



Urban Heard CIC Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk

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Policy Name: Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

Organisation: Urban Heard

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Updated with: Contextual Safeguarding, FIB forms and Exploitation December 2022

Foreword

This policy covers working with children and adults at risk.

The definition of a “**Child**” is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, and within this policy relates to any child who accesses Urban Heard activities, or any delivered in formal partnership arrangements. The use of the word ‘child or children’, therefore, relates to children or young people.

An “**Adult at Risk**” is defined as any person aged 18 years and over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

The word ‘**Practitioner**’ is used throughout the document and refers to individuals working directly for Urban Heard with children, adults at risk and their families in any capacity paid or voluntary.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best life outcomes.

Safeguarding relates to all children who access Urban Heard’s programmes or that delivered within a formal partnership arrangement. Its purpose is to ensure that children are protected from harm to achieve the best outcomes. Additionally, it seeks to ensure that any concerns relating to their well-being outside of the activities of Urban Heard are registered and dealt with in an appropriate manner to ensure their overall safety and well-being. Urban Heard seeks to adopt a child centred approach and to adhere to the Mental Capacity Act in all its actions, in relation to young people aged 16 – 18.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults at risk is defined as:

- Protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
- People and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect

- Making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

Statement

Urban Heard will have arrangements in place to safeguarding children in accordance with the 2018 version of the UK Government's document "Working Together to Safeguard Children", and to Protect Adults at Risk in accordance with the Care Act 2014. Urban Heard is aware of the important part that they have in delivering services to children and adults at risk and protecting them from harm. They will ensure that all of their practitioners are aware of;

- their responsibilities for safeguarding
- how they respond to concerns
- how they make referrals to ensure the safety of the child or adult at risk
- how they include an adult at risk in decisions about any action taken

Urban Heard's board of Directors acknowledge their responsibility that all children and adults at risk who are involved in the activities delivered are not harmed in any way through their involvement with the organisation. They recognise their legal duty to act prudently and will take all reasonable steps within their power to protect children or adults at risk from harm. They will keep up to date with relevant laws that apply to Urban Heard and the delivery of services to children and adults at risk and ensure compliance. They will ensure that best practice is adhered to throughout the organisation.

Introduction of Urban Heard Safeguarding Test

To show our commitment to Safeguarding Urban Heard has introduced a Safeguarding Policy Test. This test involves 21 questions and 3 scenarios to show understanding and implementation of the policy in real life situations. All staff will undergo an updated version of this test each year and it will be included in the introduction package of all new members of the team. The test must be completed and a minimum pass rate is 90%. If they do not reach this rate, or they did not complete the test individually then they will have the opportunity to do it again. If they continue to achieve a low rate or they are deemed to not be taking the test seriously, they would be put on performance management and potentially disciplinary action. We will cater for all abilities and needs so the test can be completed aurally either through a recording or in person. It is the duty of the employee to inform their manager of any additional needs or issues they may have in completing the test prior to completing the test.

Urban Heard Directors recognise the following needs of the child:

- **Vigilance** – to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- **Understanding and Action** – to understand what is happening, to be heard and understood and to have that understanding acted upon
- **Stability** – to be able to develop an on-going stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- **Respect** – to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- **Information and engagement** – to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- **Explanation** – to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not been met by a positive response.
- **Support** – to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of the family
- **Advocacy** – to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views
- **Protection** – to be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination and the right to special protection and help if a refugee.

Urban Heard Directors will adopt the principles set out in the Care Act in relation to the Safeguarding of Adults at Risk

- **Empowerment** People are supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
“I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and this directly informs what happens.”
- **Prevention** It is better to take action before harm occurs.
“I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is. I know how to recognise the signs, and I know what I can do to seek help.”
- **Proportionality** The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
“I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest and they will only get involved as much as is necessary.”
- **Protection** Support and representation for those in greatest need.
“I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want.”

- **Partnership** Services offer local solutions through working closely with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.

“I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me.”

- **Accountability** and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

“I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.”

Urban Heard Directors will ensure the following is in place

- This policy will be made freely available and will be reviewed bi-annually or in response to new guidance
- All Urban Heard practitioners will be made aware of this policy and the requirement to follow its guidelines
- All Urban Heard practitioners will receive appropriate training within 13 weeks of commencing any work
- Urban Heard will work positively with the social services, health providers and other partners agencies and will comply with the Local Safeguarding Children and Adult’s Board procedures
- All Urban Heard practitioners will be reference checked and DBS checked to reduce the risk of engaging unsuitable people
- There will be a Senior Manager nominated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding at an operational level and a Director nominated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding governance.
- Safeguarding referrals, near misses or concerns will be recorded and reviewed by the Senior Managers.

Safeguarding Lead’s Responsibilities

The designated safeguarding lead within Urban Heard is Charlotte Slater (C.E.O.) Within this role she will:

- be the first contact for external contacts on safeguarding matters
- commit resources to ensure that practitioners are able to safeguard children and adults at risk
- ensure that she and all staff are alert to the specific needs of children in need or adults at risk
- refer all cases of suspected abuse to the relevant local authority manager for child protection concerns or concerns about an adult at risk; the Disclosure and Barring Service (in cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child or adult at risk); the Police (in cases where a crime may have been committed); the Director of Urban Heard with specific responsibility for safeguarding
- ensure that all practitioners receive appropriate safeguarding training and have knowledge of this safeguarding policy

- keep up to date with legislation and protocols in respect of safeguarding
- act as a source of support, advice and expertise to practitioners on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies
- ensure that all practitioners complete appropriate paperwork relating to safeguarding issues
- Analyse and learn from data on significant events

Kemoy Saunders, Youth Worker Manager, will be the operational Safeguarding Lead at the Youth Centre, Crabtree Hall. Within this role he will:

- Ensure case files on young people are confidential and maintained with any minor incident as this could lead to a bigger picture
- Work with other VCSE to build a contextual safeguarding picture around both the locations young people of concern spend their time and who they spend their time with.
- Keep the confidential incident log database up to date and input information as quickly after the event as possible
- Ensure the DSL is informed of any concerns and support with the referrals
- Ensure the youth workers safeguarding training is up to date and maintained.

Practitioners' Responsibilities

Urban Heard believe that the children and young people will see those working with them as role models. All practitioners must act as positive role models, displaying behaviour that will promote equally positive behaviour in the children and young people. A practitioner holds a position of authority with the children and young people. This must be recognised and not abused, particularly as many of the children and young people may have personal issues that may come to light through their interactions.

All practitioners are expected to:

- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations
- Provide an example of good conduct
- Respect the child/young person/adult at risk's right to privacy and encourage them to feel comfortable to point out attitudes or behaviours they do not like
- Empower children/young people/adults at risk by involving them in decision making wherever appropriate
- Be aware of their actions and the possibility of misinterpretation
- Not engage or tolerate bullying at any level
- Never promise to keep secrets

- Never offer a lift to a child/young person or adult at risk in own car
- Never exchange personal details such as phone number, mobile number, home address with a child/young person or adult at risk
- Keep social networking sites private so that they cannot be accessed by a child/young person or adult at risk
- Not befriend children/young people and adults at risk on a social networking site and not accept a friend request from the latter
- Not engage or allow any sexually provocative games involving or observed by children/young people or adults at risk whether based on talking or touching
- Not engage in humour that is belittling

Recognising Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child or adult at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or an adult at risk by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. It is important to recognise that children or adults at risk may be abused by any other adult or child including adults at risk.

It is important for practitioners to remember that it may be more difficult for some children to tell than for others. Young People who have experienced prejudice and discrimination through racism may believe that people from other ethnic groups or backgrounds do not care about them. They may have little reason to trust those they see as authority figures and may consider the Urban Heard Practitioners as 'Authority Figures'. Young People with a disability may have to overcome barriers before disclosing abuse. They may rely on their abuser for their daily care and have no knowledge of alternative sources. They may have come to believe that they are of little worth and simply comply with the instructions of adults. There is also the possibility that the young person thinks that being treated badly is normal. All these aspects need to be borne in mind and should increase the diligence of Urban Heard Practitioners in recognising when abuse is happening.

Below are the categories of abuse that are recognised in the 2018 Working Together to Safeguard Children and the Care Act 2014

- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child, young person or adult at risk to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving them in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Sexual exploitation involves the grooming of a child or children, adult or adults at risk by one or more adults with the purpose of sexual activity taking place. It affects both male and female and usually starts by the offender befriending a vulnerable individual, perhaps buying gifts or drugs or alcohol, before introducing sexual activity. It can also include non-consensual sexual acts in respect of adults at risk as well as sexual teasing, innuendo, sexual harassment or inappropriate looking.

- **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or adult at risk. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child or adult at risk. It can also include unauthorised restraint, restricting movement, forcible feeding or withholding of food, making someone purposefully uncomfortable as well as involuntary isolation or confinement.
- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or adult at risk, which may cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to them that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate, and/or feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on them. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, such as domestic abuse. It may involve serious bullying causing them frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or adults at risk. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or adult at risk though it may occur alone. It also includes preventing someone having choice and opinion, failure to respect their privacy, preventing them from accessing stimulation, meaningful occupation or activities. It covers enforced social isolation, removing mobility or communication aids or leaving someone unattended when they need assistance or preventing them from meeting their religious or cultural needs.
- **Financial abuse** – this generally occurs in relation to an adult at risk (but can impact on a child) and includes theft of money or possessions, fraud, scamming, preventing a person from accessing their own money, benefits or assets. It occurs when situation arise such as an employee takes a loan from a person using the service or puts undue pressure, duress, threat or undue influence on the person in connection with loans, wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions. Other types of financial abuse are: arranging less care than is needed to save money to maximise inheritance, denying assistance to manage/monitor financial affairs, denying assistance to access benefits, misuse of personal allowance in a care home, misuse of benefits or direct payments in a family home, someone moving into a person's home and living rent free without agreement or under duress, false representation, using another person's bank account, cards or documents, exploitation of a person's money or assets, e.g. unauthorised use of a car, misuse of a power of attorney, deputy, appointeeship or other legal authority, rogue trading – e.g. unnecessary or overpriced property repairs and failure to carry out agreed repairs or poor workmanship
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child or adult at risk's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse, and once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate carers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or adult at risk's basic emotional needs. Neglect can present as a providing care in a way that the person dislikes, failure to administer medication as prescribed, refusal of access to visitors, taking no account of their cultural, religious or ethnic needs, taking no account of their educational, social or recreational needs, ignoring them or isolating them, prevent them from making

their own decisions, preventing them from having access to glasses, hearing aids, dentures etc., failure to ensure privacy and dignity. It is important to recognise that self-neglect is a form of neglect and can put an adult at risk in danger to life, particularly if they fail to take medication etc.

- **Exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups** refers to the use of children or an adult at risk for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in them receiving unjust, cruel and harmful treatment. These activities are to the detriment of the child or adult at risk's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development.
- **Institutional Abuse** occurs when organisations lack leadership and supervision, have insufficient staff or high turnover resulting in poor quality of care which results in harm to those within those institutions. It covers inappropriate use of restraints, lack of dignity or privacy, failure to manage residents with abusive behaviour, not offering choice or promoting independence, misuse of medication, failure to provide aids (mobility, hearing etc.) interference with personal correspondence or communication, failure to respond to complaints.
- **Child trafficking** occurs when children are taken away from safety and exploited. Children who are trafficked are often forced into some form of work, used for sex or simply sold. Trafficking is any part of the process from finding and recruiting children, to transporting and receiving them.
- **Online child abuse** is a unique form of child abuse also known as "Cyber Molestation" due to its virtual, distanced, and anonymous nature. Online abuse of children can occur through a variety of forms including, but not limited to, cyber-bullying, grooming and sexual abuse.
Adults at risk are also vulnerable to on-line abuse, particularly when accessing social media.
- **Sexual Exploitation** is a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person or adult at risk into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the individual needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse.
- **Discriminatory abuse** occurs when someone receives unequal treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation (known as 'protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010).
- **Influences of extremism leading to radicalisation** From July 2015, Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015 states that registered childcare services, schools, the police, local authorities and others are required to protect children and young people from being drawn into terrorism. Organisations have to ensure they are part of their local authorities' safeguarding arrangements and that

practitioners are aware of and know how to contribute to Prevent-related activity in their area where appropriate. Any practitioner requiring more information regarding this duty can take advice and guidance from the Safeguarding Lead and can access the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445977/3799_Revised_Prevent_Duty_Guidance_England_Wales_V2-Interactive.pdf

Any concerns arising under the Prevent duty should be dealt with initially under the Safeguarding procedures that are explained in this policy.

It is important to recognise that abuse occurs in all religions, all cultures and all social classes.

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

If a practitioner has any concerns regarding a child or adult at risk's welfare, they should share them immediately with their line manager at the earliest opportunity (the full guidelines to sharing concerns can be found in Government guidance "What to do if..." and LSCB procedures).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>

There is also helpful guidance from NHS England in relation to adults at risk

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/adult-pocket-guide.pdf>

Concerns may also arise for practitioners from something a child or an adult at risk says, or something said by others about the individual.

The response of staff and volunteers to a disclosure of such information should be to:

- Listen carefully and hear the conversation through
- Avoid questioning as much as possible
- Avoid leading questions
- Never make promises to keep secrets
- Discuss with a Line Manager at the earliest possible time
- Record, in writing, the conversation as soon as possible

- Adopt a person-centred approach, based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of the individual
- Put the interest of the person first even where there is a conflict of interest between parent and child or adult at risk and carer.

Instructions to Practitioners on Reporting & recording concerns

If a child is in immediate danger then ring 999.

(appendix A shows a flow chart depicting the reporting process within Urban Heard)

If in the absence of a line manager, if the practitioner feels that delay would be harmful to the child or adults at risk's welfare, seek advice from any one of the following, bearing in mind that any information given is based on the 'need to know' principle:

- Nominated Safeguarding Lead
- Nominated Urban Heard Director with responsibility for safeguarding

Referral Process

If a child isn't in immediate danger then you will need to report it to the MASH for the postcode the young person lives at, where they go to school or where Urban Heard does not mean that you can refer to that MASH, it is on postcode and postcode alone.

Contacting Parent

Best practice is to contact parents to gain permission for the referral. Please explain to the young person or vulnerable adult **before** you call parent, why we have to contact the parent and gain their consent to do so beforehand. Tell them how you will explain the referral and ensure they are happy with the word you are going to use. This is important to maintain trust. Urban Heard expects professional judgement in which parent to call and if it is appropriate to call. When you talk to the parent it is important that you get the following information:

- Check DOB, full name, full address of young person
- Ask for the full name, full address and contact details of parent
- Who else lives in the house and if appropriate their names, ages and DOB.

When it is not appropriate to contact the parent:

Very rarely it may not be appropriate to contact the parent. If you have any worries or unsure about whether to contact parent then please discuss this with the DSL.

Examples of when it might not be appropriate to contact parent are:

- The disclosure is about the parent
- It is an exploitation case and referral to the exploitation team needs to be kept secret for the safety of the child
- The police are investigating and you have been told not to tell the parents
- The child is beyond hysterical at the mention of their parents knowing, this may mean the disclosure is not the full story and there may be going on at home that they are willing to disclose.

N.B. If the child lives at home with the parent they are fearful of, then the police may need to be called as the child may be at risk if they return home.

Referrals for Solihull

If the welfare of the child dictates **immediate** action, the practitioner should make an immediate referral to Solihull Children's Social Services Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) (0121 788 4300) or out of hours contact the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on (0121-605-6060).

In the case of an adult at risk - First Point of Contact Team on 0121 704 8007. Out of hours call the Emergency Duty Team on 0121 605 6060.

Referrals for Birmingham

If the welfare of the child dictates **immediate** action, the practitioner should make an immediate referral to Children's Advice and Support Service (0121 303 1888) or if out of hours contact the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on (0121-754-4806)

In the case of an adult at risk - The contact number for Birmingham City Council Adults and Communities Access Point (ACAP) Phone: 0121 303 1234, Out of hours contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0121 675 4806.

Referrals for other areas where Urban Heard is actively working with children and adults at risk

Whenever a new contract is awarded and work is commenced, it is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead to update this policy and ensure that all practitioners working in that area are aware of the referral process applicable.

If the situation is an **emergency** the practitioner may need to **telephone 999**.

This number should be used if:

- A crime is happening right now
- Someone is in immediate danger, or there is a risk of serious damage to property.
- A suspect for a serious crime is nearby.
- There is a traffic collision involving injury or danger to other road users.

Unless there is reason to believe the child is at risk of significant harm or the parent is the alleged perpetrator, parental consent must be obtained in order to make a referral.

In the case of an adult at risk, unless they do not have capacity to make an informed decision, you must gain their consent in order to make a referral, unless you believe that they would be at risk of significant harm if you do not take action. If they do not have capacity (and this should be determined by a Mental Capacity Assessment) and the parent/carer is not believed to be the alleged perpetrator then parental consent should be obtained before making a referral.

All verbal referrals to the **DART** team must be confirmed within 48 hours using the interagency referral form. If consent has not be sought, or has been declined, you must state the reasons for this on the form. In **ALL** cases, whether or not a referral is made to Social Services, a clear, factual, detailed written account must be made as soon as possible after the event and no later than by the end of the day in question. Information contained should be clearly based on facts not opinions. The written record must be forwarded immediately to the nominated safeguarding lead for secure storage. This written account may be used as evidence in any legal action that is taken. The safeguarding lead should immediately report the issue to the Director with responsibility for safeguarding.

NB. All information in this area is strictly confidential and must be shared only on a “need to know” basis.

The baseline information (if it is available) that will be required is:

- Your name, telephone number, position and request the same of the person to whom you are speaking.
- Full name and address, telephone number of family, date of birth of child/adult at risk
- Gender, ethnicity, first language, any special needs.

- Names, dates of birth and relationship of household members and any significant others.
- The names of professionals' known to be involved with the child/adult at risk/family e.g. GP, health visitor, school.
- The nature of the concerns, and foundation for them, based on the facts presented.
- An opinion on whether the child/adult at risk may need urgent action to make them safe.
- Whether the consent of a parent with parental responsibility has been given to the referral being made, or in the case of an adult at risk, consent has been granted and if not, the rationale for not seeking consent.

Ensure that you do the following:

- Confirm action agreed to be taken following the referral.
- Keep an accurate record of your concern(s) made at the time, and the response from Social Services.
- Follow your conversation up with a written confirmation of what has been said and agreed – either by encrypted email or private and confidential letter.
- If no further action is to be taken, record the reasons for this decision.

Note: concerns regarding modern slavery or human trafficking should be referred to the National Referral Mechanism via a First Responder (e.g. an agency such as Barnardo's, Salvation Army etc) full guidance can be found at www.ecpat.org.uk

Procedure when the allegation is about a Practitioner

In any case where an allegation of abuse is directed at a practitioner and there is a suggestion that he or she has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or an adult at risk, or may have harmed a child or an adult at risk;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or an adult at risk; or,
- behaved towards a child/children/adult or adults at risk in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with them, then:

The matter would be referred to the local authority in line with the principles of this Safeguarding policy but additionally, the Safeguarding Lead

would consider whether action under Urban Heard's Disciplinary Policy is required.

In the event that an allegation of abuse is made against a practitioner the Safeguarding lead may seek advice from the relevant Manager at the Local Authority and after discussion, agree the procedure to be followed. To do this they would need to contact the Local Designated Officer:

Local Authority Designated Officer: LADO: Simon Stubbs

The LADO service is based at:

Child Protection and Review Unit, Bluebell Centre, Chelmsley Wood, B37 5TN

LADO referrals: should be made via

Telephone: 0121 788 4310

Secure email: cpru@solihull.gov.uk (please put 'LADO referral' in subject line)

Any practitioner disclosing information regarding inappropriate behaviour by colleagues will be listened to and supported in line with Urban Heard's whistleblowing policy.

Parents or carers of a child or an adult at risk allegedly abused by a practitioner or other adult will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation. Any practitioner facing investigation into an allegation of abuse will be subject to the procedures laid down by LSCB and other relevant investigative agencies. They will be offered appropriate access to professional and personal support networks and will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation.

Where an allegation has been made, and initial considerations suggest that the incident is likely to have occurred but the behaviour complained of does not reach the threshold for referral to social care and police, Urban Heard will investigate the matter internally and determine whether there is need to undertake disciplinary action in line with the Disciplinary Policy. At this stage a decision will be made about the future status of this practitioner.

Where a criminal investigation has been undertaken but a decision has been taken not to charge the individual with an offence, or not to administer a caution, or if the person is acquitted by a Court, Urban Heard will investigate the matter internally and determine whether there is a need to undertake disciplinary action in line with the Disciplinary Policy.

Disciplinary proceedings are not subject to the same burden of proof as legal proceedings. The absence of a criminal conviction or charge within itself is not an adequate defence against an allegation within the work setting, nor does it preclude an employer from pursuing an internal

disciplinary investigation. There may be elements of an allegation which clearly suggest a breach of expected or appropriate standards of behaviour or propriety, or which pose a risk to the welfare of children, young people or adults at risk, even where no criminal activity is identified.

Urban Heard will also consider its duty of care to its employees and will ensure that the employee is treated fairly and reasonably and informed about the process to be followed.

Consideration should be given to:

- the context in which the allegation occurred and whether this provides further insight which may mitigate risk.
- the type of activity the individual is expected to undertake,
- the level of access to children or adults at risk that this provides,
- the indicative risks presented by the nature of the allegation and
- if any mechanisms exist to reduce or manage the risk.

The internal investigation may determine that disciplinary action is not necessary and may exonerate the individual concerned. It is important that a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, is kept on a person's confidential personnel file, and a copy provided to the person concerned.

Occasionally, allegations will be made that are false. Urban Heard will endeavour to carry out any investigations in such a way to ensure that the rights of the individual who is the subject of the allegation are supported whilst ensuring that this does not impinge on the rights of the subject of the allegation. All investigations that are carried out will be:

- timely
- thorough
- fair.

E Safety

Photographs provide wonderful evidence of the work done by Urban Heard and should only be used with the parent/carers consent (or consent from the individual in the case of an adult at risk who has capacity). Staff must not use their own mobile phones or cameras to take photographs unless authorised to do so, with consent, and the photos should be downloaded to an Urban Heard password protected computer or cloud-based storage as soon as possible and then deleted from the personal equipment. Practitioners should be mindful of their position of trust as a

professional and should not communicate with children or adults at risk through private emails or networking sites. The use of official email and networking sites that have been sanctioned by Urban Heard are permitted as long as exchanges are visible and appropriate.

Accessing or downloading data from inappropriate websites (e.g. pornographic, websites or emails, racist, sexist or gambling websites or emails, sites promoting violence or illegal software) at any time is forbidden and will lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Using Internet Based Chat systems to engage with young people

Zoom and Teams:

Zoom should be used as much as possible as the conferencing platform to engage. This must be scheduled and people given the unique meeting I.D. and password. This needs to be changed each time. Zoom 'etiquette' should be discussed with each young person such as outlined in the list below:

Have materials ready

Be ready for your zoom meeting. Gather any materials you need ahead of time so that when it your time to share something you can do so quickly. Also, make sure you go to the bathroom beforehand.

Stay in one spot during the call and find a quiet spot

Young People should not take people on a tour of their home and should ideally not take the call in their bedroom, or in siblings rooms.

Don't use a different background

Zoom and has a ton of fun backgrounds, but they should not be used as some pictures could be inappropriate. If possible, tell young people to find a spot in your house that has a simple background and has good lighting. However, don't sit in front of a window with the light streaming in behind you; that will also make it hard for people to see you.

Know when and how to mute

Host to be in charge of mute. Turn on mute and tell young people to unmute themselves when they want to talk

Be presentable

Ensure the young people understand it is important to be dressed appropriately and washed.

Be respectful

Young people still need to be aware of respecting others and need to be informed that in appropriate language or directed insults are still not tolerated. The same rules of face-to-face groups need to be applied during the call and the young people need to be aware of that.

No sharing of confidential information

Young people need to be told that the security of the app is not 100% so it is important that not confidential information is shared. If the young people is worried or needs to disclose then the worker needs to ring them after the session.

No using of games or other apps during the session

To maximise the security during the app, other apps or in app games cannot be used.

No screenshots or recordings without prior permission

Everyone on the call needs to be informed if a picture or recording is being taken and permissions gained.

Recruitment and Training

Recruitment

Urban Heard recognises that to provide a safe, high quality service, there needs to be investment into the recruitment process and then training to enhance the skills of practitioners who are appointed. Listed below is the approach Urban Heard will take to the recruitment and training of staff to ensure that any child or adult at risk remains safe within the service delivered by them.

- Two written references will be taken up on all new practitioners including one from their previous workplace (if a person has not had a previous workplace, a professional reference will be acceptable). In all cases, references from workplaces must be on headed notepaper or from a business email. Urban Heard reserves the right to validate all reference sources. Only those with satisfactory references will be appointed and references will ask a specific question about an individual's suitability to work with vulnerable people.
- Two proofs of identity will be required including recent photographic evidence and proof of address.
- All paid staff will be required to complete a six-month probationary period.

- All volunteer placements will be reviewed after the first six months.
- Practitioners working directly with children or adults at risk will be required to undergo a satisfactory enhanced check via the Disclosure and Barring Service and complete a declaration form indicating whether they have been subject to any abuse investigations or enquiries.
- Safeguarding training will be a mandatory part of the induction process for all practitioners where contact with children or adults at risk is an integral part of their duties. Existing practitioners will receive refresher training every three years in line with national guidance.
- The Safeguarding Lead will undertake level 2 Safeguarding training every two years.
- Incidents and lessons learned will inform training.

Training and Supervision

To ensure that practitioners are equipped to support the children and adults at risk who access Urban Heard's activities appropriately and safely, in-house induction training will be provided as well as safeguarding training which will be refreshed every three years. All practitioners are expected to keep a learning log of all training to support their personal development.

Other specific training that will be required to ensure that practitioners have the right level of skills to support children and adults at risk safely will be determined, initially, at interview and then through regular personal development supervision.

Supervision of practitioners is provided as part of their on-going support and will include the opportunity to share any concerns

Contextual Safeguarding

NSPCC states that: "Contextual safeguarding, which has been developed by Dr. Carlene Firmin at the University of Bedfordshire's Contextual Safeguarding Network, recognises that as young people grow and develop they are influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside of their family. For example in school or college, in the local community, in their peer groups or online. Children and young people may encounter risk in any of these environments. Sometimes the different contexts are inter-related and can mean that children and young people may encounter multiple risks. Contextual safeguarding looks at how we can best understand these risks, engage with children and young people and help to keep them safe. It's an approach that's often been used to apply to adolescents, though the lessons can equally be applied to younger children, especially in today's changing world."

There are two main areas involved with Contextual Safeguarding:

1. Knowing the area

2. Working with other agencies

For GDPR purposes a sharing agreement between organisations that have the same young people attend will need to be sought before a contextual safeguarding map can be properly designed. Once this is in place, it is essential that records of key people of interest, safeguarding concerns, exploitation, and crimes. By working together it would be possible to understand more about the young person and build a bigger picture to support Children's Services or the Police in their investigations.

Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) Form

There is often cross-over from safeguarding concerns and criminal intelligence so it is important that a FIB form is completed if there is any indication that a law has been broken. Information on how to complete a FIB form can be found via this link:

<https://www.safeguardingsolihull.org.uk/ssab/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/09/WMP-FIB-Form-Briefing.pdf>

Any completion of FIB forms **MUST** be kept completely confidential and only the DSL will be informed. No parent or young person needs to know about the FIB form as this may interfere with any investigation. It is our duty as professionals to report any concerns that could indicate that there is criminal activity. However, this is not to be used if there has been an actual criminal offence, as practitioners must either ring 101 or 999 to report this.

Exploitation

Solihull has an all age exploitation strategy which can be read following this link:

<https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/assets/clients/6/All%20Age%20Procedures%20UPDATED%20links.pdf>

Urban Heard is in a prime location to spot signs of exploitation and grooming so it is imperative that all staff undertake exploitation training and keeps up to date with the signs and symptoms in the area. We work really closely with the exploitation team and if you ever have a concern that you need to chat through then please contact the exploitation team on: 0121 709 7039.

It is also important that the screening tool is completed and this can be found on the shared file.

Additional Information

This policy was written using information from the HM Government Document “Working Together to Safeguard Children”, a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, 2018 and the Care Act 2014.

Relevant legislation includes:

Children’s Act 1989
Care Act 2014
Data Protection Act 1998
Sexual offences Act 2003
Children’s Act 2004
Protection of Freedom Act 2012
Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
The Young Carers (Needs Assessment) Regulations
Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1976
Equality Act 2010

The Safeguarding policy has links with the following policies

Disciplinary
GDPR
Whistleblowing
Confidentiality
DBS and their use in recruitment
Code of Conduct

Appendix A

Abuse is suspected

