

## Safeguarding policy

### Framework

Tandem is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all adults engaged in the breadth of its activities. Staff, Trustees, volunteers and service users will receive a copy of this policy and are expected to be committed to its implication.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of staff, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of Tandem in relation to the protection of adults from abuse.

All adults have the right to be safe from harm and should be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To explain Tandem's responsibilities in respect of the protection of staff, volunteers and service users.
- To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where safety and safeguarding issues arise.

### Legal framework

The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- The Police Act – CRB 1997
- Mental Health Act 1983
- NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

### Definitions

Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of all adults who have contact with Tandem.

Abuse is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.

It can take a number of forms, including the following:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying
- Neglect
- Financial (or material) abuse

### *Definition of Vulnerable Adults*

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

This *may* include a person who:

- is elderly and frail
- has a mental illness including dementia
- has a physical or sensory disability
- has a learning disability
- has a severe physical illness
- is a substance misuser
- is homeless

However this policy is for the protection of all adults, wherever or not they are classified as 'vulnerable'.

### **General safety**

Types of risk include:

- *risk of harm to service users from the befriending relationship:*  
risk of harm from volunteer befrienders will be managed by effective recruitment, training and screening of volunteers. Service users will have clear guidance about contacting the Coordinator in case of concerns about the befriending relationship.
- *risk of harm to self or others:*  
Tandem is committed to doing everything possible to protect people from harm, including suicide and self-harm. Volunteer befrienders will raise any concerns with the Coordinator at the first possible opportunity.
- *safety of volunteer befrienders:*  
those referred for a befriending partnership will undergo thorough checks before matching with a volunteer, and volunteer befrienders should be advised in advance of any known potential risks to themselves or to the service user and advised of appropriate safeguards. Aggression or violence, or threats of violence, by the service user will not be accepted and will result in the termination of the befriending contract.

### **Responsibilities**

All Tandem Trustees, staff and volunteers have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures. They are expected to promote good practice by being excellent role models, contributing to discussions about safeguarding and positively involving people in developing safe practices.

*In addition:*

Trustees are responsible for:

- ensuring this policy is regularly monitored and reviewed
- ensuring that the Tandem Coordinator has a valid Disclosure and Barring Service check. No formal job offer should be made until after checks for suitability are completed (including DBS and two references).

The Coordinator, in co-operation with the Line Manager, is responsible for:

- ensuring the policy is accessible to all
- ensuring that appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks are in place for all volunteers
- ensuring all volunteers understand the policy and have access to appropriate safeguarding training and information
- ensuring that any safeguarding concerns are reported to the Line Manager swiftly and appropriately

## **Implementation**

The scope of this policy is broad ranging and is implemented via a range of Tandem policies and procedures. These include:

- Grievance, disciplinary and complaints procedures
- Equal Opportunities policy
- Data protection and CRB storage policy
- Confidentiality policy

## **Training**

Training will be provided as appropriate, to ensure that Trustees, staff and volunteers are aware of Tandem's safeguarding procedures. This training will include discussion of professional boundaries which define the limits of a befriending partnership. These are a set of standards Tandem upholds that allow this often close relationship to exist, while ensuring the correct detachment is kept in place.

## **Reporting concerns**

All complaints, allegations or concerns must be taken seriously. This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that an adult has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record should be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegations and any other relevant information. This should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

### *Responding to an allegation:*

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Coordinator on that working day where possible. A volunteer shall report the matter by telephone to a Coordinator, who will discuss the matter with the Line Manager at the first possible opportunity. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made, and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported.

In the event of an incident or disclosure the Coordinator should:

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them, date and sign them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to the Line Manager for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for on-going support.

**Neither** the Tandem volunteer nor the Coordinator should:

- Contact the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate the matter or interview the alleged victim beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes (i.e. put your own interpretation or opinions in).

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse, although they may be concerned, is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred.

### **Monitoring and reviewing policy**

Tandem will monitor the following safeguarding aspects:

- Safe recruitment practices
- DBS checks undertaken
- References applied for new staff and volunteers
- Records made and kept of partnership meetings
- Monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned
- Checking that policies are up to date and relevant

This policy will be reviewed by the Trustees every year, and when there are changes in legislation.

*Revised June 2023*