



SIT-POL-02-02
Safeguarding Adults Policy

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 As a housing provider, Torus is expected to have its own Safeguarding Adults Policy and associated procedures. The policy in the main will follow those set by the Local Authority Multi Agency Safeguarding Boards. This policy sets out our responsibilities to ensure we remain compliant with local Safeguarding procedures including adapting the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal.
- 1.2 The new Torus group structure will ensure that Safeguarding becomes everyone's responsibility and will develop a culture of never turning a blind eye and always taking responsibility across all members of staff within the Group and its subsidiary companies. This is a very obvious statement to make, however, if adults at risk, young people and children are to be effectively protected from abuse/harm, then we need to ensure this commitment is explicitly understood, embedded into our strategic framework and implemented into operational practices throughout the Group.
- 1.3 The publication in 2000 of national guidance, No Secrets, by the Department of Health and the Home Office raised the profile of abuse of vulnerable adults. Since its publication, adult safeguarding services have developed and public awareness and sensitivity has continued to grow. From the 1st April 2015 the new Care Act will put adult safeguarding on a legal footing and we will be required to fulfil our responsibilities as a key partner, given the crucial importance of multi-agency working to prevent those at risk from being harmed.
- 1.4 The emphasis is increasingly being put upon organisations working effectively together to prevent people from being abused and empowerment to ensure people remain at the heart of the process. It is therefore paramount that Safeguarding is implicitly embedded into Torus vision, values and customer service principles

2. What is Safeguarding?

- 2.1 Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live safely, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisation's working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, whilst at the same time making sure the adults wellbeing is promoted including where appropriate having regard to the views, wishes and feelings and beliefs.

3. Principles

- 3.1 This policy is based upon the principles and values that govern how safeguarding procedures should be implemented. These reflect the most recent national guidance that will be enshrined in law via the Care Act under which Local Authorities will be required to embed into their Multi-Agency procedures. The underpinning aim is to achieve good outcomes for adults at risk, based upon a culture of acceptable risk (including a person's right to make the "wrong" decision). The six principles are explained below:
 - **Empowerment** – adults should be in control of their own lives and their consent is needed for decisions and actions designed to protect them. It is therefore vital that, if someone has mental capacity and is able to make their own decisions, they maintain control, and the professional's role is to support their decision making at each stage of the process. This includes taking action only with consent unless there is clear justification to act contrary to the person's wishes e.g. if they lack mental capacity, or they and/or others are in danger.
 - **Protection** – procedures should provide a framework by which people can be supported to safeguard themselves from abuse/harm, or be protected where they are unable to make their own decisions about their safety (due to reasons of mental capacity)

- **Prevention** – this is the primary goal and everyone has a role in preventing abuse from occurring. This includes promoting awareness and understanding and supporting people to safeguard themselves. It also refers to organisations having systems in place to minimise the risk of abuse.
- **Proportionality** – is the responsibility to ensure that responses to concerns/alerts are proportional to the assessed risk and the nature of the allegation/concern. Proportional decisions need to take into account the principles of empowerment and protection. Where a person lacks the mental capacity, any decisions made on their behalf must be made in the person’s “best interests” and be least restrictive to their rights and freedoms.
- **Partnerships** – working together to prevent and respond effectively to incidents or concerns of abuse. This includes working with the person to support their decision making, with relatives, friends, informal carers and other representatives (e.g. advocates) to achieve positive outcomes for the person at risk. Also working collaboratively with other agencies and for statutory agencies to value the role of non-statutory partners.
- **Accountability** – involves transparency in decision making, by individuals and organisations, ensuring that defensible decisions are made and there are clear lines of accountability. This means that organisations, their staff and partners understand what is expected of them, that they act on those responsibilities and accept collective accountability for safeguarding arrangements.

4. Definition of Abuse

Abuse has been defined as

“The violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by another person or persons”
(*No Secrets* DH 2000)

It is behaviour that either **deliberately or unknowingly** causes harm or endangers life or infringes on rights.

It may be a **single or repeated** act. It may be **deliberate neglect or lack of appropriate action**. It can also be where the person is persuaded to do something to which s/he has not consented or cannot consent.

Abuse causes harm or distress to a person. It can often occur where there is an expectation of trust

Abuse is often a crime. For example, assault, rape, theft, fraud, domestic abuse, harassment/discrimination, anti-social behaviour, hate crime including disability hate crime, wilful neglect or mistreatment.

5. Definition of an Adult at Risk

- 5.1** Under the Department of Health’s *No Secrets* guidance (2000) the most commonly used definition of abuse that is used by statutory partners and defines an adult at risk is:

“a person over the age of eighteen who is or may be in need of a social care service by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation

The Care Act widens that and refers to a person:

- who has needs for care and support (whether or not the Authority is meeting any of those needs)
- who is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or neglect
- and, as a result of those needs, is unable to protect his/herself against the abuse or neglect or risk of it.

An adult at risk may therefore be a person who, for example:

- Has a physical disability and/or sensory impairment
- Has a learning disability
- Has mental health needs, including dementia or personality disorder
- Is dependent on others to maintain their quality of life
- Has a long term illness or condition
- Lacks the mental capacity to make particular decisions and is in need of care and support.

This is not an exhaustive list.

6. Practice

- 6.1** Torus has arrangements in place to ensure incidences of concerns and or abuse are effectively recorded and managed to ensure the group is fulfilling its corporate strategic duties. The Safeguarding Operational Group will ensure that procedures are in place and will monitor the Safeguarding performance of the organisation.
- 6.2** There are a defined number of front facing officer/team leader/manger roles within the organisation that require an enhanced DBS check which will require renewing every 3 years. The Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Operational Group will monitor the number of checks in place with Organisational Development against the number of roles and employees.
- 6.3** An annual review of all abuse cases across the whole organisation will be undertaken by the Strategic Lead and the SOG and shared via the Executive Management Team.
- 6.4** In addition reflective learning from the annual review, any lessons learned and/or areas for improvement from serious/significant incidents (including “near misses”) are reviewed as and when these happen. Immediately following such a review the outcomes are then shared across the Group via OLT.
- 6.5** All serious safeguarding incidents including any that involve staff will always be reported to the relevant Local Authority. The Director of OD will always be notified of any incident (either alleged, suspected or actual) that involves a member of staff.
- 6.6** The Corporate Risk Register must include reference to safeguarding.

7. Associated Documents

7.1 Safeguarding should not be a stand-alone policy or a separate activity, it should be very much part of our wider policy and operational frameworks. The safeguarding operational group will feed into a variety of interlinking policies and procedures to ensure that we fulfil our safeguarding responsibilities.

In particular:

- Governance
- Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing
- Professional Boundaries and Lone Working
- ABC Respond
- Training provision
- Domestic Abuse
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Disciplinary
- Confidentiality and Data Protection
- Recruitment (including DBS Policy)
- Anti-Fraud, Anti-Bribery, Anti Money-Laundering
- Risk Register

8. Communications

8.1 Prevention is included in our commitment to safeguarding and this includes the promotion of awareness amongst our customers through a variety of mechanisms including one to one advice and support, awareness raising via communication channels including social media, challenge and support where abuse is suspected.

9. Training & Development

9.1 Awareness training is carried out as part of our initial induction arrangements, with regular awareness raising sessions undertaken with staff and formal training for all Managers. All staff will be trained on:-
Understanding the 6 Principles that safeguarding is built on

Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse
Know how to be vigilant and able to respond
Have a clear understanding of how to report
Clear support from managers and co-workers about the importance of the issue
Be persistent in ensuring that the matter is resolved and not left

10. Equality & Diversity

10.1 When implementing this policy and procedure we will ensure that we comply with the Equality Act 2010.

11. Policy Review

11.1 This policy and the associated procedures should be reviewed every two years or as and when there are changes to legislation.