

## safeguarding vulnerable adults and children

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Assistant Chief Executive - Neighbourhood Services
<b>Approved:</b>	By Performance and Policy Committee June 2017
<b>Review Date:</b>	June 2018
<b>Version:</b>	7
<b>Ratification Date:</b>	November 2010
<b>Scope:</b>	Group Wide

# Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children Policy

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Incommunities Group believes that all people have the right to live their lives free from abuse. Abuse is the violation of an individual's human rights. It can be a single act or repeated acts. It can be physical, sexual, emotional, financial or discriminatory. It also includes acts of neglect or an omission to act.
- 1.2 There can be no secrets or hiding place when it comes to exposing the abuse of vulnerable adults and children. In recent years several incidents such as the events at Mid Staffordshire hospital reported in 2013 and Winterborne View 2011, have demonstrated the need for immediate action to ensure vulnerable adults and children who are at risk of abuse, receive protection and support. The Government gives a high priority to such action and sees local statutory agencies and other relevant agencies as important partners in ensuring such action is taken wherever needed. Key to this is appropriate communication protocols within all agencies.
- 1.3 Encompassed within the safeguarding arena we must recognise the issue of Mate Crime and Grooming following the death of Steve Hoskin in 2006. This tragedy highlighted the importance of agencies liaising together to ascertain risk and offer protection and support. Grooming and Mate crime can take many forms and presents a serious issue for service providers to tackle. An example is the Rotherham Child Grooming scandal, an historic case of widespread organised grooming of children, which led to changes of the Criminal Justice and Courts Bill regarding child sexual exploitation, allowing police to be able to act sooner. Research highlights how petty instances are repeated and often escalate. If people cannot or will not see the crimes to which they are subjected. It is up to the people around them to do so and to take decisive action. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- 1.4 A recent issue is radicalisation. Organisations' specific role in working in partnership to identify, detect and prevent the radicalisation of vulnerable people throughout society has been given increased focus by the government since it published its 2010 National Security Strategy. In February 2015 the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 was passed to give legislative requirements.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 was introduced to tackle slavery and requires that, as a large commercial organisation, Incommunities Group proves the steps we take to counter Modern Slavery in our supply chain.

Incommunities Group has many staff that work in our neighbourhoods and visit people's homes. They act as 'eyes and ears', so they are ideally placed for identifying the signs of modern slavery and have a safeguarding duty to report it.

- 1.5 The Government's aim is to create a framework for action within which all responsible agencies work together to ensure a coherent policy for the

protection of vulnerable adults and children at risk of abuse and a consistent and effective response to any circumstances giving ground for concern.

- 1.6 It is important to state that Incommunities Group safeguarding policy and procedures take us up to the point where the Local Authority's take over. Our procedures are about raising concerns and making referrals/alerts. Whereas West Yorkshire procedures are about how those concerns are investigated and acted upon. These protocols' have been adopted by Bradford MBC, Kirklees, and Wakefield safeguarding bodies.

## **2.0 Policy Statement and Definitions**

- 2.1 The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to ensure that Incommunities Group employees play their part in preventing, identifying and reporting abuse. The policy and procedures apply to all employees including permanent, part-time and temporary staff, placement staff, agency employees, and volunteers.
- 2.2 This policy and the associated procedures cover abuse of vulnerable adults and children who are tenants/household members/clients/temporary accommodation residents or visitors to these services by anyone in a relationship of trust with them – friends, relatives, support staff, housing staff etc. Sometimes an act between service users will also come within the scope of these procedures because of the vulnerability of the victim and the nature of the act.
- 2.3 This policy cover Incommunities Group which includes Incommunities Housing Association, Sadeh Lok Ltd and Lumia Homes
- 2.3 A full definition schedule can be found in Appendix 1.

## **3.0 Inter-agency Work**

- 3.1 This is an area of practice, which requires local partnership working between statutory agencies to create a framework of inter-agency protocols. This policy and the supporting procedures have been developed in accordance with the local protocols of the Safeguarding Adults Board and the Safeguarding Children Board in the areas that we work; as such Incommunities Group agrees to:
- Work together to improve safeguarding standards.
  - Ensure our policy and procedures remain consistent with local arrangements and are developed in collaboration and consultation with relevant agencies but also take account of the views of service users, families, carer representatives and other advocates. Incommunities group works with voluntary and statutory agencies in regards to safeguarding, as well as the Bradford District Care Trust.
  - Monitor performance and make improvements where required. Our frontline officers are trained to respond appropriately to safeguarding

matters and will receive feedback from their alerting managers in order to deliver a better service in future situations.

Promote engagement with service users and the community to raise awareness of safeguarding. For example our Intensive Housing Management Service support vulnerable tenants.

- 3.2 It is important to reiterate that our policy and procedures take us to the point where West Yorkshire procedures takeover.
- 3.3 The Care Act 2014, which came into force in April 2015, results in statutory safeguarding boards who's duties include carrying out Safeguarding Adult Reviews. There is a new duty on relevant organisations to supply information to Safeguarding Adult Boards (SAB) on request (section 45). This mirrors a duty in children's legislation relating to local safeguarding children boards regarding supply of information.
- 3.4 Councils have a duty to ensure all citizens have their best interest taken into account and there is a corporate duty for councils to make safeguarding enquiries
- 3.5 Under the mental capacity act 2005 people are assessed to not be able to make decisions in their own right are appointed an advocate to promote their rights and safeguard them. This usually relates to people requiring medical treatment or living in a care home. Decisions that deprive individuals of their liberty must be reported to the managing authority (council or health trust) for assessment.

## **4.0 Legislative Framework**

- 4.1 The State's role in safeguarding is to provide the vision and direction. They must also ensure that the legal framework, including powers and duties is clear and proportionate. There are two strands of relevant law: protection and prevention.
- 4.2 The policy and procedures have due regard for all relevant statutes and guidance. These are detailed in full in Appendix 2.
- 4.3 Protection is available through criminal and civil courts, both to prevent a person being abused and to take action against the abuser. Comparatively little use has been made of the law regarding abuse and there can also be difficulties in obtaining sufficiently reliable evidence from witnesses. Incommunities Group will ensure that any safeguarding reports or referrals are supported by a robust and systematic audit trail as set out within the safeguarding procedures.
- 4.4 Vulnerable adults and children are protected in the same way as any other person against criminal acts. Thus if a person commits theft, sexual exploitation, rape, trafficking or assault against a vulnerable adult or child they should be dealt with through the criminal justice system, in the same way as in cases involving any other victim

## 5.0 Policy Framework

5.1 Policies that support the safeguarding process include but are not exhaustive:

- Code of Conduct for Staff and Board Members
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Hate Crime Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Anti Slavery Policy
- Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures (various)
- Professional Boundaries Policy
- Personal Indicator Policy
- Covert Surveillance Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- DBS – HR Policy
- Advocacy Policy

## 6.0 Key Principles

### 6.1 Empowerment

- Presumption of person led decisions
- Promote the rights of all people to live free from abuse and coercion;
- Empower service users by making sure that they are aware: what constitutes abuse, exploitation or grooming and that they do not have to tolerate it; what to do if it occurs;
- Provide services and information in ways that meet the varied needs of all of our customers and to ensure that all responses are made with due regard to issues of race, religion or belief, culture, gender, transgender, age, disability and sexual orientation.

### 6.2 Prevention

- It is better to take action before harm occurs;
- Manage services and empower service users in a way that will prevent or minimise the potential for abuse or exploitation.

### 6.3 Proportionality

- Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. Proportionality is a logical method intended to assist in discerning the correct balance between the restriction imposed by a corrective measure and the severity of the nature of the prohibited act.

### 6.4 Protection

- Support and representation for those in greatest need;
- Ensure the safety of wellbeing of people who do not have the capacity to decide how they want to respond to abuse that they are suffering

- Respond to any allegations or suspicions of abuse, exploitation or grooming promptly and thoroughly and take action to eliminate it.

## 6.5 Partnership

- Local solutions through services working with their communities; communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting abuse and neglect;
- Work in co-operation with partner agencies, such as social services safeguarding teams, police, doctors, schools and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector service providers
- Ensure our procedure takes us to the point where Local Authority procedures take precedence, clarifying our relationship to the local and regional framework

## 6.6 Accountability

- Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding;
- Learn from any situations investigated and use this learning to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse or exploitation;

## 7.0 Outcomes

7.1 These principles will be translated into outcomes and checked through the following methods

- Reports to Board and EMT
- Alerting Managers meetings
- Internal audits
- Quality assurance

## 8.0 Reporting Abuse

8.1 All Incommunities Group employees have a responsibility for reporting suspected or observed abuse, or grooming and radicalisation. Incommunities Group issues employees with concern cards that must be completed when an employee is concerned that a customer, member of their family or household is being abused or is at risk of abuse; based on the definitions and indicators set out in Appendix 1 of this policy. the Concern Cards can be used anonymously.

8.2 Concern cards will be submitted to an Alerting Manager at the earliest opportunity, but no later than 24 hours after suspecting/observing abuse any incident; the Alerting Manager will then progress the concern using the prescribed procedures.

8.3 It is Incommunities Group policy that staff will ensure that they maintain their own safety as a priority. In situations of immediate danger, staff are instructed to leave the accommodation/site and contact the relevant emergency service; in most instances this is likely to be the police or ambulance service.

## **9.0 Accountability**

### **9.1 The Role of Board Members**

Board Members are accountable for Incommunities Group and therefore all safeguarding within the organisation.

They must also approve the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children Policy, as well as all associated procedures.

### **9.2 The Role of the Board Member Safeguarding Champion**

The role of the Safeguarding Champion is primarily to advocate for vulnerable adults and children in relevant matters brought before the Board.

### **9.3 The Role of the Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive is accountable to the Board for safeguarding within the organisation and ensuring a clear framework for the management accountability for safeguarding.

### **9.4 The Role of the Executive Management Team**

The Executive Management Team (EMT) is accountable to the Chief Executive for safeguarding within their departments and for:

- Leading on safeguarding as a corporate issue and ensuring that it is incorporated into all relevant strategic plans;
- Ensuring that any quality assurance system takes account of safeguarding;
- Regularly considering safeguarding at EMT meetings;
- Ensuring that safe employment practices are fully employed.

### **9.5 The Role of the Safeguarding Professional Lead**

The Professional lead provides essential link to the Local Authority and in particular the Safeguarding Adult Board, the multi-agency partnership with statutory functions under the Care Act 2014.

The lead will coordinate the 6 monthly Alerting Manager meetings and reports to Board and EMT in line with the specified job description for this role.

### **9.6 The Role of all Incommunities Group Staff**

All Incommunities Group staff are responsible for raising suspected or observed abuse using the Concern Card procedures, and where the risk is assessed to be imminent contact agencies, such as the police

## 9.7 The Role of the Alerting Manager

However 'minor', all allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and documented by the Alerting Manager using the Incident Report Form and referred to the appropriate body, such as the Local Authority or the Police.

If a vulnerable adult does not want a referral to be made by the Alerting Manager, then their wishes should be honoured unless:-

- A crime is suspected;
- Allegations involve a member of staff, paid carer or volunteer;
- They or others are in physical danger;
- It is the considered assessment of the Alerting Manager that they are unable/incapable of making an informed decision for themselves or;
- They are not the only person affected and risk to others needs to be considered.

All allegations/disclosures of abuse of a child will be referred by the Alerting Manager to the appropriate body.

The responsible Alerting Manager will:

- Ensure that the procedures are followed appropriately in consultation with Social Care services;
- The appropriate agencies are informed;
- Information is recorded and stored appropriately;
- Provide information to staff reporting concerns about support available to them.

## 10.0 Staff Training

10.1 Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children awareness training (including use of the Concern Card) will be covered in the Induction Training of all staff and Board Members, and all high level involved customers. Employees who come into contact with customers on a regular basis will receive refresher training in safeguarding on a three year cycle as a minimum

10.2 More detailed training will be provided for all Alerting Managers, support staff and those who monitor the service or take part in Case Conferences.

10.3 Incommunities Group has a small number of trained Safeguarding trainers employed within the business. As part of the Bradford Safeguarding Board, Incommunities Group also utilises their training, including face to face and online learning to ensure our people are appropriately trained.

## 11.0 Recruitment

11.1 Every effort will be made to ensure that staff, students and volunteers recruited to work for Incommunities Group are suitable to do so. Those who

are responsible for appointing staff will be trained in safe recruitment practices.

- 11.2 All references will be robustly scrutinised and other checks sought at the appropriate level, e.g. the Disclosure and Barring Service.

## **12.0 Confidentiality**

- 12.1 Confidentiality will be maintained for all concerned in the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, including those who report a concern/incident. The identity of the person reporting a concern/incident will not be disclosed by Incommunities Group or external agencies to the alleged perpetrator. All information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. In some circumstances confidentiality may be overridden in consideration of safety for the person and the safety of others.
- 12.2 Where a staff member is approached regarding an allegation, issues of confidentiality will be clarified early in the discussion. The person should be informed that the staff member will at the very least, have to disclose the conversation to the Alerting Manager and depending on the severity of the information may be disclosed to Social Care services or the Police.
- 12.3 With regard to children, all concerns will be referred to the Alerting Manager.

## **13.0 Allegations Against Employees**

- 13.1 If, under the Safeguarding procedures, allegations are raised against employees, these would be dealt with in accordance with Incommunities' Group disciplinary procedure. If allegations of inappropriate conduct towards children or vulnerable adults are upheld, this may result in the dismissal of the employee on the grounds of gross misconduct. Any allegations against staff will also be reported to the appropriate statutory agencies this may lead to criminal prosecution and investigation.

## **14.0 Monitoring**

- 14.1 The Alerting Manager will:
- Ensure that an Incident Report Form for all reports of concern made is completed;
  - Record the outcome of all Incident Report Form reviews, including non-referral;
  - Meet 6 monthly with other Alerting Managers and Incommunities Group representative on the District Safeguarding Partnership. This meeting will be chaired by an Incommunities Group Professional Lead and will be used to monitor and review referrals and identify learning.

- 14.2 The Professional Lead will produce a 6 monthly anonymised report for EMT and the Board, outlining the data and information collected.
- 14.3 EMT will review the learning from referrals made on a six monthly basis, making recommendations to the Board for any changes in policy, procedure or practice required.

## **15.0 Review**

- 15.1 This policy will be reviewed annually with relevant partners or stakeholders or sooner if there is a fundamental change of legislative or regulatory provisions.