Actualize Wellbeing

Safeguarding Policy – children and vulnerable adults

* Safeguarding Policy – children and vulnerable adults

**1.    Definition**

Safeguarding is a term which is broader than ‘child protection’ or ‘adult protection’ as it also includes prevention. Safeguarding has been defined as:

* All agencies working with children, young people and their families, or vulnerable adults taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children’s welfare are minimised; and
* Where there are concerns about children or vulnerable adults welfare, all agencies taking appropriate actions to address those concerns

Actualize Wellbeing is aware that it has a duty to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse.  Abuse can be defined as any behaviour which knowingly or unwittingly causes harm, endangers life or violates rights.  Abuse may be physical, sexual, psychological, financial or material, or neglect.

It is possible that Actualize Wellbeing will become aware of actual or potential abuse when carrying out its work, and this Policy sets out Actualize Wellbeing’s commitments to protecting these groups from harm.

**2.    Key aims**

Actualize Wellbeing believes that adults and children have rights and that these should be respected and safeguarded.  Actualize Wellbeing is therefore committed to:

* Supporting and working in partnership with agencies tasked with protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse or harm.
* Having an appropriate staff and volunteer recruitment policy and procedure – ensuring that all staff and volunteers have been Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) cleared and that no-one has contact with our clients or their families before a satisfactory DBS report has been received.
* Making responsibilities regarding these issues clear to staff and volunteers delivering services where there may be issues affecting these groups
* Ensuring that all groups irrespective of age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, nationality or economic status have the right to be protected from abuse
* Responding quickly and effectively to issues when they arise
* Sharing information appropriately and on a need to know basis.  A separate Data Protection and Information Sharing Policy and guidelines sets out the procedures for this.

**3.    Key principles**

The following key principles apply to this Policy:

* The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is the key concern – and the need to protect them from abuse will override any other principles
* It is the responsibility of everyone within the organisation to report any concerns that they have promptly and to the correct agencies
* The Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy will apply (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy BACP) – and all reasonable attempts will be made to protect confidentiality and maintain a relationship of trust and openness between Actualize Wellbeing and its clients.  It is recognised that there may sometimes be a conflict between the applicable principles within the BACP guidelines, and that it is not always possible to reconcile all the principles. In these circumstances the counsellor will consider all the relevant circumstances and ensure that they can justify decisions about sharing information that are made.
* Wherever possible, client consent will be sought prior to disclosing any information.  Whether this is possible will be considered on a case by case basis – and consent may not be required where there are exceptional circumstances due to the urgency or seriousness of the situation.
* Actualize Wellbeing will comply with the Buckinghamshire County Council Safeguarding Children and Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Protocols and referrals procedures.
* While working within a school environment, Actualize Wellbeing staff will follow the school safeguarding policy and procedure. Actualize Wellbeing staff will ensure that they are familiar with the school’s safeguarding policy and procedure. Actualize Wellbeing staff will be aware of the school’s Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL).

**4.    Who this policy affects**

This policy affects all staff, volunteers, directors and clients.

**5.    Implementation**

To implement this policy, Actualize Wellbeing will:

* Brief staff and volunteers on this policy and related procedures
* Develop guidelines and procedures which will be available to staff and volunteers
* Provide training to staff and volunteers on this Policy and related procedures as required
* Work within the Buckinghamshire County Council’s Safeguarding protocols – applying these protocols when sharing or receiving information regarding a person (s) safety
* Promote the Policy to clients and other stakeholders
* Identify a lead staff member with responsibility for implementing this policy and overseeing the management of individual cases

**6.    Monitoring and Review**

6.1 This Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it complies with legislative and regulatory requirements and best practice.  It is subject to approval by Actualize Wellbeing directors and will be put to the directors for approval after each review.

 6.2 Performance against the Policy will be monitored through:

* Discussions of safeguarding issues as part of the induction, regular one to one and group supervision processes
* Keeping statistical information regarding any issues that are reported – and reporting these to the Board annually

**7.    Related guidance, policy and procedures:**

* DBS Policy
* Data Protection and Privacy Policy
* Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP 2010)
* Buckinghamshire County Council Safeguarding Children Board Protocols and procedures
* Buckinghamshire County Council Safeguarding Adults procedures.