➢ Introduction

Future Wolverton comes into contact with children and / or vulnerable adults through the following activities:

- Work-related training, work placements and educational provision.
- Day-to-day operation of the Old School Community Centre, Community café and Guest House, The Shop on the Square.
- Community events and activities.

➢ Policy

Future Wolverton Limited (FW) aims to make a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe.
This policy aims to assist Future Wolverton in its responsibilities with regard to the protection of children and / or vulnerable adults and assist it in making appropriate responses to any concerns.
The policy establishes a framework to support staff, contractors,volunteers and Directors in their practices and clarifies the organisation's expectations.
Future Wolverton will meet its responsibilities under UK legislation. The principal pieces of legislation and policies governing this policy are:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- The Care Act 2014
- Children and Families Act 2024
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Education Act 2011(and subsequent updates)
- The Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021
- The Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2007
- The Children Act 1989

➢ Definitions

CHILDREN

Definition of a child: A child is a person under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child).

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- preventing impairment of children's mental health and physical development.
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent in the provision of safe and effective care.
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network, through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible, and when this is in the best interests of the children.
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework (Working Together 2023).

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected

to be suffering significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside and outside the home, including online.

This can take the form of;

- Physical abuse: Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliverately induces illness in a child.
- Sexual abuse: Sexual abuse is when someone is forced, pressured or tricked into taking part in any kind of sexual activity with another person. It could be online or in person, and it can happen to anyone. Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.
- Emotional abuse: “The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development.” Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Neglect: “Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development” Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Child Exploitation: Child exploitation is when someone uses a child for financial gain, sexual gratification, labour or personal advantage.
- Female Genital Mutilation: Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision or cutting
- County lines: As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy 234 published by the Home Office, a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of ‘deal line’. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Within these definitions there are some specific safeguarding concerns:

- cyber-bullying/online bullying
- excluding a people from online activities or friendship groups
- sending threatening, upsetting or abusive messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing or malicious images or videos
- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- setting up hate sites or groups
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a person or cause trouble using their name.

Bullying can be a form of discrimination, particularly if it is based on a child’s disability, race, religion or belief, gender identity or sexuality.

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy – Future Wolverton Limited – October 2024.

ADULTS

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adults' wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. (Care and Support Statutory Guidance DH, 2016).

There are 10 types of abuse identified for adults;

1. Physical abuse
2. Domestic abuse
3. Sexual abuse
4. Psychological or emotional abuse
5. Financial and material abuse
6. Modern Slavery
7. Discriminatory abuse or Hate Crime
8. Organisational or institutional abuse
9. Neglect or acts of omission
10. Self neglect

Definition of a vulnerable adults: A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may, in some circumstances, 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

➢ **Responsibilities**

All staff, contractors and volunteers have a responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures.

Directors of Future Wolverton have responsibility to ensure:

- Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead to take responsibility for leading on safeguarding within the organisation. The DSL role is to support all staff, contractors and volunteers where there are safeguarding concerns, oversee any referrals the organisation makes, maintain records and follow up any referrals to get feedback.
- The policy is in place and appropriate.
- The policy is accessible.
- Sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated to ensure that the policy can be effectively implemented.
- The policy is monitored and reviewed.

➢ **Support for those who report abuse**

All Safeguarding concerns should be reported through the DSL.

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they are members, volunteers or service users or members of the general public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared with the appropriate authorities if they or others are at risk.There is a duty to share concerns about children with MASH (Milton Keynes Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub). Parents will be notified of any referral, providing it does not put the child at risk.
- Staff who feel that their concerns have not been addressed can contact MASH directly.

When there is a concern about an adult it must be disclosed with the individual. Adults have the right to choose to live with a risk and refuse support or for a referral to be made, providing they have the mental capacity to make that decision, there is no public interest and it is not a criminal act. Requests for a mental capacity check must go through adult services.

The Vulnerable Adult has the right:

- To be made aware of this policy.
- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously.
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout.
- To be involved in any process as appropriate.
- To receive information about the outcome.

➢ **The Designated Safeguarding lead** is *Sara Metcalfe, Business Manager*.
This person's safeguarding responsibilities are to:

- Ensure the policy is implemented
- Receive staff or volunteers concerns about safeguarding and respond to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately
- Keep up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS.
- Develop and maintain effective links with relevant agencies
- Take forward concerns about responses.

➢ **Implementation**
Safeguarding is a thread that runs through all policies, and is shaped by the safeguarding culture of the organisation, that places the safety of children and adults at the centre of everything we do.
The scope of this Safeguarding Policy is broad ranging and in practice, it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within the organisation. These include:

- Whistleblowing –ability to inform on other staff/volunteer practices within the organisation and externally.
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures – to address breaches of procedures/policies.
- Health and Safety policy - including lone working procedures, mitigating risk to staff, volunteers and clients.
- Equal Opportunities policy– ensuring safeguarding procedures are in line with this policy, in particular around discriminatory abuse and ensuring that the safeguarding policy and procedures are not discriminatory.
- Data protection (how records are stored and access to those records).

- Confidentiality (or limited confidentiality policy) ensuring that service users are aware of your duty to disclose.
- Safer recruitment protocols.
- Staff/volunteer induction.
- Staff/volunteer training.

➢ **Recruitment** Future Wolverton will endeavour to ensure that:
The following safeguarding statement is included in recruitment adverts or application details –'recruitment is done in line with safe recruitment practices.'

- Job or role descriptions for all roles involving contact with children and/or vulnerable adults will contain reference to safeguarding responsibilities.
- There are person specifications for roles which contain a statement on core competency with regard to child/ vulnerable adult protection/ safeguarding.
- All applicants will be notified of the checks in place, including DBS and references. Any concerns will not exclude anyone from the interview, but they will be given the opportunity to respond at interview.
- Shortlisting is based on formal application processes/forms and not on provision of CVs matched to the job role and person specification.
- Interviews are conducted according to equal opportunity principles and interview questions are based on the relevant job description and person specification.
- At least one person on the interview panel must undertake an accredited safer recruitment course every 3 years (MK Together recommendation).
- Questions will be based on the job description, person specification and any gaps and discrepancies found in the application form. Questions around any criminal disclosure or online searches will initiate a risk assessment to check on suitability. All applicants will be questioned on their motivation to work with children/vulnerable adults.
- DBS checks will be conducted for specific roles for all staff (paid or unpaid) working with children and vulnerable adults. We will accept DBS certificates that are registered with the DBS Update Service.
- Job offers are made subject to suitability checks. These checks include DBS, two references, fitness to work and eligibility to work in the UK. Prior to checks being completed any new members of staff will work alongside existing DBS team members

➢ **Service delivery contracting and subcontracting**

- Suitable checks of safeguarding arrangements for any partner organisations will take place.
- All contractors working without direct supervision by DBS checked and Safeguarding trained Future Wolverton member of staff will be expected to confirm that the relevant DBS checks and safeguarding training has been undertaken.
- Safeguarding will be a fixed agenda item on any partnership reporting meetings.
- Contracts and memorandums of agreement for partnership delivery work will include clear minimum requirements, arrangements for safeguarding and non-compliance procedures.

➢ **Communications training and support for staff**

- Future Wolverton will endeavour to commit resources for induction and training of staff/volunteers. We will put into place mechanisms for effective communication and support in relation to safeguarding.
- Induction of staff/volunteers will include
  - Discussion of the Safeguarding Policy (and confirmation of understanding).
  - Discussion of other relevant policies, including Whistleblowing.
  - Code of conduct to be signed to say they have read and understood, and will adhere to.
  - Ensuring familiarity with reporting processes, the roles of line manager and Designated Safeguarding lead (Sara Metcalfe, Business Manager and Director) and who acts in their absence (Deputy DSL, Rachel Sutton Training Projects and Contracts Manager).
  - Initial training on safeguarding including: safe working practices, safe recruitment, understanding child protection and adult safeguarding.
- All staff/volunteers who, through their role, are in contact with children and /or vulnerable adults will have access to safeguarding and Prevent training at an appropriate level. This includes a basic level 2 every 3 years with an annual update, DSL and Deputy DSL every 2 years. The DSL and Deputy DSL should also do Prevent Awareness and Reporting courses.
- Future Wolverton will have a standing item on Board agendas regarding Safeguarding, and staff/volunteers working on a particular project will include safeguarding issues on team meeting agendas.
- We recognise that involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be stressful for staff concerned. The mechanisms in place to support staff/volunteers will include debriefing and access to further support as appropriate e.g. access to counselling.

➢ **Responding to a child/young person when a safeguarding concern is made**

Safeguarding training for staff and volunteers, will include how to respond to a child/ young person when a safeguarding concern is made.

- Listen and be supportive, avoid questioning the child/ young person.
- Show you care, help them open up: Give your full attention to the child or young person and keep your body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important. Phrases such as ‘you’ve shown such courage today’ help.
- Don't stop a child who is freely recalling events, but don't push the child to tell you more than he or she wishes. Respect pauses and don’t interrupt the child – let them go at their own pace. Do ask open questions like "Is there anything else that you want to tell me?" Recognise and respond to their body language. And remember that it may take several conversations for them to share what’s happened to them.
- Make it clear you’re interested in what the child is telling you. Reflect back what they’ve said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it’s their experience.
- Tell the child or young person that you will need to pass this on and to who (the DSL/ Deputy DSL).
- Take advice from the appropriate person in your organisation (the DSL/ Deputy DSL) and follow any internal procedures.

- Write a factual account of the conversation as soon as possible, use words used by the child/young person (including any slang/ swearing) and also include how they appeared to you.

➢ **Professional boundaries**

- Future Wolverton expects staff to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the organisation.
- The following professional boundaries must be adhered to:
  - Giving and receiving gifts from clients: Future Wolverton does not allow paid or unpaid staff to give gifts to or receive gifts from clients. Future Wolverton recognises that a client and/or their family may wish to give a small value gift to staff (similar to that of a thank you gift to a school teacher at the end of term). In this situation, the member of staff must make sure their line manager is aware of the gift and have their agreement that accepting it is appropriate.
    Gifts may be provided by the organisation as part of a "planned activity", such as an end of programme celebration.
  - Staff/volunteer contact with user groups: Personal relationships between a member of staff (paid or unpaid) and a client who is a current service deliverer/user is prohibited. This includes relationships through social networking sites. It is also prohibited to enter into a personal relationship with a person who has been a service user over the past 12 months.' If the professional boundaries and/or policies are breached this could result in disciplinary procedures or enactment of the allegation management procedures.

➢ **Reporting**

- The process outlined below details the stages involved in staff/volunteers raising and reporting safeguarding concerns.
  - Communicate your concerns with your immediate manager.
  - Seek medical attention for the vulnerable person if needed.
  - Discuss with the parents of the child (providing it does not put the child at risk) or with the vulnerable person.
  - Obtain permission to make a referral if it is safe and appropriate (for adults).
  - If needed seek advice from the MASH or Adults help-desk.
  - Complete the Local Authority Referral Form if required (submit to the local authority within 24 hours of making a contact).
  - Ensure that feedback from the Local Authority is received and their response recorded.
  - If the immediate manager is implicated, then refer to the Chair of the Board of Future Wolverton.

  The process outlined below details the stages involved in staff/volunteers raising concerns that someone is being radicalised into terrorism.
  - Communicate your concerns with the DSL
  - If you are unable to speak to your DSL for them to report the concern, call the national police Prevent line on 0800 011 3764 to get advice or share your concern. Alternatively, contact your local authority for help. This will ensure

that the person gets necessary interventions and support available to them if they are assessed to be at risk of radicalisation.

➢ **Allegation Management**

- Future Wolverton recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its staff/volunteers within the organisation or by a professional from another organisation. The process for raising and dealing with allegations is as follows:
  - First step: Any member of staff /volunteer from Future Wolverton is required to report any concerns in the first instance to their line manager/ safeguarding manager/ peer. If it is about the line manager or CEO report to the Chair of the Board Simon Bennett (simon@futurewolverton.org).
  - Second step- contact the local authority for advice. In Milton Keynes this is done via (for children) the Safeguarding Children Services Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 01908 254300 or if the LADO is not available, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub on 01908 253169/3170. The MASH email is children@milton-keynes.gov.uk. Out of hours, any concerns for a vulnerable child or adult, where urgent intervention may be required will be reported to the ESWT (Emergency Social Work Team) on 01908 265545. For adults the Safeguarding Adults Team will be contacted on 01908 253772, or in an emergency 01908 605650.
- Future Wolverton recognises its legal duty to report any concerns about unsafe practice by any of its paid or unpaid staff to the Disclosure and Barring Service https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-barring-referrals-to-the-dbs#online-referral-form-and-registering-for-an-online-services-account.

➢ **Monitoring**

- Future Wolverton will endeavour to monitor the following safeguarding aspects:
  - Safe recruitment practices.
  - DBS checks undertaken
  - References applied for new staff (one must be from a recent employer).
  - Records made and kept of supervision sessions
  - Training – register/ record of staff training on child/ vulnerable adult protection
  - Monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned
  - Checking that policies are up to date and relevant
  - Reviewing the current reporting procedure in place
  - Appointment and performance of Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for Safeguarding
- Information will be gathered, recorded, stored and deleted in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and Confidentiality Policy.
- All staff must be aware that:
  - Any concerns must be shared with the DSL. Clients must be made aware of this.
  - They have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults
  - They cannot promise service users or their families/carers that they will keep secrets.
- The public interest in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need to know basis only, as judged by the Designated Senior Manager.

- **Reviewing the policy**
  - Future Wolverton will review the policy at least once a year (more often if there is a change in legislation and guidance) to ensure that changes in legislation are taken into account, checking it is still appropriate and making changes as necessary.
  - The policy will also be reviewed if there are changes in organisational activity or legal requirements.
  - The policy must name the DSL and any deputy(ies) and be updated any time there is a chance.

Previously reviewed: October 2024 following review by Safeguarding training provider.
Most recent review date: 21/1/2025 following organisational restructuring
Amendements made 28/04/25 following MKC recommendations
Next planned review date:April 2026