



## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### ***SPRINGS FAMILY CENTRE***

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#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Springs Family Centre is firmly committed to the belief that all children and young people have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, and fully recognises its responsibility for child protection. Springs Family Centre believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to ensure at all times the maximum protection from any kind of harm for all young people involved in any way with Springs Family Centre. For the purposes of this policy Springs Family Centre have defined harm as:

- neglect
- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse
- sexual exploitation
- online exploitation

This policy forms part of the Terms and Conditions of Employment or contract and applies to all paid workers, volunteers and work experience placements. Its purpose is to protect the personal safety of all children and young people using the facilities, resources and activities provided by Springs Family Centre by actively promoting awareness, good practice and sound procedures.

This policy to be reviewed annually.

All Activity Leaders to receive training twice a year.

All volunteers to receive training yearly.

Next Review November 2025.

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

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### **POLICY PROCEDURES**

**Personnel/Recruitment**

- All or any paid workers and volunteers are required to provide reference/references, which are always verified.
- All or any paid workers, trustees and volunteers have Disclosure and Barring Service Checks (DBS) where they fit the criteria for screening renewed every three years.
- Should the need arise then all new paid workers members are supervised until reference/references have been verified and DBS checks received
- Where volunteers etc do not fit the criteria for DBS screening (for example if they only help on an irregular basis) they will always be working alongside a DBS screened person and not left alone with children/young people.
- All or any paid workers and volunteers will receive, and will be required to read the Child Protection Policy
- All or any paid workers and volunteers all receive regular support in their work with children and young people

### **Responsibilities**

- All those working on behalf of Springs Family Centre will accept responsibility for the welfare of the children and young people who come into contact with the organisation in connection with its tasks and functions.
- All those working on behalf of Springs Family Centre have a duty to ensure that any suspected incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported using the procedures detailed in this policy
- Springs Family Centre have a designated Nominated Child Protection Representative who is responsible for child protection and the implementation of this policy. It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Representative to take appropriate action following any expression of concern and make referrals to the appropriate agency
- All those working on behalf of Springs Family Centre will be made aware of the named Representative and how to contact them

### **Reporting Procedures**

- Any suspicion or allegation must be reported as soon as possible on the day of the occurrence to the designated Child Protection Representative namely the activity lead. Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways including a comment made by a child, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge
- It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Representative in charge to liaise with other relevant agencies where necessary and seek clarification from Northamptonshire Childrens Trust if there is any concern about the validity of any concern
- Any suspicion or allegation of abuse must be recorded in writing by the observer/s
- All stages of the reporting procedure must be documented, marked CONFIDENTIAL and stored securely

### **Allegations against paid workers/volunteers**

- When any form of complaint is made against an employee or a volunteer, regardless of whether the complaint is made by a colleague, a parent of a child or a young person involved with Springs Family Centre or by a child or a young person, it must be taken seriously. The complaint should initially be dealt with by the Activity Leader on site at the time the complaint is made
- The Activity Leader must report the complaint immediately to the Development Manager of Springs Family Centre, giving details of the circumstances.
- The Development Manager will attend the site of the allegation to gain an initial account of what has occurred from all relevant parties, including the person against whom the allegation has been made, where possible
- The Development Manager will have the right to suspend from duty and /or the premises, any person who is a party to the allegation until a full investigation has been made. This applies to a paid worker, a volunteer and the complainant

**This action does not imply in any way that the person suspended is responsible for, or is to blame for any action leading up to the complaint. The purpose of any such suspension is to enable a full and proper investigation to be carried out in a totally professional manner.**

- It is the responsibility of the Development Manager to make the decision as to whether to inform the Police and/or Social Services, depending on the nature of the allegation
- Springs Family Centre will co-operate fully with the Police, Northamptonshire Childrens Trust and all other parties involved
- The Development Manager will ensure that the Springs Family Centre Board of Trustees are fully briefed. An agreed statement will be prepared for the purpose of accurate communication with external sources and for the protection of the legal position of all parties involved
- The Development Manager will make a full written report of the incident and the actions taken. This report will be stored securely following appropriate data protection legislation

**Useful numbers:**

**Urgent concern during day: 0300 126 7000**

**Out of hours 0300 126 7000**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead - Clive Ireson**

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - Jacob Collins-Brown**

**DBS Single Central Record Co-ordinator – Dawn Williams**

## **SPRINGS FAMILY CENTRE CIO POLICY AND CODE FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS:**

The trustees of Springs Family Centre CIO recognise that the protection and safety of vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility. Springs Family Centre CIO defines a vulnerable adult based on the Law Commission's definition – that is a person who:

*'is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'.*

In clarifying this further, Springs Family Centre CIO adopts the Department of Health's guidance in that an 'adult' refers to a person aged 18 years and over and that people with learning difficulties, mental health problems, older people and people with a disability or impairment will be included within this definition, particularly when their situation is complicated by additional factors, such as physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, drug or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, poverty or homelessness.

This policy, the related procedures and the Code of Good Practice which follow, establishes the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers, in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults, with whom their work brings them into contact.

In relation to vulnerable adults, the approach Springs Family Centre CIO will take is based on, and reflects, the principles of relevant legislation and guidance relating to the protection of vulnerable adults.

- the welfare of the vulnerable adult is the paramount consideration
- all vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief and sexual orientation have a right to protection from harm or abuse.

The trustees are responsible for the protection of vulnerable adults within Springs Family Centre CIO. They have designated the Development Manager to oversee this on their behalf. This will include ensuring the implementation and monitoring of this policy.

In relation to recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers, this will also include ensuring that all criminal disclosures are made regardless of when they were committed or whether they were of major or minor consequence including spent convictions under the rehabilitation of Offenders Act, and references taken which refer to candidates' suitability to work/have contact with vulnerable adults.

It is also the responsibility of the trustees of Springs Family Centre CIO, to ensure that all staff and volunteers for whom they are responsible, are aware of and understand the importance of implementing this policy and the related procedures and code of good practice.

Trustees recognise that if vulnerable adults are to be truly protected it is essential that everyone working with vulnerable adults contributes to the work of those with direct responsibility for the protection of vulnerable adults. The procedures that follow recognise and are consistent with that objective and have been designed to complement Local Authority procedures.

As a responsible body, we can not and should not restrict our sense of duty to those vulnerable adults we identify as our service users. Staff, through their work, come into contact with a

number of vulnerable adults each and every year. By being vigilant and acting where concerns exist, we can play an important part in their protection.

In operating this policy, staff and volunteers must also be aware that, in order to protect vulnerable adults, in some circumstances it will be necessary to share what might normally be regarded as confidential information. The following principles should be adhered to:

- Information will only be shared on a need to know basis.
- Information will only be shared when it is in the best interests of the service users.
- Confidentiality must not be confused with secrecy.
- Informed consent should be obtained but if this is not possible and other vulnerable adults are at risk it may be necessary to override it.

Guidance in the form of a Code of Good Practice has also been developed to provide staff with ideas which not only will help to protect vulnerable adults, but will also help to identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse. Staff should familiarise themselves with this and if it is necessary to carry out practices contrary to it, only do so after discussion with, and the approval of, the management.

Remember, the first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults and that it is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect.

END OF VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY STATEMENT

## **Vulnerable Adults procedures**

### Part One

#### **PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IF YOU THINK A VULNERABLE ADULT MAY BE AT RISK OF ABUSE, IS BEING, OR HAS BEEN, ABUSED EITHER BY:**

- a member of staff
- a member of their family
- any other person, including another vulnerable adult

The trustees of Springs Family Centre CIO are responsible for ensuring that all staff and volunteers, for whom they are responsible, are aware of and understand the importance of implementing these procedures. Even though the overwhelming majority of vulnerable adults, which you will come into contact with through your work are likely to experience a perfectly safe and happy life.

It is recognised as well, that a percentage of the vulnerable adults that you come into contact with will, through the nature of their experiences, demonstrate behaviours that might be indicators of abuse. Many factors associated with disadvantage can also result in a vulnerable adult's behaviour being affected, thereby making the identification of abuse even more difficult. You are not expected to suddenly become expert in the protection of vulnerable adults nor are you expected to investigate abuse. You are, however, expected to comply with these procedures.

Staff and volunteers, who for any reason become concerned that a vulnerable adult may be at risk of abuse, is being, or has been, abused must immediately report that concern to one of the designated safeguarding leads.

The designated safeguarding lead will discuss your concerns with you to clarify their cause and obtain all the known relevant information. This will if appropriate be forwarded to the appropriate local Social Services Department stating that it concerns vulnerable adult protection.

## Vulnerable Adults procedures

### Part Two

#### **PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IF A VULNERABLE ADULT TELLS YOU THAT THEY ARE BEING, OR HAVE BEEN, ABUSED:**

Vulnerable adults will occasionally disclose abuse to an individual they have come to feel they can trust. This happens for many reasons but the important thing to remember is that if they do tell you, they are doing so in the hope that you will act to stop it happening, even if they ask you not to do anything with the information.

Vulnerable adults may feel as if they are betraying someone they are close to and whom they love. It is not unusual for a vulnerable adult to love the abuser but want the abuse to stop, especially when that person is a family member or carer. Equally, it may be someone they fear e.g. a person whom they perceive to be able to influence decisions concerning their future. Either way, it takes great courage for a vulnerable adult to talk about abuse and your response can be crucial.

It is important to remember too, that it can be more difficult for some vulnerable adults to tell than for others. Vulnerable adults who have experienced prejudice and discrimination through racism may well believe that people from other ethnic groups or backgrounds don't really care about them. They may have little reason to trust those they see as authority figures and may wonder whether you will be any different.

Vulnerable adults with a disability will have to overcome barriers before disclosing abuse. They may well rely on the abuser for their daily care and have no knowledge of alternative sources.

If a vulnerable adult discloses abuse to you in the course of your work it is important to react appropriately.

#### **Do:**

- Remain calm and receptive
- Listen without interrupting
- Only ask questions of clarification if you are unclear what the vulnerable adult is saying
- Make it clear you take them seriously
- Acknowledge their courage in telling you
- Tell them they are not responsible for the abuse
- Let them know you will do what you can to help them and, where possible, get their consent to inform your Designated Safeguarding Lead and if appropriate local Social Services Department

#### **Do NOT:**

- Allow your shock or distaste to show
- Probe for more information/ask other questions
- Make assumptions or speculate
- Make negative comments about the abuser
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Agree to keep the information secret

It is, therefore, essential that everything possible is done to protect the vulnerable adults who place their trust in us. If a vulnerable adult tells you that they are being, or have been, abused you must:

- make an immediate record of what the vulnerable adult has said, using their own words
- follow the instructions for reporting to a designated safeguarding lead, as set out in procedure one

- Tell them that you will have to inform your designated safeguarding lead and that if appropriate, the relevant authorities will also have to be informed.

## END OF VULNERABLE ADULT POLICY PROCEDURES PART TWO

### **Vulnerable Adults code of good practice**

This Code has been developed to provide you with advice that not only will help to protect vulnerable adults, but will also help you and your colleagues identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse.

Good practice will also protect Springs Family through reducing the possibility of anyone using their role to gain access to vulnerable adults, in order to abuse.

While it is not intended that this code should restrict staff from normal ways of working, e.g., comforting a distressed vulnerable adult through providing a hug, there is much they can do to avoid situations that may give rise to misinterpretation, which will also work to protect vulnerable adults.

If in doubt, consider how an action or activity may be perceived as opposed to how it is intended.

Wherever possible, you should be guided by the following advice.

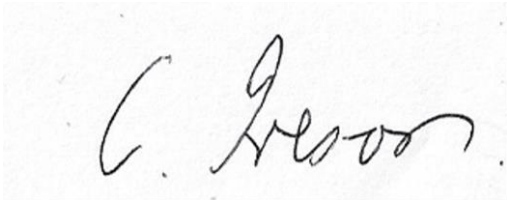
If it is necessary to carry out practices contrary to it, you should only do so after discussion with, and the approval of, the designated safeguarding lead.

### **Vulnerable Adults code of good practice**

- avoid unobserved situations of one – to – one contact with a vulnerable adult. If it is unavoidable, always keep a door open and ensure you are within the hearing of other adults
- never invite a vulnerable adult to your home
- never offer to or take a vulnerable adult alone in your own vehicle
- if it is necessary to do things of a 'personal' nature for a vulnerable adult, e.g., toileting if they are disabled, ensure these are carried out with the full knowledge of the carers and leader of the session
- develop a culture in which staff feel comfortable enough to point out inappropriate attitudes and behaviours to each other
- don't engage in or allow any sexually provocative games involving or observed by vulnerable adults, whether based on talking or touching
- never make suggestive remarks or discriminatory comments to a vulnerable adult
- don't engage in or tolerate any bullying of a vulnerable adult, either by vulnerable adults or other people
- don't engage in or tolerate inappropriate physical activity involving vulnerable adults
- never enter a room where a vulnerable adult may be changing their clothes or not be fully dressed, without first clearly getting their consent to enter
- respect all vulnerable adults, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual identity

- avoid 'favouritism' and singling-out 'troublemakers'
- never trivialise abuse
- never let allegations by a vulnerable adult go unreported, including any made against you

END OF CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Green", is centered on a light-colored rectangular background.