SAFEGUARDING OF ADULTS POLICY

1. Purpose

This document sets out Age UK Blackburn with Darwen's policy position in relation to the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults who both use its services directly and also contact it for advice and support. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Adults Procedure.

2. Scope

This document applies to all staff, volunteers, trustees, trainees, consultants and secondees (referred to as personnel) of Age UK Blackburn with Darwen the Registered Charity and its Subsidiaries.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Employers – Age UK Blackburn with Darwen is responsible for ensuring the safeguarding of vulnerable adults who use its services and it will take all reasonable steps to ensure that its personnel are trained and competent to deal with instances or suspected instances of abuse. It is also committed to using Safer Recruitment practices.

3.2 Board of Trustees and Chief Executive– the Board of Trustees have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that this policy and associated procedures are appropriate to the operations of the organisation and effective in safeguarding. The Chief Executive is responsible for implementing, monitoring and reviewing this policy and taking all reasonable steps to ensure, as far as is reasonably practical, that the organisation discharges all its responsibilities with regard to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. The Board of Trustees are also responsible for ensuring that they fulfil the duty to report Serious Incidents relating to safeguarding to the Charity Commission. The Board of Trustees are also responsible for ensuring that a referral is made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) is removed from working because the person poses a risk of harm to adults.

3.3 Head of Prevention & Wellbeing – is the operational lead for Safeguarding.

3.4 Other senior managers – are responsible for implementing this policy within their own areas of responsibility and ensuring, as far as possible, that all personnel are trained, coached and supported to deal with instances of abuse or suspected abuse.

3.5 Line managers – must ensure they are familiar with, understand and comply with this policy. Line managers are also expected to ensure that all personnel in their service areas comply with this policy.

3.6 All personnel – have a duty to undergo all relevant training in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults and to work to the organisation's guidelines for reporting instances of abuse or instances of suspected abuse.

4. Policy

4.1 Age UK Blackburn with Darwen recognises that we have a particular role to play in terms of protecting older people who for many different reasons may be vulnerable. We have a duty to ensure the safeguarding of our own service users/customers; and a role in supporting and enabling any older person or their advocate to deal with an abusive or safeguarding situation they are experiencing.

4.2 The organisation has adopted and is committed to the implementation of the Blackburn with Darwen Safeguarding Adults Board Multi-Agency Policy and Procedure (December 2023) which are underpinned by the Mental Capacity Act 2005, Care Act 2014, Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 2018, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 and the Blackburn with Darwen Safeguarding Adults Policy - 'Managing Concerns Relating to People in a Position of Trust (PiPoT)

4.3 The organisation is committed to the key principles, embedded within the Care Act 2014, which underpin all Safeguarding Adult work. The principles inform the ways in which the organisation and its personnel work with adults:

- Empowerment – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent
- Prevention – It is better to take action before harm occurs
- Proportionality – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- Protection – Support and representation for those in greatest need
- Partnership - Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting neglect and abuse
- Accountability – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

4.4 This policy and associated procedures include safeguarding concerns relating to Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Psychological or Emotional Abuse, Financial or Material Abuse, Neglect and / or Acts of Omission, Modern Slavery, Discriminatory Abuse, Organisational Abuse, Domestic Violence or Abuse, Self-Neglect and those who are vulnerable to modern slavery or radicalisation.

4.5 The organisation has an HR recruitment policy including Safer Recruitment, this ensures relevant checks are carried out appropriate to the role and includes the requirement of acceptable independent references being provided prior to any appointment being confirmed. All personnel receive an organisation induction including information on Safeguarding and paid employees have probationary periods set in line with the terms and conditions of their employment.

4.6 The organisation is committed to providing initial training on the principles and awareness of safeguarding and the implementation of local procedures to all its personnel. Refresher training is provided to staff on an annual basis and to volunteers every two years or following a change of procedure, incident or as otherwise required. All staff and volunteers receive initial training

on domestic abuse, and staff training will be refreshed every two years. All staff complete Suicide Awareness training, additionally Suicidal Distress Response Guidance is issued to all staff and volunteers. The organisation utilises a quality assured e-learning platform for the provision of this training.

4.7 This policy covers four distinct circumstances where the organisation may become involved in a safeguarding issue:

- Where an allegation of abuse or a safeguarding issue is made against a member of the organisation's personnel/people in a position of trust (PIPOT)
- Where an allegation of abuse or a safeguarding issue is raised by the alleged victim against somebody else
- Where an allegation of abuse or a safeguarding issue is raised by a third party who is not the alleged victim
- Issues of self neglect or the inability of a person to meet their own basic needs

4.8 The organisation recognises its role within the Blackburn with Darwen Adult Safeguarding Continuum and will use this to guide its decision making processes, seeking advice as necessary. When a referral is identified as appropriate we will follow the BwD Adults Safeguarding Referral Procedure. The attached Internal Procedures outline the actions/responsibilities required to ensure referrals happen consistently and within stipulated timescales.

4.9 The organisation is committed to making decisions relating to safeguarding using the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal which are person-led and outcome-focused, at all times ensuring the alleged victim is always at the centre of decisions

4.10 Confidentiality

4.10.1 The organisation recognises that there may be a perceived conflict between maintaining confidentiality and delivering our responsibilities under the Blackburn with Darwen Policy and Procedures and our duty of care to our personnel. Our Confidentiality Policy is clear that any disclosure or allegation is confidential to the organisation not to the individual personnel. That policy also sets out the circumstances when it may be appropriate to break a person's confidentiality, and this includes whenever a safeguarding allegation or concern is raised and it has not been possible to gain permission to make a referral from the alleged victim.

4.10.2 It is also recognised that personnel may be asked to provide information to the Safeguarding Team and/or the Police as part of an ongoing investigation not triggered by a referral from us. In all such instances the Head of Prevention & Wellbeing, or Chief Executive must be consulted before details are divulged.

4.11 Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews

Serious Case Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews are carried out following serious injury or death of a vulnerable person to ensure that any necessary learning or changes to policy and practice are identified and implemented. The organisation is committed to playing its role in any relevant Reviews and to meeting any requirements from this process.

4.12 Duty to Refer

As an organisation that provides Regulated Activity, as defined in the Freedoms Act 2010, we recognise that we do have a Duty to Refer to the Barred List when certain conditions are met. This is detailed in Appendix 1 to this Policy and Procedure for senior managers to follow.

5. Recording and Monitoring

5.1 All records relating to Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults cases and referrals will be kept securely and in accordance with the requirements of the current Data Protection regulations.

5.2 Safeguarding is a standard item on the employee supervision record and is discussed at monthly supervisions with all staff.

5.3 The Head of Prevention & Wellbeing provides a report of all Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults concerns and referrals, the areas of the organisation in which they are received and the types of abuse, to the senior management team on a quarterly basis and the Board of Trustees twice a year. Any trends, issues or omissions from these reports are addressed through refresher training or circulation of information.

6. People in a Position of Trust (PiPoT)

6.1 Where an allegation of abuse or a safeguarding issue is made against a member of the organisation's personnel/people in a position of trust (PIPOT) the Head of Prevention & Wellbeing (Safeguarding Lead) will assess any potential risk to adults at risk who use their services and, if necessary, to take action to safeguard those adults.

6.2 Examples of such concerns could relate to a PiPoT/personnel who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed an adult
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, an adult
- behaved towards an adult in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to adults with care and support needs
- their conduct has raised concern as to their suitability to a role in a position of trust

6.3 The Head of Prevention & Wellbeing will carry out a full internal investigation into any allegation received through any potential route, including a safeguarding referral, complaint, regulatory inspections, audits and quality systems, staff grievances, whistleblowing, social media, disciplinary and performance procedures, gathering evidence and accounts of the alleged abuse. Immediate action will be taken to remove the risk of any further harm which may include the removal of the member of staff.

6.4 A full investigation into an alleged abuse will be carried out by the Head of Prevention & Wellbeing (or Chief Executive, or other Senior Manager in their absence), or if the allegation is made against the Head of Prevention & Wellbeing the Chief Executive will take the lead. The investigation will be conducted within a 72-hour period to carry out interviews and gather evidence.

6.5 Age UK will provide effective support for any PiPoT/personnel facing an allegation and offer the employee a named contact if they are suspended. Any concern of abuse made against a PiPoT/personnel will be dealt with in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the adult and, at the same time, supports the person who is the subject of the concern.

6.6 The Head of Prevention & Wellbeing will liaise with the organisation's HR Advisors, BwD Safeguarding Team and the Police as appropriate to determine the actions to be taken as part of and separate to the safeguarding enquiry, for example any criminal investigation that may

take precedence over internal disciplinary processes initially. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

6.7 The Head of Prevention & Wellbeing will report all matters to the Chief Executive who will inform the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Full update reports will be provided to the full board following investigation when Trustees will also consider whether to report an allegation and any subsequent investigation and action taken to the Charity Commission as a Serious Incident. A referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will be made following the removal of an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from working with an adult with care and support needs (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to adults.

6.8 A full review of the organisations practices, policy and procedures would be undertaken by the Head of Prevention and Wellbeing and the Chief Executive following any safeguarding incidents involving any of the organisation's personnel.

I, confirm that I have read the Safeguarding Adults Policy

Signature: Date:

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Next due for review September 2026
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