

Failsworth Walking Group

Safeguarding Adults policy

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1. Statement of purpose

- 1.1 Failsworth Walking Group makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe.
- 1.2 All people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from, bullying, neglect, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.
- 1.3 This policy seeks to ensure that Failsworth Walking Group undertakes its responsibilities with specific reference to the protection of vulnerable adults and children and will respond to any concerns appropriately.
- 1.4 It recognises that all the volunteers of Failsworth Walking Group hold, to varying degrees, a position of trust with the community of Oldham. As part of a wider commitment to the safety and wellbeing of our employees and volunteers it establishes a framework to support staff in their safe practices by
 - clarifying what is expected from everybody in terms of safe practice.
 - explaining what to do when employees and volunteers have concerns.

2. Legislative framework

- 2.1 The **Care Act 2014**, which was implemented 2015, was the most significant reform of care and support for 60 years. It put people and their careers in control of their care and support and it included a greater emphasis on protecting the most vulnerable people from abuse and neglect. The Care Act brought in a new statutory framework for safeguarding adults in England. It replaced the *No Secrets Guidance*, which was a UK Government publication from the Department of Health, published in 2000. It provided **guidance** on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect adults deemed "at risk" from harm and/or abuse. Although this was statutory guidance it was not the law itself. The Care Act is a large document – about 500pages – and it provides guidance on the different sections of the Care Act. Chapter 14 relates to Safeguarding.
- 2.2 The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 was passed because of the Bichard Inquiry arising from the Soham murders in 2002, when Ian Huntley (their school caretaker) murdered the schoolchildren Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells. Recommendation 19 of the Inquiry Report highlighted the need for a single agency to vet all individuals who want to work or volunteer with children or vulnerable adults and to bar unsuitable people from doing so.
- 2.3 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects whistleblowers from detrimental treatment from their employers.
- 2.4 The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 extends provisions to combat DV and created a new offence of causing or allowing the death of a child or adult at risk.
- 2.5 Health and Social Care Act 2008 was created to ensure that health and social care settings are safe and of quality, and so the Care Quality Commission was established to inspect these settings.
- 2.6 Mental Capacity Act 2005 has 5 key principles: ultimately, it's about not assuming a person is mentally incapable of making the best/safe decision for themselves and being given all practicable help before they are considered not to be able to make their own decisions. If it has been assessed and found that someone doesn't have the mental capacity to make a safe decision/choice, then the adult at risk is encouraged to be involved and participate as much as possible in the safeguarding process, informed at every stage of any process, and everything is carried out in the least intrusive way possible with their best interests at the forefront of any decision. Professionals and other staff have a responsibility to ensure they understand and always work in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

- 2.7 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) aims to make sure that people in care homes are looked after in a way that doesn't inappropriately restrict their freedom.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 For the purposes of this policy a child is defined as someone who is under 18.

- 3.2 Vulnerable adults (now referred to as 'Adult at Risk') are those that may be at more risk of harm than others because they depend on others for care. This may be due to:

- -Age
- -Illness
- -Suffer from mental ill health
- -Have learning or physical disabilities
- -Have sight or hearing impairment or loss
- -Have dementia
- -Misuse of alcohol or drugs

4. Application and review of this policy

- 4.1 The committee of Failsworth Walking Group is responsible for ensuring that all volunteers adhere to this policy.
- 4.2 Failsworth Walking Group values the resilience of all individuals and communities and seeks to empower people to be able to build on the massive contribution they are already making to ensure that children and vulnerable adults enjoy the same rights as others. We will actively listen to the wishes and feelings of those we work with and will ensure that our safeguarding policy reflects this. Policies only have influence if they are put into practise. Monitoring and reviewing this policy and the associated procedures will happen on a regular basis.

5. Safe working practices for all paid staff and volunteers

- 5.1 It is everyone's responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy:
1. To promote safe practices by being an excellent role model
 2. Encourage open communication by treating all people equally with respect and dignity.
 3. Share information appropriately with others and recognise that there are times when confidentiality is essential – verbal or written.

4. Provide access to learning opportunities/signposting and empower others to share in decision making.
5. Positively involve people in developing safe practices wherever possible.
6. When planning any public event ensure that risk assessments take account of the safety of children, and vulnerable adults.
7. Always working in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations
8. Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with service users.
9. Keep up to date with training, qualifications, and insurance.
10. Report concerns about poor practice and abuse as laid out in this policy.

6. Safe selection and recruitment

6.1 It is the responsibility of the organisation to:

- Assess what level of contact the role requires with children and vulnerable adults.
- To ensure that the core competencies required for this role are taken into consideration.
- To ensure appropriate safeguarding checks, including DBS checks as defined below, are considered when the role description is agreed.
- Undertake open and transparent selection and recruitment processes for all paid staff/ volunteers.
- Check necessary identification – address, qualifications, criminal convictions.
- Accept two references which request information regarding safe practices.
- Recruit all paid staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by the appropriate practices and procedures outlined within this document.
- Ensure all volunteers have access to related policies and procedures.

6.2 What level of DBS check is appropriate?

- Standard checks are appropriate for volunteers who have the trust of the community and have access to groups working with children or vulnerable adults (as defined in Section 3)
- Enhanced DBS checks should be undertaken where there is regular/ lone contact with children or vulnerable adults (where eligible)

6.3 A person who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults will be breaking the law if they work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer, with those groups. An organisation which knowingly employs someone who is barred to work with those groups will also be breaking the law.

7. Safe management

7.1 It is the responsibility of committee to:

- Ensure paid staff/ volunteers are clear about their responsibilities and your responsibilities regarding safe practices and procedures.
- To support staff/volunteers to apply safe working practices, particularly when this is difficult. Protection from abuse is a sensitive subject for everyone and complex decisions must be made. Failsworth Walking Group provides access to counselling, if required.
- Ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge required to be effective in their roles, through induction and ongoing development.
- Ensure that their probationary review assesses their competent application of safe practices.
- Ensure that staff/ volunteers have access to other related procedures- grievance and disciplinary procedures, whistle blowing.
- provide appropriate guidance and learning opportunities, throughout induction and
- Ensure that all paid staff/ volunteers have access to regular support/ supervision.
- Review the role, regarding safe practices, should there be any changes to the level of contact that the paid staff/ volunteer has with vulnerable adults and children.

8. Responding to concerns about poor practice within the organisation

8.1 As a general rule, all concerns are to be discussed with the Committee.

8.2 If there are issues of unsafe practise or abuse that must be taken further the committee must ensure that Failsworth Walking Group's policies and procedures are adhered to.

9. Responding to concerns about poor practice when working with a group or organisation

9.1 All concerns must be discussed with the Committee and the discussion should be recorded.

9.2 Where necessary, the Committee should seek advice from the appropriate body. Where the concern involves children, the committee should talk to the Lead Area Designated Officer or Adult Safeguarding Co-ordinator (details in Section 12) to clarify areas of responsibility in dealing with the concern.

- 9.3 The group/ organisation should be involved in the early discussions about the course of action, to enable them to make informed decisions. This should be followed up by clear, written information and guidance and summary of agreed course of action to the group / organisation.
- 9.4 A written summary of how the concern was dealt with should be forwarded to the appropriate safeguarding officers (LADO/ Adult Safeguarding Co-ordinator). If there are any queries/ concerns left outstanding, then these should also be raised with the relevant officer so that resolution can be sought.
- 9.5 Consideration should be given to holding a debriefing for those Failsworth Walking Group staff, the group and other agencies involved (if deemed appropriate). Safeguarding issues can be emotionally distressing, and it allows Failsworth Walking Group to reflect and 'learn lessons' to inform future situations and practice.

10. Suspicions, allegations, and disclosures of abuse

- 10.1 What you should do if someone discloses abuse to you:
- React calmly.
 - Reassure the person that they were right to tell.
 - Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
 - Do not ask about explicit details.
 - Reassure but do not promise confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
 - Inform the person what you will do next.
 - Make a full and written record of what has been said/heard as soon as possible.

11. Reporting abuse

- 11.1 However, if you receive information about alleged or potential abuse you must report this without delay.
- All suspicions, allegations or disclosures of abuse must be reported to the Director, or in his absence they must be reported to the Director's nominated deputy.
 - All reports will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately in line with legislative guidance. It is not Failsworth Walking Group's responsibility to investigate allegations of abuse - the appropriate agencies will be contacted immediately.
 - If you have any concerns that this guidance is not being followed you must contact a member of the board of trustees, who is not the Chair.

12. Useful contacts

- 12.1 If you are worried and do not feel comfortable talking to anyone from Failsworth Walking Group the following are useful contacts.
- 12.2 If you are unsure that a child/children may be at risk of suffering and are worried, contact:
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub 0161 770 7777
 - Lead Area Designated Officer adult.mash@oldham.gov.uk (adults)
 - NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.
- 12.3 If you are unsure that a vulnerable adult may be suffering and are worried contact:
- Adult Services, 0161 770 7770/6936

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