

HOMeward FUTURES LTD

POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

SECTION 2 — SAFEGUARDING

Service: Homeward Futures LTD

Service Type: Semi-Independent Supported Accommodation

Residents: Care leavers and young adults aged 18–30

Operating Area: Southampton, Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and surrounding Hampshire and Dorset areas

POLICY 13 — SAFEGUARDING ADULTS POLICY

13.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures LTD is committed to protecting residents from abuse, neglect, exploitation and avoidable harm while promoting their rights, independence, dignity and ability to make informed choices.

The service adopts a “**safeguarding alongside independence**” approach. Safeguarding measures will be proportionate to the level of risk and will not unnecessarily restrict an adult resident's autonomy, privacy or freedom.

Where statutory adult safeguarding criteria are met, Homeward Futures will work with the relevant local authority safeguarding service and other appropriate agencies.

13.2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- all Homeward Futures employees;
- Directors and Owners;
- managers;
- Support Workers and Key Workers;
- agency or temporary workers;
- volunteers and contractors where relevant; and
- all residents.

Safeguarding concerns may relate to abuse or neglect occurring within the accommodation, in the community, online, within relationships, through professionals or by any other person.

13.3 Designated Safeguarding Leads

Homeward Futures will have two Directors/Owners acting as Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs).

A Deputy DSL will also be appointed.

The DSLs are responsible for:

- overseeing safeguarding arrangements;
- responding to safeguarding concerns;
- deciding appropriate escalation;
- ensuring referrals are made where necessary;
- liaising with external agencies;
- ensuring safeguarding records are maintained;
- monitoring safeguarding themes and risks;
- ensuring staff receive appropriate training;
- ensuring safeguarding is considered within risk assessments and support plans; and
- promoting a safeguarding culture throughout the organisation.

13.4 Reporting Concerns

All staff have a responsibility to act when they become concerned about a resident's safety or wellbeing.

Staff must report concerns to a DSL as soon as reasonably practicable.

Staff must not assume that someone else will report the concern.

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, staff should contact emergency services without waiting for management approval.

13.5 Immediate Danger

Where there is an immediate threat to life or serious injury:

999 must be contacted.

Staff should then inform the DSL or on-call manager/director as soon as practicable.

For appropriate non-emergency police matters, staff may contact:

101.

Staff are authorised to contact the police directly where circumstances warrant this.

13.6 Out-of-Hours Safeguarding

Out-of-hours safeguarding concerns will be escalated to the designated on-call management arrangements.

The on-call person will normally be:

- the Service Manager; and/or
- a Director.

The person responding to the concern will assess the immediate risk and determine whether further action is required.

13.7 Safeguarding and Resident Choice

Homeward Futures recognises that residents are adults.

Staff will therefore:

- promote informed decision-making;
- respect residents' rights;
- avoid unnecessary restrictions;
- involve residents in safeguarding decisions wherever possible;
- consider mental capacity where relevant;
- use proportionate interventions; and
- balance protection from harm with independence.

13.8 Information Sharing

Safeguarding information will be shared on a lawful, proportionate and need-to-know basis.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where information needs to be shared to protect a resident or another person from serious harm, abuse or neglect.

13.9 Safeguarding Training

Staff must complete appropriate safeguarding training before undertaking independent work with residents.

Safeguarding training will be refreshed at least annually and safeguarding will also be addressed through supervision and ongoing professional development.

13.10 Recording

Safeguarding concerns will be recorded electronically.

Records must be:

- factual;
- objective;

- contemporaneous wherever possible;
 - sufficiently detailed;
 - free from unnecessary opinion; and
 - stored securely.
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POLICY 14 — ABUSE, NEGLECT & EXPLOITATION POLICY

14.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures recognises that abuse, neglect and exploitation can take many forms and may be perpetrated by people known to the resident, strangers, professionals, family members, partners, other residents or people encountered online.

14.2 Types of Abuse

Staff must remain alert to:

- physical abuse;
- psychological or emotional abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- financial or material abuse;
- discriminatory abuse;
- organisational abuse;
- domestic abuse;
- neglect and acts of omission;
- self-neglect;
- criminal exploitation;
- sexual exploitation;
- modern slavery;
- coercive or controlling behaviour;
- online abuse; and
- exploitation through relationships or peer groups.

14.3 Indicators

Potential indicators may include:

- unexplained injuries;
- sudden behavioural changes;
- fear of particular people;
- withdrawal;
- unexplained financial difficulties;
- missing money or possessions;

- unexplained gifts or possessions;
- changes in relationships;
- unexplained absences;
- substance misuse;
- involvement with criminal activity;
- sexual health concerns;
- increased secrecy;
- changes in online behaviour; or
- evidence of coercion or threats.

Indicators will not automatically prove abuse but should prompt appropriate professional consideration.

14.4 Response

Where abuse, neglect or exploitation is suspected, staff must:

1. ensure immediate safety;
2. listen calmly;
3. take the resident seriously;
4. avoid leading questions;
5. not investigate the allegation themselves;
6. report the concern to the DSL;
7. contact emergency services where necessary;
8. make or support an appropriate safeguarding referral; and
9. record the concern accurately.

POLICY 15 — DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

15.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures recognises domestic abuse as a serious safeguarding concern that can affect residents regardless of gender, sexuality, relationship status or living arrangements.

Domestic abuse can include:

- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- emotional or psychological abuse;
- financial abuse;
- coercive or controlling behaviour;
- stalking and harassment;
- threats;
- intimidation;

- technology-facilitated abuse; and
- abuse following separation.

15.2 Response

Where domestic abuse is disclosed or suspected, staff will:

- prioritise immediate safety;
- provide a supportive and non-judgemental response;
- avoid blaming the resident;
- notify the DSL;
- consider whether emergency services are required;
- consider safeguarding referral;
- support access to specialist domestic abuse services;
- review the resident's risk assessment and support plan; and
- document actions taken.

Residents will not be pressured to leave a relationship or make decisions before they are ready, unless immediate safety requires emergency intervention.

15.3 Confidentiality

Information will be handled sensitively but cannot be kept confidential where disclosure is necessary and lawful to protect someone from serious harm.

POLICY 16 — SEXUAL EXPLOITATION POLICY

16.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures will work to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation of residents.

Sexual exploitation may involve a person being manipulated, coerced, threatened, groomed or pressured into sexual activity or sexualised situations for another person's benefit.

16.2 Indicators

Staff should be alert to:

- unexplained gifts or money;
- new or controlling relationships;
- unexplained older or influential associates;
- changes in behaviour;
- unexplained absences;

- sexual health concerns;
- sexually transmitted infections;
- sexual activity involving coercion;
- inappropriate sexualised behaviour;
- online grooming;
- threats or blackmail; and
- evidence that a resident is being exchanged for money, accommodation, drugs or other benefits.

16.3 Response

Any concern will be reported to the DSL and assessed promptly.

Where appropriate, Homeward Futures will work with:

- adult safeguarding services;
- police;
- health services;
- social care professionals;
- allocated Personal Advisers or other professionals; and
- specialist exploitation services.

POLICY 17 — CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION & COUNTY LINES POLICY

17.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures recognises that young adults may be vulnerable to criminal exploitation, including county lines activity, drug supply, violence, theft, fraud or other criminal activity.

17.2 Indicators

Potential indicators include:

- unexplained travel;
- unexplained money or possessions;
- multiple mobile phones;
- unexplained debts;
- association with controlling individuals;
- threats or intimidation;
- unexplained injuries;
- sudden changes in peer groups;

- carrying drugs or weapons;
- being asked to hold items for others;
- unexplained absences; and
- fear of particular people.

17.3 Response

Staff must report concerns to the DSL.

Where immediate danger or criminal activity presents a serious risk:

- **999** should be used for emergencies;
- **101** may be used for appropriate non-emergency matters.

Homeward Futures will work with relevant safeguarding, police and professional networks.

Risk assessments and support plans will be reviewed where exploitation is suspected.

POLICY 18 — MODERN SLAVERY POLICY

18.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures is committed to identifying and responding to potential modern slavery and human trafficking.

Modern slavery may involve:

- forced labour;
- trafficking;
- servitude;
- forced criminality;
- sexual exploitation; or
- other forms of exploitation.

18.2 Indicators

Staff should consider:

- a resident appearing controlled by another person;
- someone else speaking on the resident's behalf;
- restricted freedom;
- threats;
- unexplained debts;

- exploitation through employment;
- unexplained travel;
- fear of authorities;
- lack of control over money or documents; or
- evidence of forced criminal or sexual activity.

18.3 Action

Concerns must be reported to the DSL.

Where immediate danger exists, emergency services should be contacted.

The DSL will consider appropriate safeguarding, police and other statutory referrals.

Staff must not confront suspected perpetrators where doing so could increase risk.

POLICY 19 — MISSING RESIDENT POLICY

19.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures recognises that an adult resident has the right to come and go freely unless lawful restrictions apply.

A resident being absent or late does not automatically mean that they are missing.

The response will therefore be **risk-based and proportionate**.

19.2 Factors to Consider

Staff should consider:

- the resident's individual risk assessment;
- known vulnerabilities;
- previous missing episodes;
- expected location;
- length of absence;
- unusual behaviour;
- contact with concerning individuals;
- exploitation indicators;
- substance misuse concerns;
- mental health or wellbeing concerns;
- weather or environmental risks; and
- any information suggesting immediate danger.

19.3 Initial Response

Where concern exists, staff will attempt to contact the resident using appropriate available contact methods.

Staff should establish, where possible:

- whether the resident is safe;
- where they are;
- whether they need assistance; and
- whether there is any immediate risk.

19.4 Escalation

The DSL/on-call manager will determine whether escalation is required.

The police may be contacted where the circumstances indicate that the resident may be at risk of harm or their whereabouts are otherwise of significant concern.

Where appropriate, the resident's allocated professional will also be notified.

19.5 Return

When a resident returns following a missing episode, staff will:

- establish whether they are safe;
- provide appropriate support;
- avoid judgement or punishment;
- discuss what happened where appropriate;
- identify any safeguarding or exploitation concerns;
- consider whether risk assessments need updating; and
- make appropriate professional referrals.

A return discussion will be used to understand the circumstances and identify ways of reducing future risk.

POLICY 20 — SELF-NEGLECT POLICY

20.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures recognises that self-neglect may occur when a resident is unable or unwilling to maintain their health, hygiene, environment, nutrition, finances or safety to an extent that creates significant risk.

20.2 Possible Indicators

These may include:

- severe deterioration in personal hygiene;
- unsafe living conditions;
- significant accumulation of waste;
- failure to access essential healthcare;
- poor nutrition;
- unsafe substance use;
- financial neglect;
- failure to take necessary medication where support has been agreed;
- social withdrawal; or
- refusal of support despite significant risk.

20.3 Response

Staff will:

- seek to understand the reasons behind the behaviour;
- respect the resident's autonomy;
- encourage engagement;
- assess risk;
- involve the DSL where appropriate;
- review the support plan;
- consider mental capacity where relevant; and
- make safeguarding or professional referrals where statutory thresholds are met.

Homeward Futures will seek to avoid coercive responses unless necessary to manage serious and immediate risk.

POLICY 21 — PREVENT POLICY

21.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures recognises the importance of preventing residents from being drawn into terrorism or extremist activity and supporting individuals who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

The Home Office's Prevent guidance describes Prevent as part of the wider safeguarding and counter-terrorism framework. The statutory Prevent duty applies to specified authorities; Homeward Futures will adopt relevant Prevent principles and good safeguarding practice appropriate to its service.

21.2 Responsibilities

Prevent concerns will sit within the organisation's safeguarding arrangements.

The DSLs will oversee Prevent-related concerns and determine appropriate escalation.

21.3 Potential Indicators

No single behaviour proves radicalisation.

Staff should nevertheless remain alert to changes such as:

- increased isolation;
- significant changes in behaviour;
- vulnerability to manipulation;
- exposure to extremist content;
- expressions supporting violence;
- attempts to recruit others;
- concerning online activity; or
- association with individuals or groups presenting a terrorism-related risk.

Staff must avoid stereotyping or making assumptions based on a person's religion, ethnicity, nationality, political views or other protected or personal characteristics.

21.4 Response

Where concerns arise:

1. staff should report them to the DSL;
2. the DSL will assess the concern;
3. safeguarding arrangements will be considered;
4. appropriate professional advice will be sought;
5. a Prevent referral will be considered where appropriate; and
6. immediate threats will be reported to emergency services.

21.5 Training

Staff will receive appropriate Prevent awareness training as part of their professional development.

Homeward Futures will use current government guidance and training resources when reviewing its Prevent arrangements.

POLICY 22 — WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

22.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures encourages staff to raise concerns about unsafe, unlawful, unethical or poor practice.

Staff will not be penalised for raising a genuine concern in good faith.

22.2 Concerns May Include

- safeguarding failures;
- abuse;
- neglect;
- unsafe practice;
- falsification of records;
- serious breaches of confidentiality;
- criminal activity;
- discrimination;
- financial wrongdoing; or
- deliberate failure to report serious incidents.

22.3 Internal Reporting

Concerns should normally be raised with:

- the Service Manager;
- a Director; or
- the DSL.

22.4 Concerns About Management

If the concern relates to the Service Manager, a Director or DSL, the staff member should use an alternative appropriate management route.

Where internal reporting is inappropriate or ineffective, staff may escalate concerns to an appropriate external body or statutory agency.

22.5 Protection

Homeward Futures will seek to protect whistleblowers from retaliation, victimisation or detrimental treatment for raising genuine concerns.

POLICY 23 — ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF POLICY

23.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures will respond promptly and fairly to any allegation that a member of staff has abused, neglected, exploited, harmed or otherwise acted inappropriately towards a resident.

23.2 Immediate Action

Where an allegation is made:

- the resident's immediate safety will be considered;
- the allegation will be reported to the appropriate manager/DSL;
- the matter will be recorded;
- appropriate safeguarding referral will be considered;
- police involvement will be considered where appropriate; and
- relevant external agencies will be informed where required.

23.3 Allegations Concerning a DSL or Director

Where the allegation concerns a DSL or Director, the concern must not be managed solely by the person who is the subject of the allegation.

The matter will be escalated to:

- the Service Manager;
- another appropriate Director who is not conflicted; and/or
- an appropriate external safeguarding or statutory agency.

This is intended to prevent conflicts of interest and ensure appropriate independent oversight.

23.4 Staff Removal From Resident Contact

Where appropriate, a staff member may be temporarily removed from direct resident contact while enquiries are undertaken.

This will be a risk-based management decision and will not automatically imply that the allegation has been proven.

23.5 Fairness

All allegations will be treated seriously while recognising that an allegation is not proof of wrongdoing.

Homeward Futures will cooperate with relevant safeguarding, police, employment and regulatory processes.

POLICY 24 — SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS, REFERRALS & MULTI-AGENCY WORKING POLICY

24.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures recognises that effective safeguarding often requires coordinated working between accommodation providers, local authorities, health services, police and other professionals.

24.2 Referrals

Homeward Futures may receive referrals from:

- BCP Council;
- Southampton City Council;
- other local authorities; and
- other appropriate professional organisations.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, Homeward Futures will make referrals to the appropriate statutory or specialist service.

24.3 Allocated Professionals

Where a resident has an allocated professional, such as a social worker, Personal Adviser or other leaving-care professional, Homeward Futures will work collaboratively with that professional where appropriate.

Relevant safeguarding concerns will be communicated to the allocated professional where this is appropriate and lawful.

24.4 Multi-Agency Working

Homeward Futures may work with:

- local authority adult safeguarding services;
- social care;
- police;
- NHS and other healthcare services;
- mental health services;
- substance misuse services;
- domestic abuse services;
- exploitation services;
- education, employment and training providers;
- housing services; and

- other relevant agencies.

Information will be shared on a lawful, proportionate and need-to-know basis.

24.5 Resident Involvement

Where possible, residents will be:

- informed about safeguarding processes;
- involved in decisions;
- supported to express their wishes and views;
- provided with appropriate advocacy or professional support; and
- treated with dignity throughout the process.

However, consent will not always be required where information must lawfully be shared to prevent serious harm or protect another person.

24.6 Safeguarding at Move-In

Safeguarding information will form part of the resident's induction.

Residents will be informed:

- what safeguarding means;
- how to report concerns;
- who they can speak to;
- how to raise concerns about staff;
- how to raise concerns about other residents;
- that they can raise concerns about partners, family members, professionals or other individuals; and
- what may happen after a concern is reported.

24.7 Safeguarding in Risk Assessments

Safeguarding considerations will be incorporated into:

- initial assessments;
- individual risk assessments;
- support plans;
- reviews;
- missing-person assessments;
- exploitation assessments where required; and
- transition and move-on planning.

Risk information will be updated where circumstances change.

24.8 Safeguarding and Independence

Homeward Futures will not use safeguarding as a reason to unnecessarily restrict residents' independence.

The service will seek to:

Protect residents from avoidable harm while supporting them to develop the skills, confidence and autonomy required for adult life.

Safeguarding decisions should therefore be:

- proportionate;
- person-centred;
- evidence-based;
- risk-informed;
- least restrictive wherever possible; and
- consistent with the resident's rights and dignity.

24.9 Records

All safeguarding concerns, referrals, actions and outcomes will be recorded electronically.

Records must clearly demonstrate:

- what happened;
- when it happened;
- who raised the concern;
- who was informed;
- what action was taken;
- decisions made;
- external agencies contacted;
- advice received; and
- any ongoing actions.

24.10 Review

Safeguarding arrangements will be monitored by the DSLs and reviewed through:

- supervision;
- management oversight;
- incident monitoring;
- safeguarding reviews;
- quality assurance activity; and
- policy review.

Learning from safeguarding incidents will be used to improve practice.

SECTION 2 — KEY SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES

Homeward Futures will ensure that safeguarding practice is based on the following principles:

1. Listen

Residents will be listened to and taken seriously.

2. Act

Concerns will be acted upon rather than ignored or unnecessarily delayed.

3. Protect

Immediate safety will always be considered.

4. Respect

Residents are adults and will be treated with dignity and respect.

5. Promote independence

Safeguarding will not unnecessarily create dependency or restrict adult choice.

6. Share appropriately

Information will be shared lawfully and proportionately when necessary.

7. Work together

Homeward Futures will cooperate with appropriate professionals and statutory agencies.

8. Record

Safeguarding concerns and actions will be recorded accurately.

9. Learn

Incidents and concerns will be used to identify improvements in practice.

10. Escalate

Where concerns cannot be resolved internally, Homeward Futures will escalate to the appropriate external agency.

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

Homeward Futures will have regard to relevant legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice applicable to its service, including, where relevant:

- Care Act 2014;
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance;
- Mental Capacity Act 2005;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021;
- Modern Slavery Act 2015;
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015;
- relevant police and safeguarding guidance;
- relevant local authority safeguarding procedures; and
- current government Prevent guidance.

This list will be reviewed whenever relevant legislation or statutory guidance changes.

POLICY REVIEW

These safeguarding policies will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where:

- legislation changes;
- statutory guidance changes;
- there is a serious safeguarding incident;
- an audit identifies a weakness;
- local safeguarding arrangements change; or
- organisational practice changes.

Approved by: _____

Position: _____

Date approved: _____

Review date: _____

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