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ELSA Next Generation C.I.C.

**Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy**

**ELSA Next Generation CIC (ELSA)**

**1. Policy Statement**

ELSA is committed to providing its services in a way that safeguards and promotes the welfare of adults at risk. This Policy applies to all staff including the Ambassadors, paid Employees, Volunteers, Students, Interns, or anyone working on behalf of ELSA. It sets out what action Staff or Volunteers should take if they are concerned about the welfare of any adults at risk they meet during their work with ELSA. There are separate documents for the Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Children at Risk.

**ELSA operates two Policies relating to safeguarding: ‘Safeguarding of adults at risk’ and ‘Safeguarding of children’. All staff are required to have read and understood these documents.**

The purpose of this Policy is to:

* Protect adults at risk who receive our services;
* Provide Staff and Volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

The welfare of adults at risk is of paramount importance and all those who use our services have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief or age. Through the application of policy, procedures, training and best practice, ELSA promotes the safety, welfare and well-being of all vulnerable adults enabling them to participate in all ELSA Programmes in a meaningful, safe and inclusive environment. This equally applies to the safety and security of those working with, and who are responsible for any activities, involving vulnerable adults.

ELSA will report suspected cases of abuse, perpetrated by Staff, Volunteers or any other party, in accordance with legislative requirements and good practice. Suspected cases will be reported to the authorities in a timely fashion and recorded securely. The Organisation will provide Staff and Volunteers with the necessary support and guidance to encourage an environment where suspected or witnessed abuse will be dealt with in a timely and appropriate fashion. ELSA will ensure that Staff and Volunteers are supported appropriately during, and following, the process of reporting abuse.

ELSA is fully committed to:

* playing our part in safeguarding the welfare of all adults at risk by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from abuse or neglect;
* ensuring all Staff and Volunteers have knowledge of this Policy and Procedures document;
* having systems in place for the appropriate recruitment and selection of Staff and Volunteers.

All Employees and Volunteers are made aware of the Policy and Procedures through induction and where appropriate their work with vulnerable adults will be supported by a comprehensive on-going safeguarding Training Programme. All Staff will be required to read this Policy and abide by the Procedures, as set out in this document.

Our ‘Safeguarding Procedures’ provide staff with a framework, which is designed to protect all our Service Users and Staff from situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to allegations being made against them. Failure to follow the Procedures, or acting contrary to the code of conduct/behaviours, may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

As part of our safeguarding commitment we will ensure the use of vigorous Vetting Procedures. This will include, where it is appropriate for posts, the use of Enhanced (or Basic where appropriate) checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the use of References, which will request comments on an individual’s suitability to work with adults at risk.

**2. Definitions**

An adult at risk is defined as someone, who is aged 18 or over, and:

* Has needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of those needs);
* Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and;
* Because of those needs is unable to protect himself, or herself, against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it. *Care Act 2014, Section 14.2*

Safeguarding adults at risk is defined as:

* Protecting their rights to live in safety and to be free from abuse and neglect;
* People and Organisations working together to prevent the risk of abuse or neglect, and to stop these from happening. *Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2014, Chapter 14*

Adults at risk include those people who are living with physical disability or disabilities or impairment/s. It is important to include people whose condition and subsequent vulnerability fluctuates. It can include an individual who may be vulnerable because of their role as a Carer in relation to any of the above*.* It may also include victims of domestic abuse, hate crime and anti-social abuse behaviour. The persons’ need for additional support to protect themselves may be increased when complicated by additional factors, such as, physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviours, drug or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, poverty or homelessness.

Many vulnerable adults may not realise that they are being abused. For instance, an elderly person accepting that they are dependent on their family, may feel that they must tolerate losing control of their finances or their physical environment. They may be reluctant to assert themselves for fear of upsetting their Carers or making their situation worse.

**3. ELSA Safeguarding**

Our Director, Jane Shipley is responsible for strategic leadership on safeguarding and embedding safeguarding policies wherever ELSA is active.

**What do we mean by abuse of adults at risk?**

Abuse of a vulnerable adult may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may occur because of a failure to undertake action or appropriate care tasks. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur where a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the individual.

Concerns about abuse may be raised and reported to the Social Services Agency because of a single incident or repeated incidents of abuse. For some Clients the issues of abuse relate to neglect and poor standards of care. They are ongoing and if ignored may result in a severe deterioration in both physical and mental health and even death. Anyone who has concerns about poor care standards and neglect in a care setting may raise these within the Service, with the regulatory body and/or with the Social Services Agency.

Where these concerns relate to a vulnerable adult living in their own home, with family or with informal Carers, they must be reported to the local Social Services Agency where the individual usually resides. These reports must be addressed through the adult protection process and a risk assessment must be undertaken to determine an appropriate response to reduce or remove the risk.

**4. Abuse and Neglect**

There are 10 recognised categories of abuse under the *Care Act 2014*:

1. Neglect and acts of omission;
2. Sexual abuse;
3. Physical abuse;
4. Psychological/emotional abuse;
5. Discriminatory abuse which includes hate crime;
6. Financial or material abuse;
7. Organisational abuse;
8. Domestic violence when the victim is an adult at risk;
9. Modern slavery; and
10. Self-neglect, which includes hoarding.

**5. Online World**

Although the On-line world provides many benefits to adults at risk, there are also a number of potential associated risks:

* Inappropriate language or images;
* On-line grooming;
* Cyberbullying; and
* Sexting.

Full descriptions of each category of abuse and neglect can be found in *Appendix 1*.

**6. The ‘Prevent Duty’ - Radicalisation and Extremism**

ELSA is not a ‘specified authority’ organisation but we work with and may enter into contracts or work with bodies - such as local councils or health and social care providers - that are bound by the Prevent duty. These organisations may place contractual or other obligations on ELSA which relate to those authorities’ own compliance with the duty.

Radicalisation and extremism of adults at risk is a form of psychological/emotional abuse. HM Government states that the aim of radicalisation is to attract people to a particular extremist ideology. In many cases it is with a view to inspiring an adult at risk to eventually become involved with harmful or terrorist activities. Radicalisation can take place through direct personal contact, or indirectly through social media.

Extremism is defined as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. ELSA aims to prevent radicalisation and extremism by ensuring our Staff understand the risks of these dangers through our Safeguarding Training.

**7. Maintaining a Relationship of Trust**

Those who have responsibility for, and authority or influence over, vulnerable groups are in relationships of trust in relation to the vulnerable groups in their care. A relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party has power and influence over the other by virtue of their work, or the nature of the activity. It is vital for all those in such positions of responsibility to understand the power they may have over those in their care, and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence.

At ELSA this means that those in relationships of trust should not:

* Use their position to gain access to information relating to vulnerable groups for their own or others’ advantage. Such information should only be used or shared to meet the needs of vulnerable groups;
* Use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine vulnerable groups;
* Use their status and standing to form or promote inappropriate relationships - professional boundaries must always be maintained.

The position of trust is in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between our Staff and Volunteers, our Service Users, as well as behaviour by all Staff and Volunteers that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgment.

**8. Duty of Care**

ELSA has a duty of care towards our Service Users, Staff and Volunteers. Through our duty of care, we will endeavour to take all reasonable steps to identify and reduce risks when people are in our services, whilst respecting the individual’s rights to make choices. With regard to safeguarding disclosures and reporting we will ensure our staff are supported through our line management structure.

**9. Responsibility for adherence to this Policy and Procedures**

It is essential all Staff adhere to our Safeguarding Procedures. Failure to do so may be subject to disciplinary action. External Associates, Contractors, or any others working on behalf of ELSA, who fail to follow these Procedures may be subject to loss of future contracts or any similar arrangements.

**10. Record retention**

Records of safeguarding concerns that are raised must be kept confidentially and for an appropriate retention period. Staff involved should ***not***keep records of safeguarding concerns on their own computers or Mac hard drives. These will be stored confidentially by the Chief Executive Officer.

**11. Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality of safeguarding cases is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only, which would not normally include anyone other than the following:

* Director, Jane Shipley of ELSA;
* The adult at risk, or the person raising the concern;
* The Ambassadors, paid Employees, Volunteers, Students, Interns, or anyone working on behalf of ELSA, who received the concern or disclosure;
* The Parents/Carers of the adult at risk who is alleged to have been abused, where appropriate;
* Local Authority and Police.

Ambassadors, paid Employees, Volunteers, Students, Interns, or anyone working on behalf of ELSA, may have access to confidential information about an adult at risk, in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances, Ambassadors, paid Employees, Volunteers, Students, Interns, or anyone working on behalf of ELSA, may be given highly sensitive or private information. Confidential or personal information about an adult at risk or his/her family should not be used for their own, or others advantage.

The storing and processing of personal information about adults at risk is governed by the Data Protection Act 2018.

**12. Information sharing**

ELSA abides by the 7 guiding principles as set out by HM Government on sharing information.

Namely:

1. The Data Protection Act 2018 and Human Rights laws are not barriers to justified information sharing but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about adults at risk is shared appropriately.
2. Openness and honesty with the adult at risk (and/or their Parents/Carers or family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Advice is sought from Director, Jane Shipley if there is any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the adult at risk where possible.
4. Information is shared with informed consent, where appropriate, and where possible, there is respect for the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. Information will still be shared without consent if, in the Organisation’s judgement, there is good reason to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. Judgement will be based on the facts of the case.
5. Safety and well-being of the adult at risk is always considered.
6. Information is only shared when it is necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure to do so.
7. Records of the decision to share information in relation to any reported concerns, with whom and the reasons are always recorded confidentially.

ELSA will share information with the relevant Statutory Agencies.

**13. The role of key individual Agencies**

**Adult Social Services**

The Department of Health’s ‘No Secrets’ guidance document requires that Authorities develop a local framework within which all responsible Agencies work together to ensure a coherent policy for the protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse. All Local Authorities have a Safeguarding Adults Board, which oversees multi-agency work aimed at protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults. It is normal practice for the Board to comprise of people from partner organisations who have the ability to influence decision making and resource allocation within their Organisation.

**The Police**

The Police play a vital role in Safeguarding Adults with cases involving alleged criminal acts. It becomes the responsibility of the Police to investigate allegations of crime by preserving and gathering evidence. Where a crime is identified, the Police will be the lead Agency and they will direct investigations in line with legal and other procedural protocols.

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*Signed: Jane Shipley Founder and CEO of ELSA, Jane Shipley*

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