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## **Winslow Big Society Group Safeguarding Policy and Procedure**

Winslow Big Society Group (WBSG) is committed to supporting the right of all children and adults, especially those at risk, to be protected from abuse and neglect. It is also committed to making sure all volunteers work in line with their policies and procedures for safeguarding children or adults at risk, and act promptly when dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect.

### **Purpose of this policy:**

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of children and adults accessing services provided by WBSG and in particular it aims to:

- provide children or adults at risk with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the company of WBSG volunteers;
- promote good practice and ensure that volunteers are able to work in environments where there is unsupervised contact with children or adults at risk with confidence;
- allow volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific Safeguarding issues;
- monitor the level of volunteers contact with children or adults at risk, and request/access DBS checks where necessary, following DBS guidance – WBSG will obtain enhanced DBS checks (with barred list checks) for volunteers who have regular unsupervised contact with children or adults at risk in their capacity as a WBSG volunteer (in accordance with the policy set out below); and
- ensure that children and adults at risk and their carers (if appropriate) are aware of what to do if they have a concern and that they would feel confident to pass their concern on.

When working with anyone WBSG will ensure that we:

- Promote their health and welfare.
- Respect and promote their rights.
- Work in a way which safeguards the wellbeing of each child or adult at risk and protect them from abuse and neglect.



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- Take appropriate steps if they became aware of any signs/incidents of abuse and neglect.
  - Ensure anyone working for WBSG is made aware of their responsibilities when working alone or unsupervised with children or adults at risk or to attend to their personal needs.
  - Ensure that volunteers have received appropriate safeguarding training that relates to their involvement with children or vulnerable adults who may be at risk.

To achieve the aims of this policy, the Trustees will appoint a nominated member of the WBSG committee to be responsible for this policy and its implementation. With him/her, the trustees will:

- Ensure that the welfare of children or adults at risk is given the highest priority by the organisation, its trustees and volunteers.
- Promote good practice and ensure that volunteers are able to work with children or adults at risk with confidence.
- Ensure that the guidance attached to this policy is enacted and monitored including the briefing, training and gathering feedback from volunteers.
- Monitor contact with children or adults at risk to ensure that the frequency and intensity of contact is consistent with the DBS threshold levels, for volunteers.
- Act as the main contact for disclosing information or concerns around safeguarding children or adults at risk.
- Ensure that the concerns of children or adults at risk are heard and acted upon.
- Be responsible for reporting incidents or concerns to appropriate authorities.
- All volunteers attend appropriate training relevant to the level of engagement with children or adults at risk to ensure they remain up to date with current practice and legislation.
- Ensure volunteers have access to further appropriate information.

#### **Recruitment of volunteers:**

There is a robust application process in place for new volunteers.

All volunteers complete an application form, are interviewed, and have a reference taken up before commencing volunteering.



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All volunteers who are eligible for a DBS check, i.e. are working alone regularly with vulnerable children or adults, are DBS checked to an enhanced level. This covers all car drivers on the Winslow Community Car Scheme as well as befrienders, sitters etc.

### **Safeguarding Training:**

All befrienders receive safeguarding training at induction and on an annual basis through their ongoing training system of "Huddles."

All other volunteers will undertake similar training, which is currently being reviewed and developed with the Telephone Befriending Service team.

### **Reporting of safeguarding issues:**

All volunteers are told on commencement of volunteering of the importance of reporting any potential safeguarding incident. For general volunteers, this is done through the project lead for the service they are volunteering for, who then refers it on to our noted safeguarding representative.

She then either deals with the issues at this level or passes it onto the NHS Patient Support Service for advice or directs it to our local Social Services safeguarding line:

They are also informed of the need to contact Social Services safeguarding help line if the matter is of grave urgency.

We know that:

- **Safeguarding is everybody's business:** Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. We will work together to prevent and minimise abuse. If we have concerns that someone is being abused our loyalty to the child or adult at risk comes before anything else including our charity, other beneficiaries, our colleagues and the person's friends and family.
- **Doing nothing is not an option:** If we know or suspect that a child or adult is being abused, we will do something about it. We will report to the local Safeguarding helpline or the police if there is any imminent danger for anyone involved.

This policy will be reviewed by the Trustees at least every 3 years.

**Safeguarding helpline: 01296 383962 (office hours), 0800 999 7677 (out of hours).**



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**Signed :**

Chair: V C Corben

July 2022

**Charity number :** 1179561

**Contact:**

[contact@winslowbigsocietygroup.info](mailto:contact@winslowbigsocietygroup.info)



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## Guidance Notes

Safeguarding aims to:

- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible
- Prevent and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to children or adults with care and support needs
- Safeguard children and adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live.
- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the children and adults concerned to address what has caused the abuse or neglect

### Who is a child?

Any person under the age of 18.

### Who is an adult at risk?

Some adults are more at risk of being abused than others, such as:

- older people
- people with a visual or hearing impairment
- people with a physical disability
- people with learning disabilities or mental health problems
- people living with HIV or AIDS who have care and support needs

Local Authorities have safeguarding duties which will apply to an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs),
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

### How to spot if a person is at risk?

**Physical abuse** - Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

**Domestic violence** - Including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.



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**Sexual abuse** - Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual exploitation, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography. Witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

**Psychological abuse** - Including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

**Financial or material abuse** - Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

**Modern slavery** - Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

**Discriminatory abuse** - Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

**Organisational abuse** - Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes or practices within an organisation.

**Neglect and acts of omission** - Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

**Self-neglect** - This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.



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### **What should you do?**

WBSG provides practical guidance, and support in the form of procedures, to volunteers who have responsibility for acting on safeguarding concerns, including the role of the named person responsible for this policy.

Buckinghamshire Council takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and is committed to dealing with all aspects of abuse or neglect.

If you are concerned that any child is experiencing abuse or neglect please contact Buckinghamshire Council's Children's Social Care Team (Tel 0845 4600001 or 01296 383962, Email: [secure-cypfirstresponse@buckscg.gov.uk](mailto:secure-cypfirstresponse@buckscg.gov.uk)). The police should be notified if there is any imminent danger for anyone involved.

If you are concerned that any adult at risk is experiencing abuse or neglect please contact Buckinghamshire Council's Safeguarding Adults Team (Tel: 0800 137 915, Email: [safeguardingadultsfr@buckscg.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardingadultsfr@buckscg.gov.uk)). The police should be notified if there is any imminent danger for anyone involved.

If you believe that a child or adult is at immediate risk and in need of protection then you should call the police on 101 or 999 immediately.

You should always expect a response to let you know that the concern has been received. In some instances, if you have reported a concern on another person's behalf, you may not be entitled to know what else is being done to support that person.

If you are concerned about the referral you have made, contact the relevant council safeguarding team again.

### **Recording and documenting your concerns**

If you are concerned about a child or adult who maybe experiencing abuse or neglect following organisational safeguarding procedures, you should record the following, as accurately as possible:

- What you are concerned about
- What the child or adult said or disclosed to you
- What you said - use exact words or phrases used in quotation marks and clearly attribute them to the person that said them
- What you observed such as any non-verbal cues, body language or changes in behaviour





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- Any physical marks

Any written documentation about a safeguarding concern must be signed, dated, stored and shared in line with confidentiality and data protection procedures.

### **Behaviour Standards for Volunteers**

WBSG values the contribution of volunteers and recognises them as an integral part of the services we provide.

Following these behaviours will give you the reassurance that you are providing a safe and high standard of service and the confidence to challenge others who are not.

These standards aim to protect our volunteers, people involved in the running of our charity and people that use our services.

- Promote and uphold the privacy, dignity, rights, health and wellbeing of people who use our services
- Uphold and promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Work in collaboration with colleagues to ensure high quality, safe and compassionate delivery of service, care and support
- Communicate in an open and effective way to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of people who use our services, other volunteers and visitors
- Respect a person's right to confidentiality
- Act in a professional and appropriate manner when responding to any concern about a child's or an adult's welfare

### **Whistleblowing**

WBSG is dedicated to the highest standards of operation, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment, anyone with serious concerns about any aspect of our work is encouraged to come forward and voice those concerns.

Volunteers are encouraged to make serious concerns known to the Trustees of WBSG. Nevertheless, if you suspect wrong doing you can seek confidential advice on how to blow the whistle and who to contact from the following organisations:

- Public Concern at Work - 020 7404 6609
- Department of Health Whistleblowing Helpline - 08000 724725





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## **DBS Checks Policy for WBSG workers and volunteers**

### **General Principles**

WBSG will obtain a disclosure and barring check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for volunteers who have regular unsupervised contact with children or adults at risk in their capacity as a WBSG volunteer. DBS checks will be undertaken every 3 years.

WBSG has set up its own business unit with Buckinghamshire County Council, to enable it to do its own DBS checks on line and will adhere to the policies and processes of Buckinghamshire Council regarding DBS checks.

### **Recruitment**

All relevant advertisements for positions within WBSG will contain the statement, 'A Disclosure and Barring check will be requested in the event of a successful application'.

In accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 all application forms will contain the statement that, 'a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position'. All application forms will contain a section requiring the signature of the applicant stating they are willing for a DBS disclosure to be undertaken.

### **Volunteers**

WBSG recognises that an offence listed in a disclosure is not necessarily a bar to employment. We will review any information listed in a disclosure and in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice will consider the following when reviewing an applicant's suitability:

- a. whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;
- b. the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- c. the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- d. whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters; and
- e. the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.

The Trustees or person with legal responsibility will have the final decision as to the suitability of an appointment of a person whose application is subject to disclosure



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information. This decision will be taken in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and will be after discussion with the individual applicant.

Each applicant will be made aware that upon request a copy of the DBS Code of Conduct and this policy can be provided. This statement will be included in the application form.

### **Security & Retention of Disclosure Information**

WBSG takes confidentiality seriously and ensures that all information relating to disclosures is kept in a secure place, under lock and key. Only Trustees who have been assigned responsibility for disclosure information have access to this.

DBS sends out a copy of the disclosure to the applicant, and an email confirmation of this is sent to the administrator/verifier of the DBS process at WBSG. The confirmation email will be kept in a secure manner, on a password protected electronic file for the duration of the 3 years until it is required for renewal again, and in a paper format in a file kept in a locked place.

Disclosure information is destroyed using a confidential method (i.e. shredding).

### **Levels of Disclosure**

WBSG processes all disclosures at the level of 'enhanced' as defined by the DBS.

In the interest of the safety of the people using WBSG it is required that a new disclosure to be undertaken for all relevant volunteers upon their commencement of work, regardless of disclosures currently held.

### **Payment of DBS Checks**

There is a charge for DBS checks done in this way on line, and this cost is paid by WBSG. The DBS certificate number and expiry date will be entered on our volunteer details register.

### **WBSG Policy Statement:**

Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention & Disposal of Disclosure and Barring Checks and Disclosure information

It is a requirement of the DBS's Code of Practice that all Registered Bodies must have a written policy on the correct handling and safekeeping of Disclosure information. It also obliges Registered Bodies to ensure that a body or individual, on whose behalf they are countersigning Disclosure applications, has a written policy.



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### **General principles**

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, WBSG complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of disclosure information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request.

### **Storage and access**

Disclosure information should be kept securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

### **Handling**

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

### **Usage**

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

### **Retention**

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the data protection and human rights of the individual before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.



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### **Disposal**

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately destroyed by secure means, i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Disclosure or any copy or representation of the contents of a Disclosure. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the Disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.