



TogetherCare Safeguarding Policy for Adults and Children

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DSL – Michael Burke

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1. Introduction

TogetherCare is unwavering in its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults at risk and children. Safeguarding is a core organisational priority, and this policy outlines our responsibilities to prevent, identify, respond to, and learn from any concerns of abuse or neglect. We operate a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse and are committed to fostering a safeguarding culture embedded throughout our service.

This policy aligns with statutory guidance, regulatory requirements and sector best practice, including the expectations of the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Local Safeguarding Boards, and Greater Manchester's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. It must be read and implemented in conjunction with the safeguarding procedures and protocols of St Helens Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy, Procedures and Good Practice Guidance, St Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership, and Halton Safeguarding Adults Board, where we hold active care contracts.

2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to:

- All TogetherCare staff (including casual and agency workers)
- Contractors and external partners
- Volunteers and student placements
- Any other individual or organisation acting on behalf of TogetherCare

It covers interactions in community settings, Extra Care schemes, service users' homes, and any location where our services are delivered.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Our safeguarding responsibilities are informed by:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 (inc. Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards)
- Equality Act 2010
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- CQC Fundamental Standards
- Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR

4. Definitions

Adult at Risk: A person aged 18+ who needs care and support and may be unable to protect themselves from abuse.

Child: Any individual under the age of 18.

Abuse: A deliberate act of ill-treatment that can harm or is likely to harm a person's safety, well-being, dignity, or human rights. Categories include:

- Physical
- Emotional/Psychological
- Sexual
- Financial/Material
- Neglect and Acts of Omission
- Discriminatory
- Organisational/Institutional
- Modern Slavery
- Self-neglect

Exploitation: Manipulation or coercion of individuals for another's benefit (e.g. county lines, CSE, labour exploitation).

LADO: Local Authority Designated Officer for managing allegations against those working with children.

5. Safeguarding Principles

We follow the six key principles outlined in the Care Act 2014:

- Empowerment – Supporting individuals to make decisions about their own lives
- Prevention – Taking proactive measures to prevent abuse or neglect
- Proportionality – Responding in a measured and appropriate way
- Protection – Acting on behalf of those in greatest need
- Partnership – Working with multi-agency professionals
- Accountability – Transparency in all safeguarding processes

And also uphold:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Culture of safeguarding leadership
- Service user participation

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- Registered Manager (Designated Safeguarding Lead – DSL): Accountable for safeguarding governance and compliance. Reports concerns to statutory bodies and coordinates investigations.
- Deputy DSL: Acts in the absence of the DSL and supports safeguarding implementation.
- All Staff: Must report concerns, complete training, uphold safeguarding procedures, and challenge unsafe practice.
- Directors and Senior Managers: Provide strategic oversight and ensure safeguarding is embedded in all business processes.
- **Trainers:** Training Delivery
- **Supervisors:** Embed safeguarding in 1:1s and reviews

7. Identifying Abuse and Neglect

Staff must be able to recognise the signs and indicators of abuse. These include:

- Physical: Unexplained injuries, bruising, or fearfulness
- Emotional: Low self-esteem, withdrawal, anxiety
- Sexual: Inappropriate behaviour, physical injuries, STIs
- Neglect: Poor hygiene, malnutrition, failure to meet medical needs
- Financial: Sudden loss of funds, confusion around finances
- Child-specific indicators: School absence, poor developmental milestones, disclosure of harm

Staff must also be alert to less visible forms such as coercion, grooming, fabricated illness, and peer-on-peer abuse.

8. Reporting and Responding to Concerns

- Concerns must be reported to the DSL/Deputy DSL immediately and without delay.
- An Incident Record Form must be completed within 24 hours.
- In emergencies or if someone is at immediate risk of harm, call 999.
- Staff must not investigate but must record facts accurately and clearly.
- Concerns about fellow staff should be escalated to the Registered Manager or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Chronological log maintained by DSL.

9. Multi-Agency Referrals

Where abuse is suspected:

- A safeguarding referral will be made to the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Team (adult or children).
- Where criminal activity is suspected, the Police will be informed.
- The CQC will be notified of serious safeguarding incidents (via statutory notification).
- Any allegation involving a child and staff member will be referred to the LADO.

TogetherCare actively contributes to safeguarding meetings, strategy discussions, and case conferences as required.

Making a Referral (as per St Helens Policy)

As we currently operate in St Helens, we follow the St Helens Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy, Procedures and Good Practice Guidance.

We inform the host social services department (St Helens) of any concerns.

Managers work within the reporting timescales – typically within 1 hour of concern.

Contact Cares must be notified within 1 hour. If manager unavailable, staff escalate directly.

10. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

TogetherCare handles all allegations against staff in line with our disciplinary policy and safeguarding duties. Immediate actions include:

- Ensuring the safety of the service user
- Reporting to the DSL/LADO
- Suspension or redeployment pending investigation
- Full internal and/or external investigation

11. Safer Recruitment and Vetting

TogetherCare is committed to safer recruitment, which includes:

- Enhanced DBS checks with barred list checks for all roles
- Verification of identity, references, and right to work in the UK
- Requirement for all staff to join the DBS Update Service where possible
- Annual DBS checks via Update Service or full recheck every 3 years
- Risk assessment of applicants with criminal records, using fair recruitment principles

12. Safeguarding Training and Competency

All staff must:

- Complete mandatory safeguarding training at induction
- Undertake annual refresher training
- Receive role-specific training (e.g. DSLs undertake Designated Lead Training every 2 years)

Training is tracked via the Qintil Learning Platform and covers:

- Types and signs of abuse
- Mental Capacity and consent
- Whistleblowing
- PREVENT
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Online safety and radicalisation

13. Record-Keeping

- Safeguarding records are stored securely and confidentially.
- Records are retained for at least 6 years or longer where legal proceedings are involved.
- Each record includes:
 - Who raised the concern
 - Date/time/details of the incident
 - Action taken and by whom
 - Outcome and follow-up

Records are regularly reviewed and audited by the DSL.

14. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

TogetherCare respects the privacy of service users but recognises that safeguarding may necessitate proportionate information sharing:

- Shared only with relevant professionals on a need-to-know basis
- In line with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- We participate in safeguarding information-sharing protocols in our locality

15. Supervision, Support and Culture

- Safeguarding is embedded into monthly supervision and appraisal
- Staff are supported through reflective practice and clinical supervision where needed
- Safeguarding is a regular agenda item at team meetings
- We promote a culture of openness where safeguarding concerns are encouraged and not suppressed

16. Audit and Continuous Improvement

- Quarterly audits of safeguarding logs and actions
- Annual audit by the Registered Manager
- Lessons learned from incidents feed into training and policy updates
- Feedback from service users, families and professionals informs practice

17. Cyber Safety Training and Prevention

TogetherCare recognises the growing risk of online abuse and cyber exploitation, especially for vulnerable adults and young people. Our safeguarding training includes specific guidance on:

- Recognising signs of grooming and digital exploitation
- Safe use of social media
- Supporting service users to navigate the online world safely
- Raising alerts to online harms, including sextortion, financial scamming, or radicalisation

Staff receive refresher modules through Qintil on Cyber Safety and Digital Safeguarding annually.

18. Cross-Border Safeguarding Protocols

Where a service user is temporarily placed or supported outside of St Helens (e.g., Greater Manchester, Wider Merseyside or Halton), TogetherCare ensures safeguarding concerns are referred directly to the local safeguarding team for that area, in line with the host authority's policy. The DSL team is responsible for cross-checking each region's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) contact protocols.

19. Quick Action Safeguarding Summary

What To Do If You Suspect Abuse

Step 1: Notice signs of abuse or harm? Document what you've seen or been told.

Step 2: Inform your line manager or DSL immediately.

Step 3: The DSL must contact St Helens Borough Council – Contact Cares within 1 hour. If the DSL or line manager is unavailable, the staff member must make the referral directly.

Step 4: Complete a Safeguarding Report Form within 24 hours.

Step 5: DSL logs the case, initiates safeguarding strategy and, if required, escalates to CQC, Police or other partners.

(flowchart available on request)

20. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier in response to:

- Legislative or regulatory changes
- Serious incidents
- Local authority guidance
- Internal learning reviews

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding Procedures for St Helens and Halton Boroughs

END OF POLICY



Signed:

Michael Burke

Care Manager, TogetherCare

Date: 1st March 2025