all employees are required to be always alert to the possibility of abuse towards children or service users.

Abuse may be a single incident or something that occurs over a long period of time. It can take many forms including, but not limited to:

- financial or material abuse
- physical abuse
- mental abuse
- neglect and failures to act
- sexual abuse
- threats of abuse or harm
- controlling or intimidating conduct
- self-neglect
- domestic abuse
- poor practices within an organization providing care
- modern slavery.

The abuse may come from employees, personal assistants, service users, relatives, neighbors, social workers, providers of support services etc.

Reporting and investigating abuse

The Company will treat all complaints, allegations or suspicions of abuse with the utmost seriousness. Training will be provided, as appropriate, to ensure that staff are aware of the warning signs of abuse and the correct reporting procedure to follow if they suspect abuse is, or has, taken place.

Employees that suspect abuse is occurring should refer the matter to their line manager immediately, with as much detail as possible. The line manager will need to be informed of the names of the people involved (if known), what type of abuse is or may be occurring, and the dates and times this occurred (if known). An official

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written report of the alleged act may be requested at this stage as part of the evidence gathering procedure.

Employees may be asked to refrain from discussing alleged abuse with fellow colleagues, other than those specified by their line manager, to avoid the spread of potentially harmful misinformation and to protect the validity of any investigation.

The allegations will be investigated fully, and all such reports are taken seriously. The investigation will be conducted in a discrete and timely manner and will involve the collation of evidence typically derived from witness statements and surveillance footage where possible.

If it is suspected that a criminal act may have been committed, the Company will report the situation to the police.

Employees suspected of abuse will be suspended on full pay pending a full investigation of the complaints. It should be noted that this suspension is not an indication of the employee's guilt, but rather a necessity given the circumstances. The Company appreciates the impact prolonged suspension can have on an employee's reputation, even when allegations are later found to be incorrect, and does not take the decision to suspend lightly.

The Company may be under a duty to disclose allegations of abuse to the Disclosure and Barring Service or Disclosure Scotland as appropriate. The organization may also consider it necessary to inform the police of allegations under investigation.

Maintaining records

The Company will ensure that all details associated with allegation of abuse are recorded clearly and accurately. The records will be maintained securely in line with the Company's confidential record keeping procedure.

Disciplinary action

If the investigation reveals that abuse has happened, or is happening, the Company will set up a disciplinary hearing for the employee concerned. Abuse of service users

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is regarded by the Company as an act of gross misconduct and the allegation could result in summary dismissal, in line with the Company's disciplinary procedure. Employees will have the chance to appeal any disciplinary action that is taken against them.

Duty of disclosure

The Company is legally required to send information to the Disclosure and Barring Service or Disclosure Scotland if a decision is taken to dismiss an employee or remove them from working in regulated activity/work.

The Company may also be required to inform the Disclosure and Barring Service or Disclosure Scotland if the Company suspends an employee, or an employee resigns in suspicious circumstances, as the referral duty criteria may already be met at that stage.

Additional support and guidance

Employees who wish for further information on safeguarding are encouraged to contact their line manager or relevant HR representative. The Company will endeavor to provide up to date support and guidance to all staff when it comes to safeguarding and their duty to protect service users from harm.

Relevant supporting material is also readily available online and the Company will look to furnish employees with this where requested.

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