

S1 – Safeguarding Young People and Adults Policy

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Legislation or regulatory guidance that impact on this policy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Act 2014 • Care and Support Statutory Guidance under the Care Act 2014 • Children Acts 1989 and 2004 • Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 • Safeguarding Disabled Children Act 2009 • Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 • Children and Young Persons Act 2008 • Drug Trafficking Act 1994 • Data Protection Act 2018 • Education Act 2002 • Equality Act 2010 • Homelessness Act 2002 • Housing Acts 1996 and 2004 • Human Rights Act 1998 • UNCRC 1989 • Mental Capacity Act 2005 • Sexual Offences Act 2003

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The overall purpose of Centrepont is to end youth homelessness. We give homeless young people a chance to turn their lives around, build firm foundations for a fulfilling future and to realise their potential. Centrepont takes all forms of abuse and domestic abuse seriously.
- 1.2 Centrepont also provides support for parents and infants who use our services. We support other agencies in their work with homeless young people, influence local and central government, and promote public awareness of youth homelessness. As part of our work we involve young people in fundraising activities and invite our corporate donors into our services, so all teams need to know our principles of safeguarding.
- 1.3 This integrated safeguarding policy and procedure has combined the principles and processes for children (under 18 years) and adults who may be at risk (aged 18+) on the basis that the principles and many of the processes of best safeguarding practice are similar for both groups. The term 'vulnerable adult' is being replaced in most areas by 'adult at risk'.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This safeguarding policy and supporting safeguarding procedure demonstrate Centrepont's commitment to the overall safety and welfare of all the young people and adults for whom we provide services. The purpose of this policy is to protect young people and adults from any harm.
- 2.2 This safeguarding policy and supporting safeguarding procedure are based on principles of best practice and on current research, legislation, government and local authority guidance. The purpose is to provide **all** personnel i.e. staff, trustees, volunteers and students, as well as third party staff such as concierge/security, locums, cleaners and maintenance with a framework and process for recognising, responding, reporting and recording any concerns about a young person or adult. It also intends to ensure that in the event of a concern about a young person or adult, the relevant statutory authorities are involved in an appropriate and timely manner, following local and national safeguarding policies and procedures.

3. Audience

- 3.1 Centrepont works directly with young people and adults between the ages of 16 and 25 years, providing support through, but not limited to:
 - health;
 - learning;
 - housing Support;
 - volunteering;
 - immigration support;
 - helpline (see H1 Helpline Safeguarding Procedure for Helpline specific concerns).

- 3.2 No matter what role, any one of our personnel could have a young person or adult disclose a safeguarding concern.
- 3.3 It is vital for effective safeguarding that good liaison is established and maintained between other specialist agencies including housing, health, learning, mental health and social care. If Centrepont personnel become aware of other non-supported young people and adults through the course of their duties, they will pro-actively work to bring these safeguarding issues to the attention of local support services. The term 'personnel' in this policy is taken to include paid or volunteer staff, trustees or students.
- 3.4 This policy and supporting procedure applies to **all** trustees, staff, contractors, volunteers and students, temporary or locum staff, external visitors and partner organisations. It should form part of every induction for new staff or volunteers and for any service users of Centrepont who go on to become volunteers or paid staff. Donors and fundraising teams should use this document to ensure their activities working with young people operate safely.
- 3.5 Trustees have clear oversight of how safeguarding and protecting young people and adults from harm are managed within Centrepont. This means that they monitor our performance, not just using statistics, but with supporting information, such as qualitative reports. This will help them to understand common themes, identify risks and gaps so we can ensure they are addressed appropriately.
- 3.6 Centrepont's Board of Trustees has a safeguarding champion to lead and inform safeguarding discussion and planning with Board meetings and act as a link between the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Board. Please see S1 Safeguarding Procedure for more information about the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

4. Reporting

- 4.1 Centrepont ensures that safe, appropriate and accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to all Centrepont personnel.
- 4.2 Centrepont will also accept concerns from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

5. Terminology & Definitions

5.1 (See **S1 SD1** for further Terms and Acronyms)

5.2 The term **safeguarding** means embedding practices throughout the organisation to make sure that young people and adults are protected wherever possible. In contrast, **young people and adult protection** means responding to circumstances of abuse and/or neglect that arise.

5.3 **Abuse** is an act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture. It can take a number of forms, including, but not limited to:

- physical abuse;
- domestic violence and abuse;
- psychological/Emotional abuse;
- financial or material abuse (see FR03 Supports in Vulnerable Circumstances Policy for financial specific concerns);
- modern slavery;
- discriminatory abuse;
- organisational abuse;
- neglect and acts of omission;
- self-neglect;
- sexual abuse;
- exploitation including sexual, criminal and county lines.

5.4 **Definition of a child**

5.5 A child is anyone under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child).

5.6 **Definition of adults at risk**

5.7 An adult at risk is a person aged 18 years or over who has care and support needs. (Care Act 2014). Safeguarding duties 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 the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

5.8 **Child protection**

5.9 This refers to activity which is carried out to protect specific young people (under the age of 18) who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm.

5.10 **Duty of Care**

5.11 Duty of Care is defined simply as a legal obligation to:

- Act always in the best interest of individuals and others
- Not act or fail to act in a way that results in harm
- Act within your competence and not take on anything you do not believe you can safely do.

5.12 **Significant harm**

5.13 There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. For the purposes of Centrepoin't's response to concerns about young people or vulnerable adults, this distinction is the responsibility of young people's or adult's services and the police. Any decision about investigating concerns of this nature will therefore be their responsibility but Centrepoin't has a key role in influencing decisions and also contributing to any investigation and/or protection plan.

5.14 **Child Sexual Exploitation**

5.15 Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology (HM Government).

5.16 **Domestic Violence and Abuse**

5.17 Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

5.18 **Forced Marriage and so-called 'honour-based' violence**

5.19 A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning difficulties, cannot) consent to the marriage and where duress is used. 'Duress' includes psychological, sexual, financial or emotional pressure and physical violence.

5.20 So-called 'honour'-based violence is an incident or crime "which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and or the community". 'Honour' can be the motivation, excuse or justification behind a range of violence against mainly women and girls and in some cases men and boys.

5.21 **Female Genital Mutilation**

5.22 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or any other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. **Breast ironing** is a practise whereby the breasts of girls typically aged 8-16 are pounded using tools such as spatulas, grinding stones, hot stones, and hammers to delay the appearance of puberty.

5.23 **Prevent**

5.24 Places a duty to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

5.25 **Mental Capacity**

5.26 'Mental capacity' means a person's ability to make a decision about some aspect of their lives. It does not matter if other people would not agree with the decision but it does require the person to understand a situation and understand what will happen if they take a particular decision about it. This could range from the day to day choices of what to wear or eat to more difficult choices about housing, medical treatment or personal finances. The five key principles of the Mental Capacity Act are:

- Every adult has the right to make their own decisions and must be assumed to have capacity to do so unless it is proved otherwise. This means that it must not be assumed someone cannot make a decision for themselves just because they have a particular medical condition or disability, or because they lack capacity in other areas.
- People must be supported as much as possible to make their own decisions before anyone concludes that they cannot do so. This means that every effort should be made to encourage and support the person to make the decision for himself/herself. If a lack of capacity is established, it is still important that the person is involved as far as possible in making decisions.
- People have the right to make what others might regard as unwise or eccentric decisions. Everyone has their own values, beliefs and preferences which may not be the same as those of other people. People cannot be treated as lacking capacity for that reason.
- Anything done for or on behalf of a person who lacks mental capacity must be done in their best interests.
- Anything done for, or on behalf of, people without capacity should be the least restrictive of their basic rights and freedoms. This means that when anything is done to, or for, a person who lacks capacity the option that is in their best interests

and which interferes the least with their rights and freedom of action must be chosen.

6. Risk Factors

- 6.1 The categories of abuse listed above in 4.3 may all present within Centrepoint services, as a result of actions of staff or volunteers, or between peers.
- 6.2 Young people and adults who are referred to Centrepoint may have a history of harm or abuse. They may have been looked after by the local authority or been in youth offending institutions. They may be substance misusers, engaged in criminal activity or they may have a learning or mental health disability. Other factors may make them highly dependent and vulnerable to harm.
- 6.3 Young people and adults in our services may be vulnerable to bullying or may be involved in abusive relationships either within or outside of Centrepoint. They are also vulnerable to other forms of harm such as gang membership, serious youth violence and violent extremism. There may be historical abuse, sexual exploitation, forced marriage or 'honour based' violence.

7. Legislation

- 7.1 (See **S1 SD2** for further information about Legislation)
- 7.2 Centrepoint has a responsibility to abide by all relevant UK legislation and guidance. This policy and accompanying procedure have been developed with current statute, guidance and Local Authority procedures in mind. As such and in compliance with legislation, Centrepoint will ensure all staff, trustees, volunteers and students are sufficiently trained and provided with the skills, tools, knowledge and confidence to act in accordance with our safeguarding duties and responsibilities.
- 7.3 All personnel will attend safeguarding training and will be made aware of their responsibility to comply with current legislation and guidance and any new relevant legislation as it is implemented. Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) are expected to keep up to date and informed about any changes in this area.
- 7.4 **Note:** Legislation and guidance can change rapidly and this is especially true in the field of safeguarding and the protection of young people and adults. This may be due to a change in government and policy, a serious child or vulnerable adult death and subsequent review, or to significant new research. Whilst the information contained in this document is current (July 2022), staff, trustees, volunteers and students are advised to keep themselves updated by undertaking ongoing local safeguarding training.
- 7.5 It is expected that all staff, trustees, students and volunteers will undertake refresher and/or update training, workshops, briefings and/or seminars on an annual basis.

8. Participation statement

- 8.1 Centrepont is committed to involving young people and key stakeholders in how we manage and improve our direct services. When this policy or procedure is reviewed, we will consult and involve young people/ stakeholders to consider their views.

9. Commitment to review

- 9.1 This policy, its accompanying procedures and any supporting documents will be reviewed every year or sooner where any changing legislation and/or government guidance has an impact.

10. Commitment to equity and inclusion

- 10.1 Centrepont is committed to creating an organisation where people flourish. By establishing trust and challenging bias, both conscious and unconscious; we are committed to promoting equality, diversity and transparency in all of our day-to-day actions endorsing inclusive process, practice and culture. We want Centrepont to be a welcoming environment where individual difference is celebrated in the spaces where we live and work.