Safeguarding Adults Policy

Policy Owner	True North Collective
Approval Route	Board of Trustees
Review date	1.10.25
Next Review	1.10.26

Introduction

At True North Collective, we believe that everyone—our facilitators, trustees, employees, and attendees—has the right to be free from harm and feel safe.

Safeguarding within our organisation means actively promoting the health, wellbeing, and human rights of adults at risk. It is a collaborative effort, where we work together to prevent and reduce the risks and experiences of abuse or neglect.

We are committed to safeguarding all individuals who engage with True North Collective, ensuring that our practices align with current legislation and guidance.

This policy is supported by a comprehensive safeguarding procedure, which offers our facilitators, trustees, and employees clear guidance on how to identify, support, and report safeguarding concerns.

All activities within True North Collective will be delivered in a way that ensures the safety of every adult involved.

As part of our ethos of fostering resilience, strength, and personal growth, we are committed to upholding the rights of all adults to live free from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect. Safeguarding is integral to creating an environment where personal and collective empowerment can thrive.

Scope

This policy applies to all services provided by True North Collective, including those facilitated by our trained leaders in peer-to-peer support groups, as well as any events, workshops, or activities organised by the collective.

Safeguarding is an essential aspect of our commitment to offering a safe, empowering environment where individuals can explore personal growth, resilience, and community support.

Definitions

Adult at Risk

An adult at risk is any person aged 18 years or older who may be vulnerable due to mental or physical disability, illness, or other circumstances that impair their ability to care for themselves or protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation. This definition aligns with NHS England's guidelines on safeguarding adults.

Abuse

Abuse is harm or mistreatment of any kind including physical, emotional, financial, sexual, or psychological harm. At True North Collective, we are committed to recognising and responding swiftly to any form of abuse in order to safeguard the dignity and well-being of all participants.

Policy Statement

At True North Collective, we believe that every individual has the fundamental right to live free from abuse, neglect, or exploitation, regardless of age, gender identity, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

We are committed to fostering a safe, empowering environment where personal growth and community thrive, and where individuals feel comfortable sharing concerns without fear of judgement or retribution. This aligns with our values of **integrity, resilience, and mutual respect**.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we are dedicated to preventing any form of abuse or neglect that could undermine the well-being of the adults who engage with our services.

We acknowledge that individuals may face barriers when communicating their concerns or seeking help. True North Collective remains attentive to these challenges and recognises that these barriers may change as people progress through different stages of life.

Our commitment to safeguarding is grounded in the relevant legal framework and local statutory safeguarding procedures. We pledge to act swiftly, proportionately, and in a way that honours the dignity and voice of each adult involved.

Any actions taken will be carefully considered, ensuring they align with our mission of **empowerment, respect, and personal resilience**, while addressing the needs of the individual in a fair and balanced manner.

Our Commitment

We are committed to ensuring the safety, dignity, and well-being of every adult who engages with True North Collective. To fulfil this commitment:

- All facilitators, trustees, employees, and volunteers will be fully informed of our safeguarding procedures and trained on how to respond to concerns about the welfare or well-being of an adult.
- When working with young adults or youth groups (under 18), we will ensure that trained coordinators and facilitators handle these interactions in accordance with relevant safeguarding legislation and best practices for youth engagement.
- Any safeguarding concerns will be addressed promptly, in line with our established safeguarding procedures.
- We are committed to supporting adults at risk by listening to their views and respecting the outcomes they wish to achieve. We will work with them unless we believe they are at serious risk of harm or that a crime is being committed.
- Any actions taken in response to safeguarding concerns will be proportionate to the risk of harm, ensuring fairness and respect for the individual involved.
- All safeguarding records will be confidential, detailed, accurate, and securely stored in line with our Data Protection Policy and Procedures.
- We will act in accordance with the best mental health practices, seeking advice from trusted local bodies, including Bradford District Care Trust and relevant NHS Trusts, to ensure our actions are informed by expert guidance.
- In the event of a safeguarding concern, we will cooperate fully with the police and relevant local authority departments to ensure the safety and protection of the adult involved.

- All employees, trustees, and volunteers will undergo DBS checks and appropriate safeguarding training, ensuring their suitability to work within True North Collective.
- We are committed to safe recruitment practices, including the disclosure of relevant information through DBS checks for both employees and volunteers.
- If an individual is found to be a risk to adults, we may share relevant information with appropriate bodies, such as the Disclosure and Barring Service, the police, or local authorities, in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Our safeguarding policies and procedures will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees to ensure they remain effective and up-to-date.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

True North Collective is committed to maintaining confidentiality for all individuals involved in safeguarding concerns, including both the adult at risk and those reporting the concern. We recognise that trust and privacy are essential components of the support we provide.

Whenever possible, we will seek consent from the adult at risk before making an alert. However, in cases where the individual may be at serious risk or where others may be endangered, we may proceed without explicit consent to ensure their safety and well-being.

Personal information will only be shared when:

- We have obtained consent;
- We are required by law to do so; or
- The individual or others are at serious risk.

True North Collective is committed to handling all personal data in accordance with our **Data Protection Policy and Procedures**, ensuring that sensitive information is stored securely and only accessed by those with the appropriate authority. This aligns with our ethos of protecting dignity, privacy, and fostering an environment of trust within our community.

Whistleblowing and Allegations of Professional Abuse

At True North Collective, we expect all employees, trustees, and facilitators to uphold the highest standards of integrity. In line with our commitment to transparency, it is their duty to raise concerns about the conduct or actions of colleagues if they suspect malpractice or unethical behaviour.

Our team members should feel empowered to report:

- Suspected crimes, including the abuse or neglect of an adult at risk;
- Violations of legal obligations, including breaches of safeguarding policy;
- Issues that endanger health, safety, or well-being, including modern-day slavery; and
- Any behaviour that contradicts the values of **respect, trust, and community** that True North Collective upholds.

Employees, trustees, and facilitators who raise genuine concerns in good faith are protected under the Public Disclosure Act 1998. This protection ensures that individuals can safely report issues without fear of retaliation, aligning with True North Collective's dedication to **creating a supportive, transparent, and accountable community.**

When we will make an alert

At True North Collective, we take all allegations of abuse very seriously. An alert will be raised when we are made aware of, or directly observe, any form of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

The individual reporting the abuse (the 'alerter') is responsible for reporting and recording concerns as soon as possible. However, it is not their responsibility to prove that abuse has occurred—simply to raise the concern for further investigation.

The Board of Trustees is available to provide guidance regarding the process of making an alert and will be informed of any alerts raised. Their role is to ensure that the correct safeguarding procedures are followed in every instance.

Throughout the safeguarding process, True North Collective is committed to keeping the adult at risk informed where appropriate. We will communicate clearly about:

- Our concerns regarding their situation and well-being;
- The steps we will take with the information we have received or witnessed; and
- What they can expect as the next steps in the process.

This open communication reflects our commitment to fostering **trust, transparency, and respect** in all aspects of safeguarding.

Following an Alert

After an alert has been made to the relevant local authority department, True North Collective may be asked to provide additional information or evidence to support the safeguarding investigation. We recognise our responsibility to cooperate fully and transparently with authorities during this process.

Our team may also be required to attend formal meetings or case conferences as part of the investigation. In all instances, we are committed to acting in the best interests of the adult at risk, while maintaining confidentiality and respecting their dignity throughout the process.

Our role is not only to ensure a thorough and fair investigation but also to remain aligned with our values of **support, care, and empowerment** for the individuals we serve.

Appendix 1

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse (Adults)

True North Collective recognises the following types of abuse and their associated signs and symptoms, which may indicate that an adult is at risk.

Type of Abuse	Definition	Signs and Symptoms
Physical Abuse	Any deliberate act to cause physical harm including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication and restraint	Cuts, scratches, bite marks, bruises Untreated injuries Weight loss Lack of appetite Insomnia Anxiety
Financial/Material Abuse	Theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions or misusing property, possessions and benefits	Rent arrears Inability to pay bills Unable to access their own money or check their account Unable to buy things they would usually be able to afford Unusual activity on the bank account Missing personal belongings such as jewellery and other valuable items
Sexual Abuse	Involvement in a sexual act to which the vulnerable person has not consented, or to which he or she could not consent or was pressured into consenting	Emotional distress Itching, soreness, bruising, lacerations Mood changes Change in usual behaviour Expressions or feelings of guilt/shame Difficulty walking/sitting Disturbed sleep patterns
Neglect and Acts of Omission	Ignoring medical or physical health needs and withholding the necessities of life such as nutrition, heating and medication	Dirty/smelly living conditions Prolonged isolation Depression Inappropriate/dirty clothing Untreated medical condition Under/over medication Malnourishment, dehydration

		The person is left unattended
Psychological Abuse	Emotional abuse, threats to harm or abandon the person, depriving them of contact, humiliating, blaming, controlling, intimidating, coercing or harassing them, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawing services and support networks	Untypical changes in mood, attitude or behaviour Anger Loss of appetite Excessive fear/anxiety Confusion/disorientation Implausible stories Denial Hesitation to talk openly Low self esteem
Discriminatory Abuse	Based on cultural, sexual, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion	Failure to promote or support an individual's religious or cultural beliefs Treating everyone the same rather than differentiating, to take into account individual needs or beliefs.
Institutional Abuse	Mistreatment or abuse by an organisation or the individuals within it	Services provided by the clock rather than in response to individual needs. Set meal times with no option to snack eat outside set times Lack of privacy (e.g. personal care) No access to personal money Preventing a couple from living together Abuse of medication Speaking to an adult inappropriately Locking people in their rooms
Domestic Abuse	Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (including any of the above) occurring between adults who are or have been in an intimate relationship or are family members – regardless of gender or sexuality	Injury Anxiety Unable to express opinions Repairs reports for damage in property No access to money Damage to property

Appendix 2

Key legislation and guidance:

- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Care Act 2014
- Domestic Violence Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Human Rights Act 2008
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019

Table 2
The Safeguarding Adults Legislation in each Home Country defines categories of adult abuse and harm as follows.

England (Care Act 2014)	Northern Ireland (Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership 2015)
Physical Sexual Emotional/Psychological/Mental Neglect and acts of Omission Financial or material abuse Discriminatory Organisational / Institutional Self-neglect Domestic Abuse (including coercive control) Modern slavery	Physical Sexual violence Psychological / emotional Financial Institutional Neglect Exploitation Domestic violence Human trafficking Hate crime
Scotland (Adult Support and Protection Act 2007)	**Wales (Social Services and Well Being Act 2014)**
Physical Psychological Financial Sexual Neglect	Physical Sexual Psychological Neglect Financial

Signs and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

An adult may confide to a member of staff, facilitator, volunteer or another participant that they are experiencing abuse inside or outside of the organisation's setting. Similarly, others may suspect that this is the case.

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. There may be other explanations, but they should not be ignored. The signs and symptoms include but are not limited to:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present.
- Person has belongings or money missing.
- Person is not attending / no longer enjoying their sessions. You may notice that a participant in a team has been missing from practice sessions and is not responding to reminders from team members or coaches.
- Someone losing or gaining weight / an unkempt appearance. This could be a player whose appearance becomes unkempt, does not wear a suitable sports kit and there is a deterioration in hygiene.
- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person. For example, a participant may be looking quiet and withdrawn when their brother comes to collect them from sessions in contrast to their personal assistant whom they greet with a smile.
- Self-harm.
- A fear of a particular group of people or individuals.
- A parent/carer always speaks for the person and doesn't allow them to make their own choices
- They may tell you / another person they are being abused – i.e. a disclosure

Well-being Principle

The concept of 'well-being' is threaded throughout UK legislation and is part of the Law about how health and social care is provided. Our well-being includes our mental and physical health, our relationships, our connection with our communities and our contribution to society.

Being able to live free from abuse and neglect is a key element of well-being.

The legislation recognises that statutory agencies have sometimes acted disproportionately in the past. For example, removing an adult at risk from their own home when there were other ways of preventing harm. In the words of Justice Mumby '*What good is it making someone safe when we merely make them miserable?*' What Price Dignity? (2010)

For that reason any actions taken to safeguard an adult must take their whole well-being into account and be proportionate to the risk of harm.

Person Centred Safeguarding/ Making Safeguarding Personal

The legislation also recognises that adults make choices that may mean that one part of our well-being suffers at the expense of another – for example we move away from friends and family to take a better job. Similarly, adults can choose to risk their personal safety; for example, to provide care to a partner with dementia who becomes abusive when they are disoriented and anxious.

None of us can make these choices for another adult. If we are supporting someone to make choices about their own safety we need to understand 'What matters' to them and what outcomes they want to achieve from any actions agencies take to help them to protect themselves.

The concept of 'Person Centred Safeguarding'/'Making Safeguarding Personal' means engaging the person in a conversation about how best to respond to their situation in a way that enhances their involvement, choice and control, as well as improving their quality of life, well-being and safety. Organisations work to support adults to achieve the outcomes they want for themselves. The adult's views, wishes, feelings and beliefs must be taken into account when decisions are made about how to support them to be safe. There may be many different ways to prevent further harm. Working with the person will mean that actions taken help them to find the solution that is right for them. Treating people with respect, enhancing their dignity and supporting their ability to make decisions also helps promote people's sense of self-worth and supports recovery from abuse.

If someone has difficulty making their views and wishes known, then they can be supported or represented by an advocate. This might be a safe family member or friend of their choice or a professional advocate (usually from a third sector organisation).

Appendix 2 - Case Management Groups

Case Management Groups comprise a select number of individuals with identified and relevant skills, knowledge experience and/or status within the organisation and include at least one member with safeguarding adult expertise. The group's role and decision-making powers need to be embedded within the organisation's governance structure and be linked to related organisational functions such as codes of conduct, and the disciplinary policy and procedures.

The senior management team and the True North Collective Board of Trustees will receive regular reports from the Case Management Group, summarising cases that have been addressed and their outcomes. The Board will also be informed of any issues that require action, such as changes to policy or procedures.

Case Management Groups should have clear terms of reference. They may be 'standing committees' who meet regularly or can be brought together as the need arises.
Case Management Group roles include:

- to ratify any actions already taken by the Safeguarding Lead Officer.
- to initially assess and agree immediate response to a safeguarding case (does there appear to be a case to answer?).
- to identify appropriate 'routes' for cases (e.g. internal/ disciplinary action alone or referral to statutory agencies plus internal/ disciplinary action).
- to decide the level (from local to national) at which the organisation will deal with the concern.
- to consider the need for a temporary/ interim suspension order (some organisations' Case Management Group issue suspensions directly, while others can only make recommendations to their disciplinary group).
- to review progress of case(s).
- to identify/ communicate learning from cases.

Case Management Groups' membership should include:

- A designated Chair, responsible for leading the group's safeguarding discussions.
- A Safeguarding Lead, who acts as secretary for the group and ensures that all safeguarding procedures are followed.
- Managers from relevant parts of True North Collective, such as the heads of programmes or key facilitators, where appropriate.
- External safeguarding expertise where necessary, for example from relevant authorities such as the police or social services.

Appendix 3 – Sources of Information and Support

Action on Elder Abuse
A national organisation based in London. It aims to prevent the abuse of older people by raising awareness, encouraging education, promoting research and collecting and disseminating information.
Tel: 020 8765 7000
Email: enquiries@elderabuse.org.uk
www.elderabuse.org.uk

Men's Advice Line
For male domestic abuse survivors
Tel: 0808 801 0327

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline
Tel: 0800 999 5428

National 24Hour Freephone Domestic Abuse Helplines

England	Northern Ireland
Tel: 0808 2000 247 www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/Contact-us	Tel: 0808 802 1414 www.dsahelpline.org Twitter: www.twitter.com/dsahelpline Facebook: www.facebook.com/dsahelpline
Scotland	Wales
Tel: 0800 027 1234 Email: helpline@sdafmh.org.uk Web chat: sdafmh.org.uk	Llinell Gymorth Byw HebOfn/ Live free from fear helpline Tel: 0808 8010 800 Type Talk: 18001 0808 801 0800 Text: 078600 77 333

Rape Crisis Federation of England and Wales
Rape Crisis was launched in 1996 and exists to provide a range of facilities and resources to enable the continuance and development of Rape Crisis Groups throughout Wales and England.
Email: info@rapecrisis.co.uk
www.rapecrisis.co.uk

Respond
Respond provides a range of services to victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse who have learning disabilities, and training and support to those working with them.
Tel: 020 7383 0700 or

0808 808 0700 (Helpline)
Email: services@respond.org.uk
www.respond.org.uk

Stop Hate Crime
Works to challenge all forms of Hate Crime and discrimination, based on any aspect of an individual's identity. Stop Hate UK provides independent, confidential and accessible reporting and support for victims, witnesses and third parties.
24 hours service:
Telephone: 0800 138 1625
Web Chat: www.stophateuk.org/talk-to-us/
E mail: talk@stophateuk.org
Text: 07717 989 025
Text relay: 18001 0800 138 1625
By post: PO Box 851, Leeds LS1 9QS

Susy Lamplugh Trust
The Trust is a leading authority on personal safety. Its role is to minimise the damage caused to individuals and to society by aggression in all its forms – physical, verbal and psychological.
Tel: 020 83921839
Fax: 020 8392 1830
Email: info@suzylamplugh.org
www.suzylamplugh.org

Victim Support
Provides practical advice and help, emotional support and reassurance to those who have suffered the effects of a crime.
Tel: 0808 168 9111
www.victimsupport.com

Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales
Women's Aid is a national domestic violence charity. It also runs a domestic violence online help service.
www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support

Please also refer to the local and national support organisation that we regularly signpost towards.