

POLICY - Safeguarding policy and procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to define how Cornhill Community Action (CCA) operates to safeguard people at risk of harm in order to;

- protect them from harm
- provide tenants, trustees and volunteers (if any) with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

We, the trustees of CCA, recognise that we have a duty of care and we are committed to the protection and safety of everyone who comes into contact with the Cornhill on Tweed Centre; including anyone at risk involved as a visitor or as a participant in any of our activities. We also have a duty to safeguard and support our tenants.

2. Definitions

NB Unaccompanied children (under the age of 18) are not permitted to attend any of the workshops or services offered by the tenants of CCA.

An Adult at Risk (otherwise a Vulnerable Adult) is

- generally, a person aged 18 or older who is unable to protect himself or herself from harm, exploitation due to any temporary or permanent impairment limiting his or her ability to do so.
- particularly, a person at risk of abuse or neglect defined by the Care Act 2014 as;
being over 18 years old who
- has care and support needs
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- as a result of his/her care and support needs is unable to protect himself/herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk thereof.

A person with care and support needs but not currently receiving care or support from a health or care service may still be an adult at risk.

A child at Risk is a child who:

- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or any other kind of harm
- a child who has need for care and support in respect of special educational need or any disability (whether or not any authority is meeting any of those needs).

It is important to note:

- The use of the term 'at risk' means that actual abuse or neglect does not need to occur, rather early interventions to protect a child at risk should be considered to prevent actual harm, abuse and neglect
- The two conditions necessary to demonstrate a child is at risk of abuse or neglect ensures that protection is provided to those with care and support needs who *also* require actions to secure his or her safety in the future
- Risk of abuse or neglect may be the consequence of one concern or a result of cumulative factors.

3. Legal obligations

CCA recognises that it has responsibilities for the safety and care of children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and Working Together 2023. and recognises its responsibilities to safeguard Adults at Risk under the Care Act 2014.

- CCA will act in accordance with all relevant legislation including also the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the Terrorism Act (2000).
- CCA will fulfil its duty to report serious Incidents, including safeguarding, as part of our governance and reporting responsibilities to the Charity Commission.

4. Policy

This policy is a core part of trustees' governance responsibilities and priorities. Trustees' responsibilities include ensuring that the organisation provides a safe environment and protects tenants and anyone who comes into contact with our organisation from abuse or maltreatment of any kind.

CCA will nominate a trustee to be the Designated Safeguarding Lead who takes responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements; contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to be made known to all trustees and tenants

4(a) Principles

- CCA recognises that all people, whatever their age, ability, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief or sexual identity have the same rights to protection from abuse.
- Where appropriate CCA will promote equality of opportunity.
- CCA does not permit any form of discrimination on grounds of race, gender, marital status, caring responsibilities, disability, age, social class, sexual orientation, religion/ belief, irrelevant offending background or any other factor irrelevant to the purpose in view.
- CCA has a zero tolerance approach to abuse, exploitation, radicalisation and mistreatment. CCA takes all reasonable measures to protect persons at risk of the same.
- CCA recognises the need to protect everyone at risk both in person and/or from cyber/ virtual risks.
- CCA will not support or enable any act of terrorism or any other illegal conduct whatsoever.
- CCA ensures that all of the organisation's operations and activities are designed and delivered with effective safeguarding in mind.
- CCA promotes a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and welfare to be addressed, and for tenants and trustees to feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in fulfilling their safeguarding role.

4(b) Actions

CCA will keep everyone at risk of harm safe by

- Making sure that all trustees, tenants and volunteers (if any) know about and follow our safeguarding policy and procedures. This safeguarding policy and procedures are made available on the CCA website for anyone using our services to know what to do if they have a concern.
- Treating all people with dignity and respect, listening to them and valuing what they say.
- ensuring all necessary checks are made, including obtaining a DBS check where thought necessary and appropriate
- Practising Professional Curiosity - understanding what life is like for the individual and being alert to the needs of people at risk of harm and any risks of harm that individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children and adults at risk.

While it is the responsibility of the relevant statutory agencies to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns to the relevant trustee and external authorities swiftly and appropriately, see section 7 following.

- Tenants keeping electronic data pertinent to their clients will implement appropriate security policies and procedures. Data will be stored securely, in accordance with data protection legislation. These measures are intended to protect the organisation, its trustees, tenants and beneficiaries from harm arising from data loss whether inadvertent or malicious.

5. Persons affected

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every trustee, tenant and volunteer who supports us will play his or her part in keeping people safe.

This policy applies to everyone working for or on behalf of Cornhill Community Action, including the Trustees and tenants together with any volunteers or contractors active at the Cornhill on Tweed Centre.

6. Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Trustee who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mj Broadhurst, 07932 0525400 mobile, SMS or Whatsapp

7(a) What to do if you have concerns about a child

If you have concerns about a child because of something you have seen or heard, or a child chooses to disclose something to you. If a child discloses information to you, you should -

- Not promise confidentiality; in the case of you have a duty to share this information and refer to Children's Social Care Services.
- Listen to what is being said and accept it without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Reassure the child, but only as far as is honest and possible. Do not make promises you may not be able to keep. Such as 'Everything will be alright now' or 'You'll never have to see that person again'.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it. For example, you could say, 'You're not to blame'.
- Do not interrogate the child; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- Do not ask leading questions, ask open questions such as 'Anything else to tell me?'
- Do not ask the child to repeat the information for anyone else.
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child (do not paraphrase).
- Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Whatever the nature of your concerns, you should discuss them with the Designate Safeguarding Lead, who may confer with other Trustees. If it is agreed that action is required, refer to Children's Social Care Services, Northumberland - 01670 536400 during office hours, or 0345 6005252 out of hours

What information will you need when making a referral? :

You will be asked to provide as much information as possible, such as the child's full name, date of birth, address, school, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities the child may have, details of the parents. Do not be concerned if you do not have all these details, you should still make the call.

You should follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 48hrs

A Social Worker and the Trustees decide on the next course of action within one working day

7(b) What to do if you have concerns about an adult at risk

Safeguarding for adults is person-led and outcome focused, Whatever the nature of your concerns, you should discuss them with the Designate Safeguarding Lead, who may confer with other trustees.

Trustees will use their best judgement to engage the adult at risk in a conversation about how best to respond to his or her paramount needs. Issues of capacity, consent and decision making are taken into account.

8. Allegations Involving Trustees, tenants or volunteers

CCA is committed to making sure that trustees, tenants and/or volunteers(if any) are safe to work with children and young people.

However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against someone involved with CCA. Allegations against those who work with children cover a wide range of circumstances.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way which has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

The allegations may relate to the person's behaviour at work, at home or in another setting. The trustees will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made.

The discussion will consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, the trustees will immediately refer the matter to the appropriate authority. It is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined independently of the organisation so that police or social care may be consulted as appropriate.

Consideration must be given to the following three strands:

- 1) The police investigation of a possible criminal offence; some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to the police
- 2) Referral to Children's Social Care Services for enquiries and assessment by Children's Social Care Services as to whether a child is need of protection or in need of services
- 3) Consideration by the trustees of disciplinary action in respect of the individual, if appropriate.

Common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

9. Review

This policy and related guidance will be monitored by the trustees on a regular basis for compliance and will be reviewed each year at the AGM in May.

Updated June 2025