

Safeguarding Policy

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Who is covered by this policy?

All staff, trustees, volunteers, customers, beneficiaries and other stakeholders at Age Concern Bishop's Stortford.

What is covered in this policy?

This policy outlines Age Concern Bishop's Stortford's commitment to safeguarding and explains what to do if you have a safeguarding concern at work.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that through its work and behaviours Age Concern Bishop's Stortford demonstrates its commitment to protecting the rights of people to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances are. Through safeguarding, Age Concern Bishop's Stortford will promote the well-being and welfare of all those whom it comes into contact with, which includes beneficiaries, customers, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders.

The policy

Safeguarding is defined as the range of measures in place to protect people within an organisation, or those it comes into contact with, from abuse and maltreatment of any kind.

This means:

- protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect;
- protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford is committed to ensuring that all staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, customers and other stakeholders are safeguarded from harm and from situations in which they feel vulnerable. All of Age Concern Bishop's Stortford's policies and procedures support this commitment.

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford will provide adequate resources to ensure that all staff and stakeholders are aware of this policy and committed to its effective implementation.

The procedure

In the context of Age Concern Bishop's Stortford and its work, a safeguarding protection issues include (but are not limited to):

- sexual abuse and exploitation;
- negligent treatment;
- physical or emotional abuse;
- commercial exploitation;
- extremism.

A safeguarding concern may relate to you or to the way someone else is being treated. If you have a safeguarding concern, you should do the following:

1. First, raise any concerns with your line manager.
2. If you believe that your immediate line manager is involved, or you feel for whatever reason unable to raise it with your line manager, raise the issue with the Centre Manager. If you have concerns about raising the issue with the Centre Manager, then you should raise it with a trustee.
3. If your concern is with a trustee, contact the chair of the board of trustees.
4. If your concern involves a trustee, go to the chair of the board of trustees.
5. Put your name on the complaint. If requested, your identity will be kept confidential for as long as possible, provided that this does not prejudice the enquiry. Anonymous complaints may be investigated if the person receiving the complaint believes it to be appropriate, having taken into account the seriousness of the issue, the complaint's credibility, the ability to investigate an anonymous complaint and fairness to any individual mentioned in the complaint.

Any concerns raised will receive a response. Either the Centre Manager or a nominated investigating officer will investigate the concern.

Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the Centre Manager or nominated investigating officer will write to you:

- acknowledging the concern has been received;
- indicating how it is proposed to deal with the matter;
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to complete the investigations;
- telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made.

The amount of contact between you and the person considering the matter will depend on the nature of the matter raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided.

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you might experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, it will make arrangements for you to receive advice about

the procedure. Age Concern Bishop's Stortford will ensure that there is no detriment at all to your career if you report a safeguarding concern in good faith.

If your concern is not substantiated, you should not take any subsequent action or make any disclosure to anyone other than those referred to in this policy. The exception is disclosure within the parameters of the Age Concern Bishop's Stortford's Whistleblowing Policy if you feel that is required.

The matter will be recorded in accordance with Age Concern Bishop's Stortford's Grievance Procedure and any wrongdoing will be dealt with according to Age Concern Bishop's Stortford's Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure.

Risk assessment and management

Under usual circumstances, Age Concern Bishop's Stortford will risk-assess any situation in which a potentially vulnerable employee, volunteer or associate may find themselves or that might cause someone to become vulnerable. It will then take appropriate measures.

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford will ensure that trustees, staff and volunteers learn about protection issues and their responsibilities in line with statutory guidance.

Incident investigation

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford will report and investigate allegations and concerns to improve its safeguarding processes. It will use any lessons learned from such events to take corrective action to prevent recurrences.

Where there are alleged incidents of abuse, the police is responsible for investigating whether a criminal offence may have been committed. Age Concern Bishop's Stortford will report a suspected crime (e.g. assault or indecency) to the police.

Trustees' responsibilities

Prevention is the primary responsibility of trustees. Trustees must take reasonable steps to protect staff, volunteers and those connected with the activities of Age Concern Bishop's Stortford from harm.

The Centre Manager will inform trustees immediately when they become aware of a safeguarding issue and advise of the action being taken.

Trustees are responsible for making reports, where necessary, to the police, social services and other agencies, and, where the criteria are met, sending a serious incident report to the charity regulator.