

# Safeguarding:

## Guidance for staff and members

### Introduction

In carrying out our functions, CHCs will often encounter children, young people and adults who may be in vulnerable situations due to age, illness or disability.

The term 'safeguarding' can apply to both adults and children and is about protecting them, preventing their abuse or neglect and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers.

Safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of individuals, is a broader term than protection of individuals from abuse. It is about individuals and organisations identifying risk factors and acting to prevent possible abuse of individuals at risk who could be an adult or a child.

All staff and members within CHCs in Wales have a clear duty, which is laid out in legislation and guidance, to protect the most vulnerable members of our society. We all need to know about safeguarding even if we rarely see any children or vulnerable adults in the course of our activities.

### The role of CHC staff in safeguarding

To support and put all necessary procedures into practice, CHCs will ensure that all members of staff receive training which best fits their role.

All members of staff will be made aware of the Powys tHB Safeguarding Policy as a standard part of their induction process. In addition, each member of staff will receive adult protection awareness training, which includes recognising abuse

and the responsibility to report abuse, with updates as necessary, throughout their employment.

### **When recruiting, CHCs will:**

- seek to recruit using appropriate safeguards and checks
- determine which roles involve “regulated activity” as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended) and undertake relevant barring list checks (DBS)
- take up references for all posts and member roles.

### **When training, CHCs will provide:**

- an induction programme for all new staff
- appropriate training to enable all staff who may work with people in vulnerable situations to undertake their roles safely and confidently; and
- on-going training that benefits the personal and professional development of staff and the aims of our organisation in this area.

## **Members**

CHC members will work in accordance with their Code of Conduct and will receive an annual appraisal (member assessment).

Members undertaking visiting and engagement activity will work in pairs or small teams at all times. As part of the national CHC member development programme, all new members will receive awareness training on safeguarding.

CHCs will provide clear guidance and appropriate, targeted learning and clear information on what to do for all members undertaking local activities which may bring them into contact with someone who may be in a vulnerable situation.

## **CHCs’ safeguarding obligations**

CHCs need to ensure that in any setting or contact where a suspicion or allegation of abuse might arise that they are clear about safeguarding obligations.

People using a CHC service or having contact with CHC staff or members can be defined as "Service users".

1. Service users have the right to expect that sensitive information given in confidence will be handled in a confidential manner and will only be used for the purpose for which it was intended or on a need to know basis.
2. Therefore, wherever possible information should not be released to others, either verbally or in writing, without their consent.
3. However, it should be made clear that if there is a reason to be concerned for the welfare of a person in a vulnerable situation then that information must be shared with someone who is in a position to take action or responsibility.

## Significant harm

Where there is risk of significant or immediate harm the Chief Officer and Deputy are empowered to take all necessary steps to prevent or minimise that harm. This may include:

- to prepare a record of all conversations regarding the issue
- to prepare and sign any reports required and to request that staff, members or any other witnesses should provide signed statements
- confidentially to seek advice from expert sources as they feel is appropriate
- share concerns (with consent where this is required and is appropriate) internally with senior staff
- share concerns and make referrals to external agencies such as Social Services, the Police or NSPCC as appropriate to the circumstances
- make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service

regarding staff or members working in regulated activity where this is appropriate.

## **What to do if you suspect abuse**

Staff and members have a responsibility to report concerns of suspected, alleged or witnessed abuse in line with the CHC procedures and wider framework.

You do not have to decide whether the person is capable of giving consent to you raising the concern.

You do not have a responsibility to investigate or decide - the decision whether or not abuse has taken place is not up to chief officers or deputies – that is a matter for others.

## **Who is responsible in a CHC?**

The CHC chief officer is the appointed Safeguarding Officer, supported by the deputy chief officer. The chief officer or deputy will be available to all staff, members, clients and members of the public; to speak to when they have any safeguarding concerns. This includes concerns, issues or complaints regarding:

- the safety and wellbeing of those we meet whilst undertaking our activities, including advocacy clients and
- members and staff.

The chief officer and deputy will have access to appropriate training to support them in these roles.

## **Communication**

We will communicate the message of this safeguarding

guidance to our staff, members and clients as well as the wider public using appropriate methods, formats and language.

We support and encourage all staff, members and clients, to inform the chief officer or deputy chief officer in all cases where they have:

- a concern (a worry, issue or doubt about the treatment of a client or someone else they engage with, or about circumstances or practices that may create the risk of harm),
- a disclosure (information about a person at risk of or suffering from significant harm) or an
- allegation (the possibility that a member or staff member of our organisation or other organisation could cause harm to a person).

NB: Though we would prefer our members and staff to use internal processes whenever possible to make a report, this does not prevent them from making a report or referral to e.g. Social Services, in their own right as a private individual.

## **Duty to report**

For the purposes of this guidance, a duty to report to the local authority will be taken to mean a referral to social services who, alongside the police, have statutory powers to investigate suspected abuse or neglect. Concerns about abuse and neglect may be present when a child or adult at risk is already known to Social Services. Do not presume because they are known that there is no need to report. Always report.

## **Confidentiality**

All reports and logs (including personnel records) will be kept securely and confidential according our data protection policies and privacy statement, as far as this is possible and

until or unless it is necessary to share this material with the agencies referred to in this and the wider guidance referenced below.

## Legislation and guidance

[The Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) came into force on 6 April 2016. The Act provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support. The Act is made up of 11 Parts with Part 7 relating to Safeguarding specifically. This legislation provides the framework for the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

The Act is supported by regulations, statutory guidance (known as [Working Together to Safeguard People](#)) and relevant codes of practice. These provide a lot of detail about the practical arrangements that need to be in place.

In June 2020, the Welsh Government introduced the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019. These procedures have been produced as an online tool and can be accessed at <http://www.safeguarding.wales/>.

The procedures have been written to provide clear guidance and expectations for safeguarding both adults and children.

They aim to help anyone who works with adults or children (whether through paid or unpaid work) to apply the legislation and statutory guidance of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 to their roles and duties by explaining what their responsibilities are and how to meet them.