ALLIANCE Safeguarding Policy

# 1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

1.1.1 protect children, young people, vulnerable adults and others, with whom we engage, against abuse

1.1.2 protect staff against abuse and against unwarranted allegations of abuse

1.1.3 provide a safe environment for staff to work within

1.2 This policy applies to all staff and volunteers, including paid staff, agency staff, consultants and contractors, those on secondment, members of the board of directors, fast-streamers, and anyone else working on behalf of the ALLIANCE.

1.3 Throughout this document these groups are collectively referred to as staff.

1.4 This policy does not form part of your contract and can be changed at any time.

# 2.0 Legal Framework

2.1 This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect including:

* Data Protection Act 2018
* GDPR 2018
* Sexual Offences Act Scotland 2009
* Sexual Offences Act 2003
* Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
* Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification order 2021)
* Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
* Human Rights Act 1998
* Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
* Safeguarding and Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
* Equality Act 2010
* Work Time Regulations 1998

2.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the ALLIANCE policies and procedures on Child Protection and Adult Support and Protection.

# 3.0 Application

3.1 The ALLIANCE recognises that within the course of its activities staff may come into contact with children (anyone under the age of 16) or vulnerable adults.

3.2 Examples of activities that may lead to contact with the above groups include:

* Community Link Practitioner activities
* Events
* Groups and individuals using the ALLIANCE meeting rooms and hot desks
* Delivering educational seminars at care homes, schools, universities etc.
* Collection of personal stories
* Focus groups, research, workgroups
* Any activity involving those with “lived experience”
* Field trips such as walking groups

# 4.0 PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) Disclosure Scotland

4.1 Only staff working in a regulated service (in accordance with Disclosure Scotland definitions) will be required to undergo a PVG check. At the ALLIANCE this means that Community Links Practitioners (CLP) will have to undergo a Disclosure Scotland check.

4.2 HR will request the check through Disclosure Scotland and a certificate will be provided to the ALLIANCE and individual. The CLP will not be able to commence work until a satisfactory result of the check has been received. The PVG check will:

* Highlight all relevant spent and unspent convictions, cautions and warnings
* Other relevant information provided by the police, and
* Check on whether the applicant is barred from carrying out regulated work.

4.3 Should the result advise that an individual is unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults and/or children, the job offer will be withdrawn. If an individual is already employed and is no longer able to perform their role due to the results of a PVG check that individual will be dismissed.

4.4 Conducting a PVG check is one means of ensuring that individuals are suitable to carry out roles in regulated services. Irrespective of whether a PVG check is carried out all individuals affected by this policy will be appointed to their roles through a number of checks and interviews; these would include references, presentation of CV with work and volunteering history, relevant qualifications and interview following completion of an appropriate application.

# 5.0 Dealing with allegations of inappropriate behaviour or abuse

5.1 Everyone affected by this policy has a responsibility to take action to protect individuals who are at risk, themselves and the ALLIANCE as an organisation.

5.2 A variety of behaviour, activities and circumstances may be termed inappropriate or abusive. These may include deliberate acts and well-intentioned but misguided acts or acts of omission that put people at risk of harm.

5.3 Staff members must treat all allegations seriously.

5.4 In all cases of allegations concerning vulnerable adults or children the processes laid out in the ALLIANCE policies and procedures for Child Protection and Adult Support and Protection are paramount and should be followed at all times. Outwith this all allegations must be reported to HR and the member of staff’s line manager (unless it involves either party, in which case the concerns must be reported to the Chief Officer – Operations or Board).

5.5 Anyone making a complaint, allegation or who expresses concern can be reassured that the ALLIANCE:

* Will contact emergency services or other support services as is necessary and appropriate
* Will take complaints about behaviour of ALLIANCE staff seriously and will investigate these complaints
* Will treat complaints or allegations confidentially, but information may require to be shared with appropriate authorities if the person making the complaint or others are at significant risk, or if a crime may have been committed
* Will be given support as appropriate throughout the process.

# 6.0 “Anonymous” Complaints

6.1 Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with satisfactorily. For example, it is not possible to contact the person making the complaint to check the facts, to establish what the complainant is seeking by making the complaint or to let them know the outcome of consideration of the complaint. Nevertheless, anonymous complaints must be carefully considered, particularly in the best interests of any child or vulnerable adult who may be involved or any staff member or volunteer who may be subject of the complaint.

6.2 Therefore, all anonymous complaints will be recorded and considered by HR in conjunction with a promoted member of staff not involved in the complaint. Consideration will be given as to whether the complaint will be investigated, and if so the extent to which it can be investigated. In cases where it is alleged that a crime may have been committed a decision on whether the complaint should be referred to the police will be considered. Decisions on whether an investigation will proceed, or a referral made will be based upon a number of factors including; the information given in the complaint, the potential effect of the matter(s) complained about on any person, whether it is alleged that a crime may have been committed and, treating individuals affected by this policy with respect and fairness.

6.3 It will be normal practice to inform individuals affected by this policy of any anonymous complaint about them and whether or not it is to be investigated or referred to another agency. An exception could be circumstances through which HR and the promoted member of staff believe that to do so would put a person at risk of serious harm.

6.4 Any individual named in an anonymous complaint will receive appropriate support from their line manager.

6.5 HR will keep copies of any records associated with anonymous complaints in line with the ALLIANCE policies on record keeping and retention.

# 7.0 Allegations against Staff

7.1 Allegations, concerns or complaints made against ALLIANCE staff will be addressed using the Complaints and Disciplinary and Grievance policies.

7.2 The ALLIANCE will determine whether any allegation needs to be reported to the Police and whether the employee can continue normal duties during any investigation or whether adjustments need to be made.

7.3 Adjustments may include:

* Suspension
* Lone worker being partnered with another
* Role being temporarily changed.

7.4 Adjustments do not imply guilt; these are for the safety of the employee and the individual(s) concerned. Any staff facing adjustments will be supported throughout the investigation by the ALLIANCE.

# 8.0 Obligation to Refer

8.1 If the allegation is upheld the ALLIANCE will, where appropriate, inform Disclosure Scotland of the outcome and notify OSCR as appropriate under the notifiable events policy. For staff who are regulated by professional bodies e.g. SSSC, NMC, HSPC, consideration will be given as to whether these bodies should be informed.

# 9.0 Self-harm, Threat of Suicide or Threat of Violence Against Others

9.1 Should a person with whom a staff member is engaged reveal that they plan to put themselves or others at risk of serious harm, the staff member may be required to breach confidentiality (in accordance with data protection policy) and report the situation to the appropriate authorities for the person’s own protection and/or the protection of others. Data protection allows for this in circumstances where the vital interests of the person and others require protection. However, before breaching confidentiality staff members should seek the advice of their line manager or HR except where there is evidence of imminent risk of serious harm to vulnerable people or colleagues. In these circumstances’ individuals should contact the emergency services and report the circumstances to their line manager, HR or Chief Officer - Operations at the earliest opportunity thereafter.

# 10.0 Sharing Personal Details

10.1 Other than in exceptional circumstances (as discussed in the previous paragraph) staff should not share personal details of individuals unless they have explicit permission to do so and can prove such permission exists.

# 11.0 Lone Working

11.1 Staff working in lone working environments face specific health and safety issues including the potential for violence, aggression and accident and illness.

11.2 This includes ALLIANCE staff whose working activities can involve periods of time during their working day where they are without any kind of close or direct supervision or in contact with other colleagues including;

* Mobile workers working away from their fixed base e.g. on domiciliary visits (e.g. Community Links Practitioners)
* Staff working in isolation in fixed establishments
* Staff working outwith normal working hours
* Staff working from home.

11.3 It is the responsibility of individual line managers with their staff members to develop checking out/in systems that update their line managers on their whereabouts, times and contact details whilst engaged in out of office activity, through for example maintaining an up to date Outlook diary and regularly checking in to reassure line managers of their safety and wellbeing. The system must suit both line managers and their staff.

11.4 The agreed system should ensure include staff who are:

* travelling
* out of the workplace
* working alone from the workplace
* working from home

11.5 CLPs must use the safe shores system and ensure that they have this on their person and active when working.

# 12.0 Support and Supervision

12.1 People affected by this policy work with, and come into contact with, a range of people including those who may have suffered adversity and trauma. Individuals may have to deal with sensitive and challenging issues.

12.2 Managers have a duty to ensure that all people affected by this policy have access to regular support and supervision meetings and that at these meetings they are given the opportunity to talk about their wellbeing. More information on this can be found in the Staff and Supervision policies.

# 13.0 Prevention and Protection

13.1 Everyone affected by this policy must:

* Always act professionally within their role.
* Only those with an appropriate PVG check should spend time alone with children or vulnerable adults.
* Must report and record suspicions, disclosure or allegations of abuse
* Not use sexually or racially provocative language
* Not allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
* Not allow bullying or inappropriate language to go unchallenged
* Not take photographs of vulnerable adults of children and young people without proper consents
* Wear clothing appropriate to their role.
* Ensure that their vehicle is roadworthy, properly insured and taxed (where appropriate) when used for ALLIANCE business.
* Must not Engage in any relationship with children, young people or vulnerable adults outwith the parameters of their professional relationship

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