

## **Guild of Benevolence**

### **Safeguarding Policy**

#### **Version 1.0**

#### **Scope of Policy**

Safeguarding has been identified by the Charity Commission to be a key governance priority for all charities, regardless of their sector of operation.

This policy sets out how trustees, volunteers and staff of the Guild of Benevolence will address and fulfil the Guild's safeguarding responsibilities.

At the heart of safeguarding is ensuring that reasonable steps are taken to ensure that all who come into contact with the charity are protected from harm. Extra protections and responsibilities are applied to interactions with children and vulnerable adults/adults at risk.

#### **DBS Checks**

The Guild will ensure that all trustees, volunteers and staff undertaking face-to-face contact with beneficiaries will have valid, up-to-date checks from the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)/Disclosure Scotland/Access Northern Ireland prior to commencing such visits. Additional staff and volunteers not engaged in face-to-face contact with beneficiaries may be DBS checked at the trustees' discretion.

#### **Working with other organisations**

The Guild will ensure that any organisations undertaking work on its behalf, including but not limited to those undertaking face-to-face visits with beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries, have appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and training in place.

#### **Safeguarding - risks to be alert to**

Abuse and harm can take many different forms. Some of the key risks to be alert to include:

- sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation
- criminal exploitation
- cyber abuse
- modern day slavery
- negligent treatment
- self-neglect
- physical, emotional or psychological abuse
- bullying or harassment
- health and safety
- commercial exploitation
- financial exploitation
- extremism and radicalisation
- domestic abuse
- forced marriage
- human trafficking
- female genital mutilation
- discrimination on any of the grounds in the Equality Act 2010

#### **Appropriate Behaviours**

When working with children and vulnerable adults, the Guild's representatives are expected to always:

- Ensure that whenever practicable someone normally responsible for the children or at risk adults (e.g. teachers, guardians, parents) are present during activities or that more than one adult is always present;
- Dress in a way that is appropriate to the role and tasks being undertaken;
- Work in an open environment;
- Treat all equally and with respect and dignity;
- Be sensitive to the appearance, race, culture, religious belief, sexuality, gender or disability of children and at risk adults;
- Understand the difference between friendliness and familiarity;
- Model good and appropriate behaviour;
- Recognise and respect that all have a right to personal privacy;
- Avoid physical contact with children and at risk adults whenever possible;
- Bear in mind that actions, including but not limited to physical contact including horseplay, can be misinterpreted, regardless of the underlying intention;
- Challenge any unacceptable behaviour observed, whether it is from children, at risk adults or other Guild representatives; and
- Report all allegations and/or suspicions of abuse the Guild's safeguarding lead.

### **Safeguarding Lead for the Guild**

The Chair of the Guild's Governance and Audit Sub-Committee will serve as the Guild's lead on safeguarding issues. For any allegations involving the designated safeguarding lead, the Guild Chair shall act as safeguarding lead for that particular case. The Institute's safeguarding lead may provide assistance at the Guild's request.

### **Responding to safeguarding concerns about an adult**

Emergency action, via 999, should be taken if someone is at immediate risk of harm/in need of urgent medical attention.

Otherwise, the Guild's representative should obtain brief details about what has happened and what the adult would like done about it, without probing or conducting a mini-investigation. Consent should ideally be sought from the adult at risk to take action and report the concern but there may be circumstances where this is not possible such as if they lack capacity to make decisions about their own and others' safety and wellbeing.

Concerns should be reported in writing to the Guild's safeguarding lead at the earliest opportunity. If this is the result of a disclosure made to a Guild representative, the report should include what the person reporting said, in their own words, along with anything the Guild's representative saw or heard. It is also important that a clear distinction is made between what the person said and any inferences drawn by the Guild's representative.

In considering whether and to whom the incident should be formally reported, the safeguarding lead should take the following into account:

In making a decision whether or not and to whom to refer an adult safeguarding concern, the designated safeguarding lead should take into account:

- the adult's wishes and preferred outcome
- whether the adult has mental capacity to make an informed decision about their own and others' safety
- the safety or wellbeing of children or other adults with care and support needs
- whether there is a person in a position of trust involved

- whether a crime has been committed

The designated safeguarding lead should keep a record of the reasons for referring or not referring the concern.

### **Allegations against Guild personnel including volunteers**

All Guild personnel including volunteers should take care and action not to place themselves in vulnerable positions with children or at risk adults.

Any allegations against Guild representatives should ideally be made directly to the Guild's safeguarding lead in the first instance. Should an allegation come initially to the attention of another Guild representative, that individual must ensure that the safeguarding lead is immediately notified.

The Guild and its Trustees may discuss the content of the allegation with the relevant authorities and will seek to provide appropriate support to all parties involved in any incidents or allegations.

### **Committee of Management responsibilities**

Reports of incidents or concerns and any consequential actions will be passed to the Guild's Committee of Management which retains the responsibility to ensure that appropriate action is taken and that the Guild cooperates fully with the relevant authorities. As part of its serious incident reporting framework, the Charity Commission requires that any actual or alleged incident which results in or risks significant harm to the charity's beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact with the charity through its work be reported. The responsibility for reporting to the Charity Commission remains with the trustees, even if the reporting is delegated operationally to staff or professional advisers.

### **Confidentiality**

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned and information will be handled or circulated on a strict need-to-know basis only. However, no one should ever promise to keep secret any information which might compromise the safety or well-being of the child, at risk adult or other party.

### **Updates to this policy**

The Committee of Management will review this policy at least annually. Additional, out-of-cycle reviews will be carried out in the event of any serious incidents being reported under the policy.