



## Safeguarding Code of Conduct

### **Purpose**

This Code of Conduct outlines the conduct expected of all staff and volunteers working for Torch Help Hub (Torch) in relation to safeguarding. It aims to help protect adults at risk of harm, children and young people from abuse plus inappropriate behaviour from those in positions of trust, and to reduce the risk of unfounded allegations of abuse being made.

### **Role of staff and volunteers in safeguarding**

When working with children and young people or adults at risk of harm, you are acting in a position of trust for Torch. As a representative of Torch, you must act appropriately.

### **Good practice**

- Treat everyone with dignity, respect, and fairness, with regard for an individuals' interests, rights, safety, and welfare.
- Work in a responsible, transparent, and accountable way.
- Be prepared to challenge unacceptable behaviour or to be challenged.
- Listen carefully to those to whom you are providing a service.
- Avoid any behaviour that could be perceived as bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, spiritual abuse, or sexual abuse (including inappropriate physical contact such as rough play and inappropriate language or gestures).
- Don't make inappropriate promises particularly in relation to confidentiality.
- Do explain to the individual what you intend to do and don't delay acting.
- Report to your line manager or a Coordinator any concerns about a breach or potential breach of professional boundaries by you, a colleague or an external agency, even if the breach was not intentional.
- Follow policies, procedures and guidelines and report all disclosures, concerns, allegations, and suspicions to the DSL.
- Seek advice from Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) when necessary.

### **Unacceptable behaviour**

- Not reporting concerns or delaying reporting concerns.
- Taking unnecessary risks.
- Any behaviour that is or may be perceived as threatening or abusive in any way.
- Passing on your personal and/or social media contact details (excluding mobile).
- Developing inappropriate relationships.
- Favouritism/exclusion – all people should be equally supported.
- Self-disclosure of details about your personal experiences or life.
- Visiting a client home outside of your Torch responsibilities whilst still a Torch client.
- Gift-giving and accepting presents should comply with THH13 Torch Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

### **The Do's and Don'ts of responding to a Disclosure**

A disclosure is the process by which someone starts to share their experiences of abuse with others. that is happening now, may happen in the future or has happened in the past when:

- The adult or child communicates that they have been (or are worried they may be) abused or neglected; or



- Any other person reveals that they have seen an incident of abuse or neglect, or found evidence that indicates it may be, or is occurring.

A disclosure can be verbal or written (i.e. a text, email, or letter). Below are some good practice dos and don'ts when responding to a disclosure:

#### **Do**

- Take the disclosure seriously and reassure them that they were right to tell you.
- Accept what they are saying.
- Listen quietly, carefully, and patiently.
- Stay calm and avoid reactions such as shock, disbelief, or anger.
- Respond in a calm but concerned manner.
- Allow the person to talk without interruption.
- Ask open questions using the acronym TED – tell, explain, describe E.g., “tell me a little more about what happened?”, “can you explain/describe to me what happened”).
- Reflect back/repeat what was said to check that you have understood properly.
- Reassure the person that the information they have shared with you will be handled sensitively and shared only with those who need to know.

#### **Don't**

- Promise to keep anything secret – explain that you can't promise confidentiality to anyone as there may be situations when matters need to be shared to ensure everyone is kept safe. If there is a safeguarding concern, you have a duty to pass it on to the DSL/ Trustee Safeguarding Lead (TSL).
- Relay details to other people whether in your organisation or not, other than the DSL. If other people need to know, it is the DSL's job to inform any relevant parties but there are confidentiality issues surrounding disclosures that need to be upheld.
- Show shock, disgust, or judgement.
- Interrupt the person when they are recalling significant events.
- Tell the person that you understand what they are going through or have a similar story about yourself or another person to 'make them feel more comfortable'.
- Ask closed or leading questions which could result in any evidence being inadmissible in any subsequent court case. For example, “who hit you?” or “did your uncle do this to you?”. These have a presumption on the part of the questioner as to what happened. A non-leading question would be “how did that happen?” or “can you tell me how you got that bruise?”.
- Ask intrusive questions or seek further details beyond what they are willing to disclose or is needed to establish safety.
- Provide an opinion or suggestions as to how to deal with the situation.
- Try to talk to the alleged abuser or investigate anything yourself.
- Make negative comments about the suspected abuser.
- Say whether you believe that what the person is alleging is true - your role is to gather basic information to enable you to report the matter.
- Make promises you can't keep or situations you cannot guarantee e.g., “I promise to make sure it will never happen again”, “I promise not to tell anyone”, or similar.

#### **Things to remember**

- Avoid asking leading questions – these are questions that imply or contain its own answer and can subtly prompt the person making the disclosure to answer in a particular way.
- Leading questions can lead a disclosure off track, prompting the respondent to answer in the



way they think you want to hear, or they are comfortable with.

- Go with your “gut” feeling.
- Keep all matters confidential.

#### Change Record

Date of Change:	Changed By:	Comments:
19/04/24	DSL	First published
26/02/ 25	TSL	Annual review with minor updates
19/02/26	TSL/OD	Annual review and minor update approved by Trustees