

Safeguarding Policy

January 2026



Purpose of Policy

To outline the Life Project (Bath) position regarding the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

This policy and procedure was adopted on 14th January 2026 by the Life Project (Bath) through its Board of Trustees which remains responsible for its review.

Operational Date: January 2026

Review Due: January 2027

*Please be aware that any **printed** version of the Policy may NOT be the latest version. You are reminded that you should always contact info@lifeprojectbath.org.uk for a copy of the current version.*

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SECTION 1: Details of the Organisation

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|---|---|
| Name of Organisation: | The Life Project (Bath) |
| Address: | Old Acorn Barn Englishcombe Bath BA2 9DU |
| Tel No: | 07708 217901 |
| Email address: | info@lifeprojectbath.org.uk |
| Safeguarding Trustee: (including DBS Senior Leader) | Philippa Phillips, <i>Trustee</i> |
| Email address: | safeguarding@lifeprojectbath.org.uk |
| Safeguarding Coordinator: (including DBS Additional Recruiter) | Kenny Nelson, <i>Director</i> |
| Contact Telephone: | 07444 408736 |
| Email address: | kennynelson@lifeprojectbath.org.uk |
| Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator: (including DBS Additional Recruiter) | Sarah Carney, <i>Deputy Director</i> |
| Contact Telephone: | 07856 576461 |
| Email address: | sarahcarney@lifeprojectbath.org.uk |
| DBS Lead Recruiter: | Sarah Joyce, <i>Team Administrator</i> |
| Email address: | info@lifeprojectbath.org.uk |
| Charity Number: | 1142459 |
| Company Number: | 07573284 |
| Insurance: | Zurich (Public, Products, Pollution liability; Employers' liability; Professional Services liability) |

Our Organisation

The following is a brief description of our organisation and the type of activities we undertake with children, young people and vulnerable adults:

Our vision is to create an inclusive world where individuals with learning disabilities know they belong. Our mission is to build a supportive community for people with learning disabilities, their families, and carers, providing purposeful activities that support holistic well-being, social development, and healthy relationships. We also offer opportunities for individuals to express their uniqueness and, for those who wish, to explore their faith.

The Life Project (Bath) is guided by Christian values, rooted in Christian teaching but accessible to all, regardless of background. We believe each person is unique, fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14), and a valuable gift to our community. Our four key values—Creative, Inclusive, Enabling, and Community—reflect our commitment to fostering meaningful engagement, celebrating individual worth, and creating a space where everyone has the opportunity to participate and grow in a supportive, respectful community.

The Springs Fellowship is the foundation from which the Life Project originated and remains central to our mission and purpose. Springs is a Christian fellowship group for adults with learning disabilities who seek encouragement and growth in their faith and relationship with the God of the Bible. Springs has five important purposes:

- **Community:** Fostering a sense of belonging and deeper relationships among members through regular gatherings.
- **Discipleship:** Members study the Bible together, pray, and encourage one another in their faith journeys, helping each other grow spiritually.
- **Mission:** Providing members with a platform to share their gifts and reach out to others with the love of Christ.
- **Prayer and Worship:** Coming together to pray and worship, deepening their connection with God and each other.
- **Support:** Offering a space for sharing personal struggles and celebrations, providing mutual support.

Springs is facilitated by a team of dedicated volunteers from local churches who lead worship, conduct creative Bible teaching (often with crafts, quizzes, and drama), provide refreshments, offer transport, and support members in engaging, leading, and supporting one another.

Our Day Services are designed to provide meaningful and purposeful occupation, empowering our Service Users—whom we affectionately call "Makers"—to make decisions, choose activities, and shape their daily experiences. We do this by:

- Giving Opportunities for trying and learning skills necessary for producing quality items and increased sense of independence in daily living.
- Creating an environment which nurtures healthy relationships, whilst celebrating uniqueness and personal growth.
- Generating ways in which we can positively impact the wider community.

Our sessions include a diverse range of activities such as drama, dance, singing, music, woodwork, arts and crafts, gardening, and cooking, among others. Most importantly, our Day Services foster friendship, encouraging participants to share life, and to uplift and support one another. The majority of our sessions are held at the Old Acorn Barn in the picturesque village of Englishcombe, just outside of Bath, with an additional allotment located a short drive away.

Supported living arrangements are part of our plans for the future.

Our Commitment

As a Trustee Board we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.

We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.” As a Trustee Board we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the ten safeguarding standards published by **thirtyone:eight** (<https://thirtyoneeight.org/about-us/who-we-are/our-ten-standards/>)

The Trustee Board undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers (including volunteers) and trustees will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- support the Safeguarding Team in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.

SECTION 2: Prevention

a) Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

In order to safeguard those in and using our organisation we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 which states:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Detailed definitions, signs and symptoms of abuse, are included in Appendix 1 which accompanies this policy.

b) Safer Recruitment

The Trustee Board will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- there is a written job description / person specification for the post;
- those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form;
- those short listed have been interviewed;
- safeguarding has been discussed at interview;
- written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate;

- a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information);
- qualifications where relevant have been verified;
- appropriate training is provided for the successful applicant;
- the newly appointed worker completes a probationary period;
- the newly appointed worker is given a copy of the Life Project's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

c) Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

- **Staff.** All staff are appointed subject to clearance at an appropriate level of DBS check. They are expected to cooperate with the Lead Recruiter (Sarah Joyce) in submitting the relevant forms and identity documents within one month of the written confirmation of a job offer. Staff will not be allowed to work unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults until the Recruiter has been notified of the result of the check and their certificate has been received. Project Coordinators are responsible for ensuring this is complied with.
- **Volunteers.** Upon agreeing to volunteer with the Life Project and signing the Volunteer Agreement, volunteers must submit the required paperwork to support their clearance at an appropriate level of DBS check within one month. Volunteers will not be allowed to work unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults until the Recruiter has been notified of the result of the check and their certificate has been received. Project Coordinators are responsible for ensuring this is complied with.
- **Trustees.** Upon agreeing to become a trustee of the Life Project a trustee level DBS check will also be carried out. The Recruiter will notify the trustee of the processes required and the Chair of Trustees will be kept informed. Trustee will not be allowed to have unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults until the Recruiter has been notified of the result of the check and their certificate has been received.
- It is the Life Project's intention that it is clear to everyone involved in the projects who is eligible to work unsupervised with children and/or vulnerable adults. This will normally, and where appropriate, be made clear by the wearing of appropriate badges/lanyards denoting 'staff', 'volunteer' or 'visitor'.

d) Safeguarding Training and Awareness

The Life Project Trustee Board is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis, either on-line or in face-to-face sessions. Training will be recorded to ensure compliance and to monitor frequency.

The Trustee Board will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

e) Management of Workers and Volunteers

As an organisation working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

As well as general expectations regarding codes of conduct for workers, as included in job descriptions, employment contracts and the Volunteers' Handbook, we also aspire to articulate specific good practice guidance for each activity we are involved in and these will be developed as new projects and activities grow.

f) Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

The Life Project (Bath) works with a number of organisations and partners as part of its work e.g. Local Churches, Weston Hub. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding where necessary.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

SECTION 3: Responding to Allegations of Abuse

a) Reporting Procedures

Under no circumstances should a worker or volunteer carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:

- Allegations or suspicions of abuse should be reported as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Team consisting of:
 - **Safeguarding Coordinator:**
Kenny Nelson | 07444 408736 | kennynelson@lifeprojectbath.org.uk
 - **Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator:**
Sarah Carney | 07856 576461 | sarahcarney@lifeprojectbath.org.uk
 - **Safeguarding Trustee:**
Philippa Philipps | safeguarding@lifeprojectbath.org.uk
- Alternatively, if the suspicions implicate the Safeguarding Team, then the report should be made in the first instance to:
 - **Thirtyone:eight**

PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ | 0303 003 1111 |
<https://thirtyoneeight.org/>

- Alternatively contact Social Services or the Police (*see below for details*).
- The Safeguarding Team may take the following actions:
 - Meet (omitting anyone who may be implicated in the allegation) to confidentially review the suspicion or allegation and consider an appropriate course of action.
 - Contact the *thirtyone:eight* helpline for advice.
 - Contact the appropriate social services in the area the child or adult lives:
 - **Children's Social Services**
01225 396111 or 01225 477929 (Office Hours)
01454 615165 (Out of Hours Emergency)
 - **Adult Social Services**
0300 247 0201, Option 3 (Office Hours)
01454 615165 (Out of Hours Emergency)
 - If required, the Safeguarding Coordination Unit (Bath Police) number is 101.
- The Safeguarding Team may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern, including:
 - Chair and/or Board of Trustees (excluding anyone implicated) who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
 - Designated Officer, formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.
- A written record of the concerns relating to service users should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place for seven years. If concerns have been raised about staff or volunteer behaviour records will be maintained in their personnel file either until they reach normal retirement age or for 10 years - whichever is longer.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported a member of the Safeguarding Team the absence of the Team members should not delay taking advice from *thirtyone:eight*, referral to Social Services, or the Police.
- The Trustee Board will support members of the Safeguarding Team in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.

- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from *thirtyone:eight*, although the Trustee Board hope that staff and volunteers of the Life Project will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Team has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Team as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope that by making this statement the Trustee Board demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults who may be at risk of harm or abuse.
- The role of the Safeguarding Team is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

b) Detailed Procedure where there is a Concern about a Child, young person or vulnerable adult

i. Allegations of Physical Injury, Neglect or Emotional Abuse

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Team will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or *thirtyone:eight* in the first instance) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carers to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carers is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services directly for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by *thirtyone:eight* (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

i. Allegations of Sexual Abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Team will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by *thirtyone:eight* if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. *thirtyone:eight* will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

c) Detailed Procedure where there is a Concern that an Adult is in Need of Protect

i. Suspicions or Allegations of Abuse or Harm

Suspicions or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse

If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Team will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively *thirtyone:eight* can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

ii. Suspicions or Allegations of Spiritual Abuse

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, Safeguarding Team will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact *thirtyone:eight* and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

d) Allegations of Abuse Against a Person Who Works with Children / Young People

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff), the Safeguarding Team, whilst following the procedure outlined above, will in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services in regard to the suspension of the worker.
- Make a referral to a Designated Officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the Designated Officer.

e) Allegations of Abuse Against a Person Who Works with Vulnerable Adults with Care and Support Needs

The Safeguarding Team will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker.
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services.

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide not the organisation.

SECTION 4: Pastoral Care

a) Supporting Those Affected by Abuse

The Trustee Board is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the organisation.

The Life Project is committed to offering pastoral care through our existing projects and Project Coordinators as resources allow, this may include referring individuals to specialist services and agencies e.g. counselling.

b) Working with Offenders

Due to the nature of the work the Life Project undertakes some-one who is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs will not be allowed to work in either a voluntary or paid capacity within our organisation. If in any doubt about potential risks, we will always

seek advice from *thirtyone:eight* before proceeding with allowing a known previous offender to work either in a voluntary or paid capacity within our organisation.

SECTION 5: Trustee Board Safeguarding Statement

The Trustee Board recognise the importance of its work with children, young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care. The following statement has been agreed by the Trustees:

This organisation is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults with care and support needs and ensuring their well-being.

Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, spiritual abuse and neglect of children, young people (those under 18 years of age) and vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every person should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that people we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults who have care and support needs and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of children, young people and adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all children, young people and adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of the organisation unless they pose a risk to the safety of others.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

We are committed to:

- following the requirements of UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations;
- respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- implementing the requirements of legislation regarding people with disabilities;
- ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy;
- keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding;
- following organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection;
- supporting the Safeguarding Team in their work and in any action they may need to take to protect children / adults;
- ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this organisation;
- supporting parents and families;

- nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work;
- supporting all in the organisation affected by abuse;
- adopting and following the ten safeguarding standards developed by *thirtyone:eight*.

We recognise:

- Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. The Adult Disability Team (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about an adult with care and support needs.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.


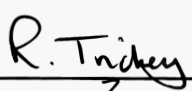

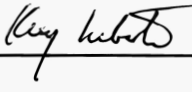
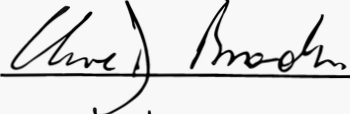
We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually or when there is a change in personnel.

If you have any concerns for a child or adult with care and support needs, then speak to one of the following who have been approved as the Safeguarding Team for this organisation.

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Kenny Nelson | Safeguarding Coordinator (<i>DBS Additional Recruiter</i>) |
| Sarah Carney | Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator (<i>DBS Additional Recruiter</i>) |
| Philippa Phillips | Safeguarding Trustee (<i>DBS Senior Leader</i>) |
| Sarah Joyce | <i>DBS Lead Recruiter</i> |

A copy of the full policy and procedures is available from our website (<https://www.lifeprojectbath.org.uk/>) or by requesting a copy from info@lifeprojectbath.org.uk.

Signed by Trustee Board/Organisation

Signed:  
 

Date: 14/1/26.

APPENDIX 1: Definitions and Signs of Abuse

a) Definition of a Child

The legal definition of a child is someone under the age of 18. Some legislation in the UK allows young people from age 16 to make certain decisions for themselves (e.g. getting married), but safeguarding legislation applies to anyone under the age of 18 because this is the legal definition of a child. The Children Act 1989 and 2004 in England and Wales, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 in Scotland and the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 in Northern Ireland similarly define a child as someone under 18.

Throughout this document when we refer to a child our meaning (unless otherwise stated) is a person under the age of 18.

b) Definition of Vulnerable Adult / Adult in Need of Protection

An adult is someone aged 18 or over (unless specific legislation states otherwise). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the European Convention on Human Rights, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008) all state that adults should be free from abuse.

It follows that some adults because of circumstance or particular vulnerability or risk may be in need of protection. Vulnerable adults are also known as 'adults at risk'. Throughout this manual we will use the terms vulnerable adults and adults in need of protection interchangeably.

The Department of Health and Home Office document 'No secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse' (March 2000) states a vulnerable person is someone:

'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, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'.

c) Statutory Definitions of Abuse - Children

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance.

The definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)'.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Spiritual Abuse

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.

In 2013 spiritual abuse was defined as

“Spiritual abuse is coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack. This abuse may include manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a ‘divine’ position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context.”

(Oakley & Kinmond, 2013).

d) Statutory Definitions of Abuse – Vulnerable Adults

The following definition of abuse is laid down in ‘No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse (Department of Health 2000)’:

“Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons. In giving substance to that statement, however, consideration needs to be given to a number of factors:

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent*. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.”

**Definition of consent - in law, voluntary agreement with an action proposed by another. Consent is an act of reason; the person giving consent must be of sufficient mental capacity and be in possession of all essential information in order to give valid consent. A person who is an infant, is mentally incompetent, or is under the influence of drugs is incapable of giving consent. Consent must also be free of coercion or fraud.*

Physical Abuse

This is the infliction of pain or physical injury, which is either caused deliberately, or through lack of care.

Sexual Abuse

This is the involvement in sexual activities to which the person has not consented or does not truly comprehend and so cannot give informed consent, or where the other party is in a position of trust, power or authority and uses this to override or overcome lack of consent.

Psychological or Emotional Abuse

These are acts or behaviour, which cause mental distress or anguish or negates the wishes of the vulnerable adult. It is also behaviour that has a harmful effect on the vulnerable adult's emotional health and development or any other form of mental cruelty.

Spiritual Abuse

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Financial or Material Abuse

This is the inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions

Neglect or Act of Omission

This is the repeated deprivation of assistance that the vulnerable adult needs for important activities of daily living, including the failure to intervene in behaviour which

is dangerous to the vulnerable adult or to others. A vulnerable person may be suffering from neglect when their general well-being or development is impaired.

Discriminatory Abuse

This is the inappropriate treatment of a vulnerable adult because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality, disability or any other protected characteristic covered by the Equality Act. Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals. Discriminatory abuse links to all other forms of abuse.

Institutional Abuse

This is the mistreatment or abuse of a vulnerable adult by a regime or individuals within an institution (e.g. hospital or care home) or in the community. It can be through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect or poor professional practice, plus the other abuses listed above as headings.

e) Signs of Possible Abuse – Children and Young People

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context of the child's whole life.

Physical Abuse

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse*

Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia*

Emotional Abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

Neglect

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food
- Untreated illnesses
- Inadequate care, etc

* These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

f) Signs of Possible Abuse – Adults

Physical Abuse

- History of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries.
- Signs of under or over use of medication and/or medical problems left unattended.
- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Bruising and discolouration - particularly if there is a lot of bruising of different ages and in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Recurring injuries without plausible explanation
- Loss of hair, loss of weight and change of appetite
- Person flinches at physical contact &/or keeps fully covered, even in hot weather;
- Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of a particular person or people

Domestic Violence

- Unexplained injuries or 'excuses' for marks or scars
- Controlling and/or threatening relationship including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence and Female Genital Mutilation.

Sexual Abuse

- Pregnancy in a woman who lacks mental capacity or is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually explicit behaviour
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear and/or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- Full or partial disclosures or hints of sexual abuse
- Self-harming
- Emotional distress
- Mood changes
- Disturbed sleep patterns

Psychological Abuse

- Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of a carer
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes
- Unexplained paranoia
- Changes in mood, attitude and behaviour, excessive fear or anxiety
- Changes in sleep pattern or persistent tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Helplessness or passivity
- Confusion or disorientation
- Implausible stories and attention seeking behaviour
- Low self-esteem

Financial or Material Abuse

- Disparity between assets and living conditions
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents or loss of money
- Sudden inability to pay bills, getting into debt
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf
- Recent changes of deeds or title to property
- Missing personal belongings
- Inappropriate granting and / or use of Power of Attorney

Modern Slavery

- Physical appearance; unkempt, inappropriate clothing, malnourished
- Movement monitored, rarely alone, travel early or late at night to facilitate working hours.

- Few personal possessions or ID documents.
- Fear of seeking help or trusting people.

Discriminatory Abuse

- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect
- Poor quality or avoidance care
- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawn
- Anger
- Person puts themselves down in terms of their gender or sexuality
- Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves

Institutional Abuse

- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawn
- Anger
- Person puts themselves down in terms of their gender or sexuality
- Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves
- No confidence in complaints procedures for staff or service users.
- Neglectful or poor professional practice.

Neglect and Acts of Omission

- Deteriorating despite apparent care
- Poor home conditions, clothing or care and support.
- Lack of medication or medical intervention
- Self-neglect
- Hoarding inside or outside a property
- Neglecting personal hygiene or medical needs
- Person looking unkempt or dirty and has poor personal hygiene
- Person is malnourished, has sudden or continuous weight loss and is dehydrated – constant hunger, stealing or gorging on food
- Person is dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions
- Dirt, urine or faecal smells in a person's environment
- Home environment does not meet basic needs (for example not having heating or lighting)
- Depression

APPENDIX 2: Practical Guidance

a) Listening and Responding to an Adult or Child Wishing to Disclose Abuse

- Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child or adult at risk to talk in private but making sure others are aware the conversation is taking place;
- It is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk;
- Above everything else listen without interrupting;
- Be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking;
- Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used;
- Try to remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different;
- Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality;
- If they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen;
- Use language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc;

HELPFUL RESPONSES

- You have done the right thing in telling me
- I am glad you have told me
- I will try to help you

DON'T SAY

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- I am shocked, don't tell anyone else

b) Communicating and Working Online

i. General Principles

- The Life Project strives to maintain good and transparent relationships with members of its community: staff, volunteers, trustees and all those participating in group activities and projects.
- We are clear about when and how we communicate electronically and where appropriate we gain the permission of parents or carers regarding communication with their children or protected adults under their supervision.
- We seek consent for the use of photos, videos and internet technology when new users fill out registration forms for any of our activities.
- We maintain professional boundaries with any users of our services and do not seek personal information other than that which is appropriate for our work or share personal information.
- We are clear and explicit about information that we *need* to share with others, i.e. the limits of confidentiality, and when the disclosure of harm or abuse must be passed on to statutory authorities to keep them safe. Apart from this we respect anyone's right to confidentiality.
- We remain circumspect in our communications with our service users to avoid any possible misinterpretation of our motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.
- Where possible we use Life Project owned devices (e.g. phones, laptops) to make communications.

ii. Specific Guidance for those Communicating on Behalf of the Life Project

a. Social media (including texts, WhatsApp messages etc.)

- Always save and maintain a log (date, person and purpose) of any electronic contact with individuals and group members including email messages and texts.
- All social media interaction between workers, paid or voluntary, and those registered with any regular Life Project activity should be limited to Life Project administrated social media groups.
- Any private electronic messages between staff, volunteers and *individual* group members should be retained or a log of communications taken for safeguarding purposes.
- Any safeguarding concerns or allegations arising from social media should be referred to the Safeguarding Team (Safeguarding Coordinator / Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator / Safeguarding Trustee).

b. Photographic Images and Videos Online

- Ensure that written permission is sought for the taking of photographs or videos when individuals register with any Life Project group. Images should only be taken or used for the purposes laid out in the Registration Form. Specific permission should be sought from the individual or the parent/carer if an image is to be used in a way not originally stated on the form.
- Photographs that include children should be selected carefully and circumstances where children could easily be identified should be avoided. No names or personal information should be displayed alongside any photographs of children.
- Live streaming of events must be clearly advertised in advance.

c. Remote Learning Activities

- Zoom, Microsoft Teams, FaceTime or other media using web cameras can be used for conference calls and for a project or group to use in a group environment where there are clear aims and objectives for its use.
- Any need for specific supervision or help by parents or carers should be arranged in advance.
- Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and YouTube can be used for one-to-one and small group learning activities but should be scheduled and planned in advance with vulnerable adults and, where necessary, with the permission of the parent or carer.
- It is recommended that staff and volunteers seek advice from their line manager about the appropriateness of one-to-one sessions and inform them when one-to-one sessions are scheduled or have taken place.
- If using alternative interactive methods, e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc. ensure that that you abide by the Terms and Conditions for end users and that where possible privacy settings are set at the highest levels of security. Permissions must be sought if all or any part of the online session is being recorded.
- The expectations of attendance and participation in any online activity should be made clear in advance.
- The suitability of the location vulnerable adults may join from and what can be seen and heard on screen should be considered carefully by staff and volunteers in advance. For example, ideally the location would ideally not be a bedroom and they must be appropriately dressed, never in nightwear.
- The necessary skills and technology required by staff or volunteers should be discussed in advance with project coordinators.
- A back-up plan should be considered in advance in case the technology breaks down (e.g. how to contact the participants easily by phone; who might be available for tech support).

d. Staff and Volunteers Must Not:

- Access the internet using another person's login details.
- Harass, insult or bully others by their actions online.
- Illegally copy or play copyrighted content where permission has not been given.
- Search for or download pornographic, racist or hate-motivated content.
- Access, download, send or request any data (including images) which the Life Project may consider to be offensive in any way, including sexually explicit, discriminatory, defamatory or libellous material.

e. Violations of these Guidelines may Result in:

- A temporary or permanent ban on internet use in relation to Life Project work.
- Disciplinary action.
- If applicable, a report being made to police or local authorities.