

Lighthouse Hostel Policies & Procedures

Safeguarding Policy

Version 10

November 2022

Next Revision Date November 2025

Audited by

Residents Committee

Name: _____ Date: _____ Sig: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____ Sig: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____ Sig: _____

Lighthouse Staff

Name: Shannon O'Neill Date: _____ Sig: _____

Name: Samantha Brown Date: _____ Sig: _____

Name: Jayne Stevenson Date: _____ Sig: _____

Lighthouse Management

Name: Mark Forsythe Date: _____ Sig: _____

Name: Stephen O'Neill Date: _____ Sig: _____

Living Rivers Management Board

Name: Dr Harvey Grahame Smith Date: _____ Sig: _____

Contents

1. Safeguarding Statement
2. Underpinning principles
3. Lighthouse procedures for effective Safeguarding
 - a. Staff training and Supervision
 - b. Residents Inclusion
 - c. Complaints Procedure
4. Consent
 - a. Lack of Consent
5. Capacity
6. Confidentiality
7. Reporting and recording
8. Handling an allegation of abuse against a staff member or volunteer
9. Support for individuals who report concerns, victims and perpetrators
10. Responsibilities of Safeguarding lead officer and deputy
11. Reporting concerns outside of the Lighthouse
- 12. Review of Policy**

Appendices:

- A** Definition of Abuse
- B** Types of Abuse and How to Identify Them
- C** Definition of Safeguarding
- D** Meaning of an adult at risk and an adult in need of protection
- E** How you can be alerted to abuse and the Do's and Don'ts when abuse is disclosed
- F** The Role of the Adult Safeguarding Champion
- G** Staff reporting abuse flowchart
- H** Allegation of Abuse against a Staff member/Volunteer Flowchart
- I** Abuse Report Form
- J** Adult Safeguarding Champion referral To HSC Trust form
- K** Useful Contact Numbers
- L** NISCC Employer referral Form
- M** Supporting People protocol for dealing with untoward events, incidents, actual or suspected abuse
- N** Disclosure and Barring Service referral form

- 1. Our commitment to Safeguarding**

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights; it can take many forms. The staff and volunteers in the Lighthouse Hostel are committed to practice which promotes the welfare of adults at risk and safeguards them from harm.

Staff and volunteers in our organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues that cause adults harm, and to establish and maintain a safe environment for them.

We will not tolerate any form of abuse wherever it occurs or whoever is responsible.

We are committed to promoting an atmosphere of inclusion, transparency and openness and are open to feedback from the people who use our services, carers, advocates, our staff and our volunteers with a view to how we may continuously improve our services/activities.

We will endeavour to safeguard the adults we work with and care for by:

- Adhering to our adult safeguarding policy and ensuring that it is supported by robust procedures;
- Carefully following the procedures laid down for the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training;
- Implementing clear procedures for raising awareness of and responding to abuse within the organisation and for reporting concerns to statutory agencies that need to know, while involving adults at risk and their carers appropriately;
- Ensuring general safety and risk management procedures are adhered to;
- Promoting full participation and having clear procedures for dealing with concerns and complaints;
- Managing personal information, confidentiality and information sharing; and
- Safeguarding adults at risk by implementing a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers.

We will review our policy, procedures, code of behaviour and practice every 3 years to ensure the effectiveness of the policy and its implementation.

2. Underpinning Principles Of Safeguarding

As an organisation working directly with adults at risk or in need of protection, the Lighthouse is committed to good practice. Good practice meaning a commitment to keeping our residents safe from harm and exploitation, and upholding their rights; that is, always acting in their best interests and with their consent. The procedures set in this policy will give guidance to staff and volunteers on how this will be maintained.

There are a number of values and principals which underpin the Lighthouse safeguarding practices:

(1) A Rights-Based Approach: We will promote and respect an adult's right to be safe and secure; to freedom from harm and coercion; to equality of treatment; to the protection of the law; to privacy; to confidentiality; and freedom from discrimination.

(2) An Empowering Approach: We will empower adults to make informed choices about their lives, to maximise their opportunities to participate in wider society, to keep themselves safe and free from harm and enabled to manage their own decisions in respect of exposure to risk.

(3) A Person-Centred Approach: We will promote and facilitate full participation of adults in all decisions affecting their lives taking full account of their views, wishes and feelings and, where appropriate, the views of others who have an interest in his safety and well-being.

(4) A Consent-Driven Approach: We will make a presumption that the adult has the ability to give or withhold consent; to make informed choices; to help inform choice through the provision of information, and the identification of options and alternatives; to have particular regard to the needs of individuals who require support with communication, advocacy or who lack the capacity to consent; and intervening in the life of an adult against his wishes only in particular circumstances, for very specific purposes and always in accordance with the law.

(5) A Collaborative Approach: To acknowledge that adult safeguarding will be most effective when it has the full support of the wider public and of safeguarding partners across the statutory, voluntary, community, independent and faith sectors working together and is delivered in a way where roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are clearly defined and understood. Working in partnership and a person-centred approach will work hand-in-hand.

2. Lighthouse procedures for effective Safeguarding

a. Staff training and Supervision

All staff should have the knowledge from the safeguarding policy, required to carry out their role, explained to them and be provided with a copy or made aware of the availability of the policy for use to further develop an effective knowledge or confirm processes. For new staff this will be done as part of their induction.

As part of all staff induction they follow the process as laid out in the Induction/Probation policy. This policy details the policies and procedures, guidelines, activities and ethos of the organisation

All staff should attend training on Safeguarding. Regular training should be held in-house to refresh staff knowledge and ensure consistency in responding to situations. Records must be kept of all training sessions. Staff will be expected to develop the skills required to deliver the Safeguarding policy, such as motivational interviewing, active listening, and dealing with challenging behaviour.

Staff will receive regular supervision, which will be recorded. This should address problem areas and identify training and development areas. Staff will also be supported through any cases of abuse that they are a part of.

b. Residents Inclusion/Support

All residents will have access to information that they can understand to make informed choices relating to the support they receive and their active participation both in the hostel and the wider community. This will include access to expert knowledge and advocacy, as required. All residents will have the opportunity to select independently from a range of options based on clear and accurate information. All residents will be accorded the same respect and dignity as any other adult, staff/ volunteers will recognise their uniqueness and personal needs; all residents will be treated equally and their background and culture will be valued and respected. All residents will be invited to engage in activities and offered services that enable them to fulfil their ability and potential with all residents having as much control as possible over their lives whilst being safeguarded against unreasonable risks. All residents will be free from unnecessary intrusion into their affairs; and there will be a balance between the individual's own safety and the safety of others. All residents will feel safe, and live without fear of violence, neglect or abuse in any form; all adults will be supported to report any form of abuse and to receive appropriate support following abuse for as long as may be required.

c. Complaints Procedure

An up to date complaints procedure which is widely promoted within the hostel, where staff, residents, visitors and volunteers are encouraged, and where appropriate, supported to use the procedure; contributing to an environment where safeguarding is at the forefront of service delivery. Staff will receive training on dealing with complaints positively.

4. Consent

An organisation that provides activities and services for adults at risk or in need of protection should adhere to the underpinning principles on page 4 of this policy. In so doing, we will seek always to work in the best interests of the adult and with his consent. Staff and volunteers should always be mindful of the need for the adult to consent to, and to be comfortable with, any proposed activity or service. Consent is a clear indication of a willingness to participate in an activity or to accept a service. It may be signalled verbally, by gesture, by willing participation or in writing. It does not matter so much how an adult gives consent, the important issue is to ensure the consent given is valid.

Consent is only considered to be valid when:

- The adult has the capacity to consent, that is, s/he can understand and weigh up the information needed to make the decision; and
 - The adult is appropriately informed, that is, s/he has been given sufficient information, in an appropriate way, on which to base the decision;
- And
- It has been given voluntarily, that is, free from coercion or negative influence.

If any of these factors is absent, consent cannot be considered to be valid. In cases where the adult lacks capacity, decisions will usually be made on behalf of the adult in accordance with current legal provisions.

Staff and volunteers should remember that no one can give, or withhold, consent on behalf of another adult unless special legal provision for particular purposes has been made for this. In certain situations the need for consent may be overridden. This is generally when it is in the public interest to do so, for example, the disclosure of information to prevent a crime or risk to health or life.

Staff and volunteers should:

- Always presume that the adult at the centre of the decision or action is able to give or withhold consent unless it is established otherwise;
- Make every effort to encourage and support the adult to make the decision for themselves and communicate the decision. This includes giving them all the necessary information which is explained or presented in a way which the adult fully understands. If lack of capacity is established, it is still important that you involve them as far as possible in making decisions.
 - Be aware that an adult who has capacity has the right to make what others may regard as an unwise decision. Everyone has their own values, beliefs and preferences which may not be the same as those of other people, but sometimes a balance needs to be struck between the adult's human rights and the need to intervene to protect others;
- Provide support to an adult where they have withheld consent and this has been overridden; and
- Understand that an adult can change their mind about any choice or decision they have made.

Where there are concerns about consent, for example, doubts about whether it is valid, the staff member or volunteer should bring this to the attention of their ASC, who should in turn seek professional advice where necessary.

Lack of Consent

In some circumstances it may be necessary for the withholding of consent to be overridden. Where consent to intervene is not provided by the adult at risk, action to progress a case may still be taken in circumstances where there is a strong overriding public interest, or where a crime is alleged or suspected.

This may happen when:

- the person causing the harm is a member of staff, a volunteer or someone who only has contact with the adult at risk because they both use the service; or
- consent has been provided under undue influence, coercion or duress.
- other people are at risk from the person causing harm; or
- a crime is alleged or suspected.

In these circumstances, the adult should be informed of that decision, the reason for the decision, and reassured that as far as possible no actions will be taken which affect them personally without their involvement. Consideration should be given to any support the adult may need at this time, as they may be distressed by the prospect of their information being shared without their consent.

5.Capacity

Mental capacity means the ability to make a decision and take actions. An adult will always be assumed to have capacity to make a decision unless it is suspected otherwise. This means staff and volunteers should always start by believing that the adult can make their own decisions unless they can prove otherwise. It does not matter what the adult looks like, how they behave, what age they are or if they have a disability or illness.

Staff and volunteers must be aware that capacity can fluctuate, and it is both issue and time specific, therefore it should be kept under regular review.

If a member of staff or volunteer has any doubts about the capacity of an adult to make a decision or series of decisions, they should inform their Adult Safeguarding Champion, who should seek professional advice from the local HSC Trust. It may be necessary for a HSC professional to conduct a capacity assessment.

Any decisions made or actions taken on behalf of an adult who lacks capacity must be done in their best interests, after considering their preferences. The person/agencies making the decision must consider whether it is possible to do this in a way that would interfere less with the freedoms and rights of the adult. Where appropriate, relevant family members or carers will be consulted regarding what action to take.

6. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be fully understood by all staff and volunteers particularly in context of safeguarding. In addition to each worker signing a confidentiality agreement staff and volunteers will undergo training, to ensure that they understand the need for confidentiality.

Staff and volunteers have a duty to respect and protect the confidentiality of any information they have relating to an adult at risk or in need of protection. Such information should not normally be disclosed without the adult's consent.

However, there is an underlying professional requirement to act in the interests of residents and other members of the public. Consideration may need to be given to disclosure without the adult's consent in situations where:

An adult at risk's health renders them incapable of consent (e.g. mental incapacity)

- Disclosure is necessary to prevent serious injury or damage to the health of the adult at risk, adult in need of protection, third party or to public health (e.g. other adult at risk, adult in need of protection are also at risk).
- Disclosure is required by law or under an order of the court.

Information should only be disclosed to relevant persons or agencies on a 'need to know' basis.

Staff and volunteers should never give an adult at risk assurance of absolute confidentiality of information disclosed to them, especially in situations where other adults at risk or in need of protection may be at risk as information received may need to be passed to the relevant authorities: as the protection of the adult at risk or in need of protection is ultimate. Staff asked by an adult at risk or in need of protection to keep a secret, should advise them that the information may need to be shared with others but that they are supported and information will only be shared with those needing to know it. Wherever possible, the adult at risk should be informed of any decision to share information that is contrary to their wishes. They should be aware of what information is being shared and with whom.

Similarly staff should not discuss any information with any other persons (including other staff) but report it to the Adult Safeguarding Champion (Mark Forsythe). This ensures peoples protection and most importantly the adult at risks. Steps may need to be taken to ensure the adult at risks immediate safety and this will be done in consultation with the Adult Safeguarding Champion or their appointed person (Steven O'Neill) if not available.

Professionals can only work together to safeguard adults if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. This has been recognised in principle by the courts. Any disclosure of personal information to others, [including the social service departments, must always however, have regard to both common and statute law. Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information. Wherever possible, consent should be obtained

before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances, consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of an adult at risk or in need of protection dictates that the information should be shared. The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard an adult at risk or need of protection. (See *Code of Confidentiality and coinciding Codes of Conduct and GDPR policies*)

7. Reporting and recording

Well-kept records are essential to good safeguarding practices. The Lighthouse is clear about the need to record any concerns held about an adult at risk or in need of protection within the hostel, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies. Such records should be made at, or as early as possible to the events arousing concerns using the abuse report form (see appendix I). This report should be forwarded to the Adult Safeguarding Champion or his appointed person as soon as possible. (See appendix G Flow chart for reporting abuse).

The record should be clear and factual, since any information you have may be valuable to professionals investigating the incident and may at some time in the future be used as evidence in court. This kind of information should always be kept in a secure place (including electronic filing) and shared only with those who need to know about the concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of abuse.

There may need to be some initial 'checking out' with the adult at risk who has disclosed information to you in order to ensure his safety, for example, if a staff member/volunteer notices a bruise on an adult's arm, it would be appropriate to ask, 'I see you have a bruise on your arm. How did that happen?' However, be careful not to start investigating. It is important that staff/volunteers understand the clear distinction between 'checking out' and an investigation. Staff/volunteers should **not begin to investigate alleged or suspected abuse** by asking questions that relate to the detail, or circumstances of the alleged abuse, beyond initial listening, expressing concern and checking out. Investigation and discovery of how an event occurred is not the Lighthouse Hostel's responsibility. Care will be taken not to make the adult at risk or in need of protection feel unsupported or guilty or to interfere with possible later required evidence. This will include not removing any clothing if allegations of abuse are made but to leave this to the relevant experts.

A Safeguarding log is maintained by the Adult Safeguarding Champion, or the appointed person. The Safeguarding protection log is maintained in a locked cabinet accessible only by the Adult Safeguarding Champion and the appointed person, the representative member of the Trustee Management Team and Living Rivers Trust. This log book will be used as a tool for the review of this policy and the development of the Adult Safeguarding Position Report (see appendix F)

8. Handling an allegation of abuse against a staff member or volunteer

Initially, all details of the incident should be recorded fully by Adult Safeguarding Champion, who will inform Board member and responsible person Dr Harvey Grahame Smith. The Adult Safeguarding Champion will then take the actions outlined below. It is possible that the actions outlined will occur virtually simultaneously and not necessarily sequentially.

- The ASC or appointed person will consult with the HSC Trust and/or PSNI to ensure that any subsequent action taken by the organisation does not prejudice the HSC Trust or PSNI investigation;
- Following the above consultation, inform the staff member/volunteer that an allegation has been made against him/her and provide them with an opportunity to respond to the allegation. His/her response should be recorded fully;
- The ASC or appointed person will consult with the HSC Key Worker (if known) or the HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service (if Key Worker is not known) to agree the most appropriate way forward;
- Take protective measures which may involve transferring the staff member/volunteer to another post without contact with adults at risk, or suspension. It should be noted that suspension is a neutral act to allow the investigation to proceed and to remove the staff member/volunteer from the possibility of any further allegation. If it is necessary to suspend a staff member or volunteer, the allegation should be dealt with as quickly and sensitively as possible.

All actions taken should be in accordance with the Lighthouse disciplinary procedures, and have due regard to guidance from the HSC Trust and/or PSNI so as not to prejudice any investigation. It is recommended that the ASC or appointed person is not the person who carries out the disciplinary procedure. If a staff member is dismissed following the investigation the Adult Safeguarding Champion must report the incident to the NI Social Care Council Conduct department (see appendix L) a Notification of Untoward Event/Incident form (See appendix M) completed for Supporting People and DBS Disclosure & Barring Service informed (see appendix N).

9. Support for individuals who report concerns, victims and perpetrators

The Lighthouse recognises that adults at risk or in need of protection who are abused or who witness abuse will be subjected to a range of emotions and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. We also recognise that some adults at risk or adults in need of protection who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that they can receive appropriate help and support.

The Lighthouse will endeavour to support adults at risk/ adults in need of protection through:

- a) Materials to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.
- b) The ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all adults at risk a sense of being respected and valued.
- c) The implementation of behaviour management policies.

- d) A consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the adult at risk displays. This is vital to ensure that all adults at risk are supported.
- e) Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies that support the adult at risk, adult in need of protection and their families.
- f) A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with family, or others, whenever it is in the adult at risk, adult in need of protection's interest to do so.
- g) The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in safeguarding situations.

The Lighthouse recognises that, statistically, an adult at risk or an adult in need of protection with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. Lighthouse Hostel staff who work, in any capacity, with adult at risk or an adult in need of protection or groups with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse. It must also be stressed that an adult who has previously, or is currently living in an environment where there may be domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, may be vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

Staff/ volunteers who have witnessed abuse or have had a disclosure of abuse made to them will also be subjected to a range of emotions. The Lighthouse recognises that they too will need to be supported. Management will endeavour to do this through supervision, where staff will be given the opportunity to discuss any concerns they have and reflect on their practice and to help them to deal with the emotions involved when dealing with abuse cases. Staff on shift during an incident of abuse may be offered a few days off to rest, depending on their shift plan and the nature of the incident. (see Traumatic Incident Support Policy for more info)

Staff/ volunteers of the Lighthouse will be supportive to any individual who reports concerns of abuse. Any resident, staff member, volunteer or visitor who is subjected to abuse will be supported, where appropriate to receive specialised counselling or support from outside agencies.

10. Responsibilities of the Adult Safeguarding Champion

When an alert is raised in relation to an adult safeguarding concern or disclosure, the ASC, or appointed person, will ensure the following actions occur:

- Consider whether the concern is a safeguarding issue or not. This may involve some 'checking out' of information provided whilst being careful not to stray into the realm of investigation;

- Where immediate danger exists or the situation warrants immediate action, ensure any medical assistance has been sought and refer to the HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service or PSNI;
- Support staff to ensure that any actions take account of the adult's wishes;
- Where it has been deemed that it is not a safeguarding issue, other alternative responses should be considered such as monitoring, support or advice to staff and volunteers. A record should be made of the concern and the details kept on file, including any action taken; the reasons for not referring; and the situation monitored on an ongoing basis;
- If it is decided that it is a safeguarding issue, the situation will be reported to the HSC Key Worker where known. If unaware of HSC Key Worker contact details, a referral will be made to the HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service. The HSC Trust will then conduct a risk assessment and decide what response is appropriate;
- If a crime is suspected or alleged, contact the HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service directly;
- Act as the liaison point for any investigative activity which is required and will ensure easy access to relevant case records or staff;
- Ensure accurate and timely records and any adult safeguarding forms required have been completed.

Where there is any doubt or uncertainty about whether there is a safeguarding issue this should be discussed with the HSC Key Worker (if known) or HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service.

Where the ASC is not immediately available, this should not prevent action being taken or a referral being made to the HSC Trust in respect of any safeguarding concern

See Appendix F for further information on the role and key responsibilities of the ASC

11. Reporting concerns outside of the Lighthouse

If staff, volunteers, residents or visitors have followed the procedures as set out within this policy and are unhappy with the outcome they can raise their concern with the Board Member and the Lighthouse's responsible person Dr Harvey Graham Smith, C/O Lighthouse Hostel, 8 Linenhall Street, Ballymena, BT43 5AL, 02825647654. If they feel they are unable to raise the matter at this level they should raise the matter, in writing, to Living Rivers Trustees.

If the above steps have been followed and they still have concerns or they feel that the matter is so serious that they need to raise it externally then they should contact the PSNI or local HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service, contact details are available in appendix K of this policy.

13. Review of Policy

The ASC will be responsible for reviewing this policy every 3 years, alongside the Adult Safeguarding Position Reports or in response to any incidents or changes in legislation relating to Safeguarding. The review will include input from Residents, Staff, Social Services and PSNI and will seek to identify and address the effectiveness and implementation of the policy, any disincentives to reporting abuse and the practice when dealing with suspicion/cases of abuse.

This policy should be considered alongside all other related Lighthouse policies such as the Safeguarding children policy, Health and Safety, Lone working, Positive Risk Taking, Support Process, Risk assessment, Termination of Services, GDPR policy, Code of Conduct, Code of Confidentiality, Complaints Procedure, Appeals Procedure and Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, key working policy and Supervision policy.

This policy has been written in accordance with:

- Adult Safeguarding: Prevention to Protection in Partnership Policy (DHSSPS 2015)
- Protocol for Joint Investigation of Adult Safeguarding Cases (NIASP 2016)
- The Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967
- The Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Orders and the Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009
- The Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986
- Mental Capacity Act 2016
- The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- The Northern Ireland Act 1998, Section 75
- The Human Rights Act 1998 – enacted 2000
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)
- The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015
- The data protection act 2018