NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH NETWORK (NWN)

SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1. Safeguarding

1.1 NWN commits to protect the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults who come onto its premises or who are involved in Neighbourhood Watch activity to ensure that they are welcomed into a safe, caring environment, with a happy and friendly atmosphere.

1.2 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. NWN recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its staff members, Trustees and volunteers to prevent the neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and vulnerable adults and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

2.Scope

2.1 This policy and procedure outlines the specific responsibilities of NWN staff members, Trustees and volunteers to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and promote their welfare.

2.2 Any reference to volunteers includes NW Association members, NW area and street coordinators and any other persons aligned to Neighbourhood Watch Network, or having a role supporting Neighbourhood Watch activity, in a voluntary capacity.

2.3 Any reference to NWN staff members also includes Associated Personnel whilst engaged with work related to NWN, including but not limited to the following: consultants; contractors. It also includes visitors to NWN premises including journalists, celebrities and politicians.

3.Safeguarding Lead

3.1 The Safeguarding lead for NWN is the CEO. NWN staff members must immediately report any issue arising from this policy to the CEO who will ensure the issue is or has been reported to the relevant statutory authorities and report the issue to the NWN Board of Trustees as soon as is practicable.

4.Neighbourhood Watch Associations

4.1 Neighbourhood Watch Associations that are not charities in their own right must abide by this policy and procedures and advise the NWN Safeguarding Lead when they have reported safeguarding concerns about a child or a vulnerable adult to their local Children's or Adult Social Care Team or local police.

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4.2 Neighbourhood Watch Associations that are registered charities are expected to adopt this policy and have their own Safeguarding Lead and procedures in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

5.Reporting Concerns to Children's Social Care

5.1 It is important that NWN staff members, Trustees and volunteers report safeguarding concerns to Children's or Adult Social Care and / or their local police force as soon as they become aware of the concerns.

5.2 This is because safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults –and in particular, protecting them from significant harm - depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise. For example; - individual children, especially some of the most vulnerable children and those at greatest risk, will need co-ordinated help from health, education, children's social care, and quite possibly the voluntary sector and other agencies, including youth justice services.

5.3 For those children or vulnerable adults who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard and promote welfare of the child(ren) or vulnerable adult(s) and – where necessary – to help bring the perpetrators of crimes to justice.

6.Recognising Signs of Abuse or Neglect

6.1 All NWN staff, Trustees and volunteers should:

•be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect

•be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children or vulnerable adults

•share information so that an assessment can be made by Social Care Teams of the needs and circumstances of the child or vulnerable adult

•contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child or vulnerable adult's welfare.

7.Definitions of abuse and neglect:

7.1 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

7.2 Physical abuse

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

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7.3 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional maltreatment such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development or the health and well-being of a vulnerable adult. It may involve conveying to children or vulnerable adults that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing a child or adult participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children or vulnerable adults frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or vulnerable adults. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult, though it may occur alone.

7.4 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person or adult to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child, young person or adult is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children or vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

7.5 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child or vulnerable adult from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs.

8.Staff, Trustee and Volunteer awareness

8.1 All NWN staff and Trustees will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for all staff. Where necessary or possible, staff will be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses.

8.2 Volunteers who work on NW led projects with young people or vulnerable adults will be made aware of this policy by the NW project lead and where necessary or possible, will also be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses.

9.Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

9.1 Where Neighbourhood Watch Network staff members or NWN volunteers are involved in Regulated Activity with children or vulnerable adults, NWN will ensure that all staff members and volunteers involved have had a satisfactory DBS check before allowing them undertake that activity.

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A ‘satisfactory’ check is defined as having no criminal convictions (including cautions, reprimands and final warnings) relevant to the role.

9.2 Force Area or Borough Associations are responsible for ensuring that volunteers who work on local NW led projects with young people or vulnerable adults are DBS checked before undertaking that activity.

9.3 All NWN staff and volunteers involved in Regulated Activity with children or adults must report any subsequent criminal convictions to the NWN or local NW Association Safeguarding lead.

10.NWN Safeguarding Procedures

10.1 NWN recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to the abuse of children and vulnerable adults.

10.2 NWN is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and vulnerable adults and to providing supervision and maintaining and promoting good links with relevant statutory services and encouraging our Neighbourhood Watch Associations to do likewise.

11.What to do if you have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult

11.1 You may have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult because of something you haveseen or heard, or a child or vulnerable adult may choose to disclose something to you. If a child or vulnerable adult discloses information to you:

- Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to Children’s or Adult Social Care Services.
- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said.
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult, but only as far as is honest, don’t make promises you may not be able to keep e.g. ‘Everything will be alright now’, ‘You’ll never have to see that person again’.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt if the child or vulnerable adult refers to it. For example, you could say, ‘You’re not to blame’.
- Do not question the information or try to investigate the child or vulnerable adult; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- Do not ask leading questions (e.g. Did he touch your private parts?), ask open questions such as ‘Is there anything else you want to tell me?’
- Do not ask the child or vulnerable adult to repeat the information for another member of staff or volunteer.
- 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 or vulnerable adult (do not paraphrase).
- Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions. Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with your manager or the designated NWN Safeguarding Lead.

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11.2 You, your manager or the NWN or your own Safeguarding Lead should immediately refer the matter to the appropriate safeguarding organisation (e.g. Local Authority Child or Adult Social Care department or your local police).

12. What information will you need when making a referral?

12.1 You will be asked to provide as much information as possible. This will include the child or vulnerable adult's full name, date of birth, address, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities they may have, including school and details of the parents of a child. Do not be concerned if you do not have all these details, you should still make the call or referral. You should follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 48hrs.

13. Allegations Involving a Neighbourhood Watch Staff Member, Trustee or Volunteer

13.1 NWN is committed to having effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including DBS checking all staff and volunteers who may be involved in Regulated Activity with children or adults. Where appropriate, key staff involved in recruitment processes will undertake Safer Recruitment Training. However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff, a Trustee or a volunteer.

13.2 Allegations against those who engage with or work with or care for children or vulnerable adults, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances. All allegations of abuse or suspicions of abuse of children or vulnerable adults by Neighbourhood Watch staff, Trustees or volunteers must be taken seriously. It is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by safeguarding experts.

13.3 The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a Neighbourhood Watch staff member, Trustee or volunteer has:

• Behaved in a way which has, or may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult;

• Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or vulnerable adult;

• Behaved towards a child, children or vulnerable adult(s) in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. The allegations may relate to the person's behaviour at work, at home, as a volunteer or in another setting.

13.4 All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to the local Child or Adult Social Care service and / or local police force and the NWN or your own Safeguarding Lead.

13.5 The Safeguarding Lead, or their designated representative, will immediately refer the matter to the relevant Children's or Adult Social Care service and / or the local police force (unless

there is clear evidence that the matter has already been referred to Children's or Adult Social Care and / or the local police by the local NW Association or volunteer).

13.6 Such allegations may result in: -

1) A police investigation of a possible criminal offence and / or

2) Enquiries and assessment by Children's or Adult Social Care Services as to whether the child or vulnerable adult is need of protection or in need of services

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13.7 An NWN staff member, Trustee or volunteer who is subject of a safeguarding allegation that is being investigated by the police or being dealt with by Social Care Services, shall be suspended from their paid or unpaid role with Neighbourhood Watch until the outcome of the investigation is complete.

13.8 Should the outcome of the investigation indicate that the staff member, Trustee or volunteer is guilty of abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, then disciplinary action will be taken by NWN or the local Neighbourhood Watch Association. Disciplinary action may result in dismissal from their paid or unpaid role with Neighbourhood Watch.

(Please refer to the NWN Guidance on Managing Concerns about Volunteer Behaviour and NWN Disciplinary Procedure)

14. Reviewing the Policy and Procedure

14.1 This policy and procedure will be reviewed every year, this will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

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