

King's Lynn Night Shelter

Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Aims

This policy has been drawn up in recognition that there is an ever-present risk of abuse happening to vulnerable adults (Adults at Risk). It is our duty to prevent abuse and to take effective action when abuse is suspected or disclosed. Abuse is unacceptable in all circumstances.

This policy sets out the steps that the King's Lynn Night Shelter will take to safeguard guests who are at risk of abuse and neglect and the responsibilities of all staff and volunteers.

The Night Shelter works with the Diocese of Norwich Safeguarding Team as our safeguarding provider and a formal service level agreement is expected at the time of review.

The policy will be renewed annually.

Good Practice Statement

The best defence against abuse is the strength of values incorporated in the Night Shelter culture. We believe that all guests are entitled to be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, race, gender, sexual orientation, health condition, ability or any other factors, and are equally deserving of our concern and care.

Safety is embedded within good practice in our work and guests are encouraged to protect themselves appropriately, discuss concerns and make their views known to staff.

Who are Adults at Risk?

Adults at Risk are people who need more help than others with staying safe and with daily living. This may include:

- Older people
- People with disabilities
- People with mental health problems
- People who have been ill for a long time
- People who are misusing drugs or alcohol

At the Night Shelter we count all our guests as Adults at Risk by the fact (in addition to any other factors) of them having nowhere safe to stay.

What is adult abuse?

Adult abuse is when someone hurts an adult at risk. There are many different types of abuse, such as:

- **Physical** - ill-treatment such as hitting or pushing, whether or not it causes physical injury; racially or religiously motivated physical attacks; a requirement for someone to work in an unsafe environment; theft of prescription medicines (see also below).
- **Emotional or psychological** - use of threats or fear; misuse of power in a relationship; bullying; harassment; lack of privacy or choice; deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation; making someone feel worthless; verbal abuse; humiliation; blaming; coercion, including theft of prescribed medication or coercing into taking illegal drugs.
- **Sexual** - any sexual act carried out without the informed consent of the other, both contact and non-contact; or between a person and someone whose relationship with them is one of pastoral responsibility or a position of trust. Non-contact abuse may include sexual remarks and suggestions, introduction to indecent material, indecent exposure. Contact abuse may include rape, indecent assault, being forced to touch another person, sexual intercourse or being pressured to consenting to sexual acts for any purpose including in exchange for money or drugs.
- **Spiritual** – inappropriate use of religious belief or practice to persuade, indoctrinate or control; intrusive healing or deliverance ministries.
- **Financial or legal** - wilful extortion or manipulation of a person's legal or civil rights. Theft of money or goods; misuse of finance or property; exploitation of resources; misuse of a position of authority to persuade a person to make gifts or legacies or change a will; control of a person's money or bank account without their consent.
- **Neglect** - any neglectful pattern of behaviour which seriously impairs another person. This may include failure to intervene when an adult needs help; not giving personal care, deliberately withholding visual or hearing aids or food or drink; restricting access to medical services; denying contact with family etc.
- **Discrimination** – unfair or unkind treatment of one person over another.
- **Institutional abuse** – failure of an institution to provide the best possible care.
- **Domestic abuse** – threatening behaviour, coercive control, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members.
- **Self-neglect** – failure to look after oneself, either through illness or any other factor.
- **Modern slavery** – forcing others to work for no pay or under illegal conditions or against their will; buying and selling people as property to be traded.

Prevention and Risk Management

Prevention

The Night Shelter employs various strategies to reduce the risk of abuse and neglect: safer recruitment, training, and a culture of good practice.

Recruitment

- Staff and volunteers, including Trustees, will be recruited in accordance with the Church of England Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance 2021:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance>
- All staff and volunteers, including Trustees, will be interviewed and references sought prior to appointment. An enhanced DBS check will be carried out for all Trustees and all staff in contact with guests.
- All staff and volunteers, including Trustees, will complete an application form and a Confidential Declaration Form. Responses will be shared with the Diocese of Norwich Safeguarding Team and risk-assessed. A new Confidential Declaration Form will be completed annually.
- All volunteers will be interviewed and references sought prior to starting work.
- See Policy Statement for Recruitment of Ex-Offenders.

Training

- All staff and trustees will complete the Church of England Safeguarding Training Levels C0 & C1 (or equivalent within their own church denomination) and any further training as recommended by them.
- The Director and Chair of Trustees will also complete Level C2 (Leadership) and any further training as recommended.
- The Trustees and any staff involved in recruitment including the Director will complete the Safer Recruitment and People Management module.
- The above training in line with Church of England guidelines is renewed every 3 years.
- All new volunteers will receive training in a basic understanding of safeguarding before beginning work at the Night Shelter and will be encouraged to complete the Church of England Safeguarding Training.
- All staff and volunteers have two named contacts who may be approached with any safeguarding concerns. This will normally be the Director (the Designated Safeguarding Officer) and Trustee for Safeguarding.

Good practice

- All guests are risk assessed when a referral is made to the Night Shelter, and again on arrival if the referral has taken place earlier in the day. The risk assessment will take into account the guest's need

for shelter and safety, and the safety and wellbeing of everyone else (staff, volunteers and guests) in the building. The Night Shelter accepts guests both referred from other agencies and self-referred but must have a completed referral form for any guest referred to us from an agency or third party.

- Risk assessments are treated as working documents in progress and will be updated during a guest's stay with us. As a general rule we must know a guest's name and date of birth before allowing them to stay. The Night Shelter will check any known risks with Police before accepting a self-referral, or (for self-referrals accepted in the evenings or at weekends) on the next working day.
- A list of guests is communicated to the Police and other relevant parties weekly.
- Volunteers should not be on their own unsupervised with a guest for an extended period of time and should follow the guidelines and procedures in the Volunteer Handbook as well as **the Code of Safer Working Practice** (Appendix 2 below).
- The Staff Handbook contains a number of policies and procedures which all staff are expected to follow including the Code of Safer Working Practice (Appendix 2 below). All incidents and concerns should be recorded on the daily log or separate Incident Report and passed to the Director in the first instance (the Safeguarding Officer), or to the Trustee for Safeguarding if the Director is on leave, as soon as possible.

Alerting

Any member of staff or volunteer may be alerted to the possibility of abuse. Alerting could mean that an act of abuse is witnessed, a person is saying that abuse has occurred, or suspicions are raised.

- All staff and volunteers are responsible for reporting concerns, disclosures or possible indications of abuse. The Director should be informed in the first instance, or the Trustee for Safeguarding if the Director is on leave or the allegation relates to the Director. The Director and/or Trustee will seek advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, Adult Social Care or Police regarding the next steps to be taken.
- Information about abuse must never be withheld intentionally as failure to disclose may have an influence on the future safety of an individual.
- Disclosures and concerns should not be treated as confidential between a guest and an individual member of staff or volunteer (ie no agreement to "keep a secret").

Signs of abuse

Among Adults at Risk in a Night Shelter setting these may include, but are not limited to:

- Physical signs: bruises, cigarette burns, cuts or grazes especially on the arms, unexplained illnesses, vomiting, sleeplessness, incontinence, drunkenness (if unusual for the individual), odour or soiled clothes beyond what might be expected from a guest's circumstances and/or time on the streets.

- Behavioural signs: unexplained change of demeanour, fearfulness, keeping close to staff, reluctance to be in certain spaces or with certain people, inappropriately sexual behaviour or dress or conversation, eating alone or not at all.
- Emotional signs: tearfulness, paranoia, adopting the role of “child” to a staff member’s “parenting”, attention seeking, difficulty containing anger or frustration.

It is important to recognise that among our Night Shelter guests we will experience a range of conditions including mental health conditions, learning disabilities and addiction, and the effects of cold and exhaustion, and at any one time a range of factors may be involved.

Victims and survivors of abuse

- It is not unusual for the homeless to disclose past abuse (as children or as adults) and it is essential that we offer the best possible response to victims. The above procedure of documentation and reporting should be followed and the Night Shelter undertakes to co-operate fully with any subsequent police investigation.
- Guests making disclosure of past abuse should be signposted whenever possible to organisations which can help and support them.

The Night Shelter will seek to protect survivors of abuse from the possibility of further harm and abuse whilst they are guests with us and will seek to offer compassion and understanding of any current behaviour or circumstances in which past abuse or trauma may be a factor.

Supporting guests with a history of abusing

At the same time as protecting and caring for survivors the Night Shelter also has a duty of care towards guests whose referrals contain information of a history of abusing or for whom allegations or incidents may occur while they are staying with us. We recognise that abusers may also be vulnerable adults in need of shelter and support and our approach to welcoming them is risk-assessed on an individual basis.

- The names of all guests staying are shared with the Police weekly who will inform the Director of any confidential information in addition to that contained on the referral form (for example if a guest is on the Sex Offenders Register). The Director will share this information with the Trustee for Safeguarding and risk assess taking into account other guests currently staying.
- Guests about whom allegations of sexual offences against children have been made, whether true or not, are especially vulnerable and may be at serious risk of harm from other guests and members of the public if allegations are known. The Night Shelter will take a proactive and robust approach to ensuring their safety and will report any threats or concerns to the Police.

- In the event of domestic violence between guests, we will work with both parties and with our partner agencies including alternative accommodation providers for the protection of the victim and to support the abuser so that neither is homeless as a result.

Children and Young People

Access to the Night Shelter is restricted to those aged 18 and over while guests are present. This includes volunteers, family and friends of staff, volunteers and guests, visitors, and potential guests. The Night Shelter is committed to following the guidelines set out under the Norfolk County Council's Children's Advice and Duty Service <https://www.norfolkscb.org/people-working-with-children/how-to-raise-a-concern/> in the event of need.

Appendix I: Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

- The Night Shelter has a legal obligation to protect vulnerable adults from people who have committed serious offences, and as such meets the requirements in respect of exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- DBS checks for staff will include details of caution, reprimands or final warnings, as well as convictions, including "spent" convictions and where the post is subject to Enhanced Disclosure, other relevant non-conviction information, such as police enquiries and pending prosecutions will be included.
- Criminal records will be taken into account for recruitment purposes only when the conviction is relevant.
- When considering whether to accept a person as a volunteer or employee who has a criminal record, the following factors will be considered:
 - the potential candidate's suitability for the role
 - the relevance of the offence
 - the level of risk they pose (to the organisation and those that come into contact with it)
 - the setting in which the volunteering activity will take place.
- It might be necessary to seek further information from the candidate including the following:
 - whether or not the conviction is relevant to the volunteering opportunity
 - the nature and seriousness of the offence
 - the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation offered by the applicant
 - how old the applicant was when the offence was committed
 - the length of time since the offence occurred
 - whether the behaviour that constituted the offence is still a cause for concern

- whether the context behind that behaviour is still a cause for concern
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed
- the applicant's attitude to the offence. Is it one of remorse? Does the applicant take responsibility for it and recognise the harm they caused?
- whether the offence has since been decriminalised.
- We are committed to compliance with the Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice for Registered Persons and other recipients of Disclosure information. This Document can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>
- The Night Shelter will follow the Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy with respect to information about criminal offences.
- If you are in any doubt about your declaration, you should seek further advice e.g. from the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Appendix 2: Code of Safer Working Practice

This Code has been adapted from the Church of England Code of Safer Working Practice with additional material relevant to working with vulnerable adults at the Night Shelter. It is an integral part of the Night Shelter's Safeguarding Policy and applies at all time to all staff and volunteers when engaging with guests or other individuals being supported by the Night Shelter, both on site and in any other location. The Code sets out what we expect from anyone involved in our charitable work, in both paid and voluntary roles, and is one of the ways we ensure high standards of safeguarding in all we do.

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to the Safeguarding Officer. Staff and volunteers who breach this code may be subject to disciplinary procedures or asked to leave their role. Serious breaches may also result in a referral made to the relevant statutory agency.

All those working on behalf of the Charity with vulnerable adults including guests and others seeking the help of the Night Shelter ("service users") must:

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity;
- Respect people's rights to personal privacy;
- Ensure that their own language, tone of voice and body language are respectful;
- Ensure that service users know who they can talk to about a personal concern;
- Record and report any concerns about a service user and/or the behaviour of another worker with the Safeguarding Officer. All written records should be signed and dated;
- Obtain written consent for any photographs or videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored.

- Always aim to work with or within sight of another staff member or volunteer.
- Ensure another staff member or volunteer is informed if you need to accompany a service user to the toilet or provide first aid or any form of personal care.
- Respond warmly to a service user who needs comforting but make sure there are other staff or volunteers around.
- Use first names only wherever possible.
- Some of our service users will have a poorer understanding of boundaries than you do and will need help in keeping you, and them, safe. Gently discourage inappropriate comments. Tell a colleague if you have a concern so that they can support you by ensuring you are not alone with the individual, or by taking a lead in their care for the remainder of your shift.
- Be aware that you have an unequal relationship as a volunteer or staff member with our service users, and you may matter more to them than they do to you. Be friendly but don't seek to build friendships or relationships outside the Night Shelter. Don't arrange to meet up for coffee, offer help beyond your role at the Night Shelter or try to find them work. It's fine to say hello in the street!

You must not:

- Use any form of physical punishment;
- Be sexually suggestive about or to an individual;
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual or group;
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying;
- Show favouritism to any one individual or group;
- Allow an individual to involve them in excessive attention seeking;
- Allow unknown adults access to guests staying at the Night Shelter. Visitors should always be accompanied by a member of staff or suitable volunteer;
- Provide lifts to service users, unless you are a member of staff or a volunteer accompanied by a member of staff, AND a copy of your business insurance is held in the office, AND a colleague is aware of where you are going (see Lone Working Policy).
- Take photographs on personal phones or cameras as this means that images are stored on personal devices.
- Don't give your home phone number or home address to a service user, or invite them home.
- Don't give a service user your mobile number, email address, or befriend them on social media. The Night Shelter is unable to accommodate personal friends of staff or volunteers so the consequence of doing this is likely to be that an individual will be homeless and/or you may be subject to disciplinary procedures.
- Don't give or lend money to service users, or offer to help with their own money. If you are concerned about their situation, refer them to the member of staff on duty.
- Don't share tobacco or cigarettes with service users, or accept theirs.

- From time to time service users may wish to give gifts to staff or volunteers. It can mean a lot to someone to be able to give something away but the general rule is that all gifts should be shared with the team: explain this to the service user and let the member of staff on duty know. Sometimes a gift may be excessive or inappropriate, the member of staff on duty will return this to the service user.
- Don't give personal gifts to service users: if you become aware of a need and would like to donate a needed item, give it to a staff member / a colleague to pass on and let the gift come from the Night Shelter rather than from you. We are grateful for your help!

Acceptable Touch

Sympathetic attention, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by all adults. Some physical contact with service users can be wholly appropriate. However, abusers can use touch that appears safe to 'normalise' physical contact which then becomes abusive. As a general rule, the use of touch between adults in positions of responsibility and those with whom they are working or volunteering should be initiated by the service user themselves, and kept to the minimum. In addition to this, always follow the guidelines below:

- Ask permission (consent) before you touch someone;
- Allow the other person to determine the degree of touch except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention);
- Be aware that service users under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or who are experiencing mental health difficulties, may be unable to consent, or may be unable at a later stage to recall consent or what has happened;
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual, abusive or offensive, especially if service users are under the influence of alcohol or drugs or experiencing mental health difficulties;
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors;
- Touch should be in response to a person's needs and not related to the worker's needs.