

Safeguarding Policy

Chester House is managed by the Guy Chester Centre. The Guy Chester Centre is the trading name of the Trustees of the North Bank Estate.

1. PURPOSE OF POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to develop good practice to promote the welfare and to protect from harm all those residing in or visiting Chester House. This policy applies to all residents who may be at risk, regardless of age, class, ethnicity, gender, marital status, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

1.2. Child/Children: Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

1.3. Adults at Risk: The Guy Chester Centre (GCC) recognises that some adults (over-18) are also vulnerable to abuse and will work to support and protect them. GCC will consider any past or present, personal or social issues that may make a resident more open to harm, self-harm, abuse or exploitation should GCC be made aware of such circumstances. GCC will have regard to the definition of Adult at Risk in The Care Act 2014:

An adult at risk is an individual aged 18 years and over who: (a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of those needs) and (b) is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and (c) as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

1.4. GCC is committed to:

1.4.1. Take the appropriate action to see that all residents are kept safe by promoting and maintaining a safe environment.

1.4.2. Make every effort to be aware of the signs of abuse or neglect, to identify residents at risk and to report concerns.

1.4.3. Take a reasonable response based on the activities of GCC to any concerns.

1.4.4. Develop policies, procedures and staff knowledge for identifying, reporting and acting on concerns.

1.4.5. Make clear to residents, parents or carers that any children and under-18s they bring onto site remain their responsibility at all times.

1.5. In continually improving this policy and any associated procedures, GCC will consult with, and take account of, guidance issued by government and other relevant bodies and groups. Regard will be paid to any advice from the local Children's Safeguarding Board and Churches' Agency for Safeguarding.

1.6. As GCC is associated with the Methodist Church, any safeguarding concerns must be reported to the relevant Church safeguarding department. Any communications regarding any safeguarding matter, especially to the media, must be passed on and dealt with by the Church's communication department.

2. DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

The Centre Director takes lead responsibility for protection issues for both under-18s and adults and acts as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Centre Director will provide regular updates to the governing committees of GCC.

3. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

3.1. This policy is designed to cover situations where Children or Adults at Risk may be at risk.

3.2. For the purpose of this policy, GCC will adopt the following definition of abuse in relation to Adults at Risk:

“Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded into actions to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subject to it.” (Adapted from Department of Health 2000 No Secrets)

3.3. For the purpose of this policy, GCC will adopt the following definition of abuse in relation to children:

“A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.” (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (publishing.service.gov.uk))

3.4. The following are some of the main categories of abuse, but it is important to remember that abuse is often hidden. It may be something small that causes concern such as something the person says or an action that is unusual behaviour:

3.4.1. Physical Abuse

A form of abuse which 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 or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness.

3.4.2. Psychological & Emotional Abuse

This is persistent emotional maltreatment or rejection such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on someone's emotional development.

3.4.3. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing someone to take part in sexual activities where the person has not or could not consent to such activities. It can also include sexual harassment, female genital mutilation and non-contact abuse such as pornography.



3.4.4. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet someone's basic physical and/or psychological needs, in a way that is likely to result in serious impairment of health or development. It may also involve neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, someone's basic emotional needs.

3.4.5. Domestic violence

Domestic violence is defined as any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can also include honour-based abuse. It affects both adults and under-18s within the family.

3.4.6. Financial abuse

This includes the misuse and misappropriation of money, property and possessions and the exploitation of a person financial transactions.

3.4.7. Modern slavery

This can be forced labour, domestic servitude and human trafficking forcing individuals into a life not of their choosing.

3.4.8. Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the act of causing someone to adopt radical positions on political or social issues usually through the exploitation of individuals who may be vulnerable. Radicalisers often act as a trusted friend providing support and making the individual feel part of a group. Radicalisation will often prevent itself through the comments made by an individual.

3.4.9. Spiritual abuse

Harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice including the misuse of authority or discipline, oppressive teaching and forced healing and deliverance ministries.

4. DEFINITION OF VULNERABILITY

Vulnerability is a part of being human and no-one is invulnerable. Vulnerability can be permanent or temporary and can be of a greater or lesser degree. This is the definition used by GCC:

Anyone under the age of 18 and any adult who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of themselves or to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

5. HOW A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE WILL BE DEALT WITH AND THE PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING CONCERNS

5.1. If any employee or volunteer at GCC, collectively known as staff for the purposes of this policy, sees or hears something or is given information that causes them concern about resident's health, safety or welfare, they commit to:

- a) Listening and observing carefully, with sympathy and understanding.



- b) Being honest and transparent with the resident regarding confidentiality and information sharing. If the resident begins to share information, they will be informed that it is necessary to pass the information on, but only those who need to know will be told. The resident will be given details of who that is, e.g., designated safeguarding lead, line manager, colleague, emergency services.
- c) Seeking clarity when needed and providing reassurance to the resident, that they have done the right thing.
- d) Calling the relevant emergency service(s) straight away in the event of a clear medical emergency or a situation of immediate danger. No permission is needed to do this. Otherwise, the resident will be asked whether they feel that they are, or that anyone else is, at immediate risk.
- e) Ensuring that the resident's basic needs are met enlisting others to help, if necessary, in order to stay with the resident.
- f) Making a written record of what is said and observed and reporting the matter to the designated safeguarding lead at the soonest opportunity.

5.2. GCC STAFF WILL NOT:

- a) Ignore any safeguarding concerns presented to or observed by them.
- b) Ask any further questions, when discussing safeguarding disclosure with a resident, other than concerning immediate risk, or get into any discussion where there is suspected abuse, as this may prejudice a later court case.
- c) Promise complete confidentiality to the resident as the information/concerns may need to be passed on.
- d) Attempt to investigate concerns or allegations. Instead, staff will report immediately to the designated safeguarding lead.

5.3. All staff have a duty to comply with this policy. This includes not only employees and volunteers, but casual workers and contractors, who will be informed of their duties in this regard.

5.4. The designated safeguarding lead will take lead responsibility for any concern and, except in an emergency, all concerns should be communicated to the designated safeguarding lead.

5.5. The designated safeguarding lead will ensure that the right support is offered and provided to all parties.

5.6. The designated safeguarding lead will ensure that they are aware of the procedures to report any concerns and during the process of making a report will keep relevant staff updated on a 'need to know' basis.

5.7. If any concern or allegation involves the designated safeguarding lead (the Centre Director at GCC), residents and anyone else linked to GCC (including employees, volunteers, casual workers, contractors, committee members and trustees) should contact the Connexional (Methodist Church) Safeguarding Team (see final section for contact details) and will take lead responsibility.

6. PROCEDURES SPECIFIC TO CHILDREN

6.1. GCC will refer concerns that a Child might be at risk of significant harm through the designated safeguarding lead to the local child protection lead agency, normally after explaining to the Child (allowing for age and understanding) and their parent(s) (or legal guardian) that this is going to happen. Even if the parent(s) opts to contact the appropriate authorities, the designated safeguarding lead will still report concern.

6.2. GCC recognises that although it is ideal to work with the parent(s), and the parent(s) have legal authority over their Child, there are some situations where this may provoke further risk to the Child. The designated safeguarding lead would consider this before speaking to the parent(s).

6.3. The designated safeguarding lead will:

- a) Liaise with the local child protection lead agency.
- b) Refer any cases of suspected abuse, or allegations or disclosures, to that lead agency, through the appropriate channel.
- c) Maintain a proper record of any child protection referral, complaint or concern (even where that concern does not lead to a referral).
- d) Provide general advice and support to all staff and residents on issues relating to Child protection policy and practice.
- e) Ensure that parents of Child residents are aware of the GCC's Policies on Safeguarding.
- f) Contact, if appropriate and in line with GCC's data protection policy, the resident's place of study to determine if any co-ordination or sharing of information is required.

7. IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

7.1. All staff, including committee members and trustees play a significant role in implementing this policy. GCC aims to create a culture of informed vigilance at all levels in the organisation by providing enough information and training as required and especially to those supporting residents.

7.2. GCC is a registered entity with Due Diligence Checking (who is the registered body for processing DBS applications for the Methodist Church) and can carry out disclosure and barring service (DBS) check based on the role of the employee or volunteer.

7.3. All employees that may be in a 1-2-1 situation with Children will be recruited accordingly and a DBS check will be made through the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding.

7.4. The responsibility for implementation lies with the Centre Director who is the designated safeguarding lead. The governing committees will be regularly updated on matters concerning safeguarding.

7.5. The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for:

- a) Responding to allegations concerning residents, employees or volunteers.
- b) Reporting abuse (including allegations) to the governing committees and/or safeguarding authorities and/or statutory authorities.



- c) Ensuring that the appropriate support is made available to persons who have suffered because of abuse and trauma.
- d) Seeking the appropriate advice and support for any safeguarding concern considering any risk to GCC.
- e) Obtaining DBS checks.
- f) Ensuring that the management committee is informed of any safeguarding concerns.
- g) Sharing this policy with all appropriate persons or organisations. E.g. office tenants at Chester House and Catering contractor.

7.6. GCC will provide staff with this policy. This provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with residents.

7.7. Policies and contracts will make clear the importance of the position of trust in which staff are placed and the importance of accepting the expectations of such work and the prospect of disciplinary action if they are not met.

7.8. A Record of Safeguarding Concerns will be kept indefinitely; even if the matter turned out to be malicious, unsubstantiated, or unfounded. This record will remain confidential, and access is authorised by the Centre Director only.

8. CODE OF SAFER WORKING PRACTICE – WHAT RESIDENTS CAN EXPECT FROM GCC STAFF

8.1. All staff at GCC are made aware of the following guidelines to ensure that all working practices are safe.

8.2. GCC staff must:

- a) Treat all residents and colleagues with respect and dignity.
- b) Ensure that their language, tone of voice and body language is respectful.
- c) Where practicable and when in a 1-2-1 situation with a resident, always work within sight of another adult; where not practicable work in a location that is covered by a CCTV camera.
- d) Ensure that residents know who they can talk to about a personal concern and refer them to the accommodation team.
- e) Where practicable and first aid qualified, administer first aid in the presence of others.
- f) Obtain consent for any photos and/or videos to be taken, displayed, or used on social media.
- g) Record any incidents of concern, sign, and date the record and give them to the designated safeguarding lead.
- h) Always share concerns with the designated safeguarding lead.
- i) Ensure that health and safety requirements are adhered to, and risk assessments have been produced where necessary in advance.

8.3. GCC staff must not:



- a) Have physical contact with residents or colleagues.
- b) Initiate contact with residents through social networking/media sites.
- c) Invade a resident's privacy.
- d) Have a sexual relationship with a resident.
- e) Touch any residents or colleagues inappropriately or obtrusively.
- f) Scapegoat, ridicule or reject a resident or group.
- g) Permit abusive peer activities including ridiculing or bullying.
- h) Show favouritism.
- i) Allow a resident to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature.
- j) Consume alcohol or drugs, or smoke in the presence of residents.
- k) Invite a resident to their home or meet with a resident in their room.
- l) Use their own car to transport any resident unless the car is insured for business use, and it has been agreed with the Centre Director.

9. IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

• LOCAL CONTACTS

Designated Safeguarding Lead/Centre Director: Chris Kemp **0208 883 8204** or chris@chesterhouse.org.uk

For urgent safeguarding concerns outside of normal office hours (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm), Chester House residents or anyone connected to GCC should call the number provided above or use the reception phone to reach the on-duty staff member. They will contact the Centre Director, who will return the call directly as soon as possible.

Safeguarding Trustee/Second Safeguarding Lead: Jenny Pathmarajah

Contact details are available upon request from the accommodation team, the Centre Director, or the Connexional Safeguarding Team.

• METHODIST CHURCH CONTACTS

Connexional Safeguarding Team: **020 7467 5189** or safeguarding@methodistchurch.org.uk

• LOCAL AGENCIES

Police emergency number: **999**

Police non-emergency number: **101**

• HARINGEY CONTACTS

Children's Services (office hours): **020 8489 4470**

Mon-Thurs: 8.45am-5pm; Friday: 8.45am-4.45pm



GUY CHESTER
CENTRE

CHESTER
HOUSE

Safeguarding Adults Referral and Advice Line (office hours): **020 8489 1400**

Out of Office Hours (including weekends): **020 8489 0000**

Calls to the emergency duty team will be logged by a call centre. An emergency duty social worker will ring you back.

Professional or volunteer: **020 8489 4533** – Mon-Thurs: 8.45am to 5pm; Friday: 8.45am-4.45pm

This is a dedicated advice line for professional consultations and urgent safeguarding referrals, for professionals or volunteer working with children.

- **HELPLINES**

Childline: **0800 1111**

Family Lives (Parentline Plus): **0808 800 2222**

10. REVIEW DATE

This policy will be reviewed in March 2026.