

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. **Introduction**

The services delivered by MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO aim to address the impact of the social, environmental, economic and psychological influences upon women’s wellbeing using a whole person & total place approach. We aim to support, encourage and enable all women to get the best out of life for themselves and their families.

Our aim is to engage with women who are currently outside mainstream activities and provision, delivering support to overcome barriers to participation in normal daily life, developing confidence and unlocking potential.

We aim to reduce harm and increase safety for those accessing the services, their families and the wider community. Where possible we will contribute to and coordinate our priorities for safeguarding alongside those of our Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards (LSCB)/ Local Safeguarding Adults Boards (LSAB).

We recognise that in order to provide a safe and supportive environment for staff, volunteers and service users we must put safeguarding at the heart of all our actions and thoughts.

We are committed to working together with both Statutory and voluntary partners to ensure safeguarding remains a priority in the delivery of our services.”

These Policy and Procedures seek to ensure that MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO undertakes its responsibilities with regard to protection of vulnerable adults and / or children and will respond to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support paid and unpaid staff in their practices and clarifies the organisation’s expectations. They will be made available to all staff and volunteers in the organisation.

### CEO Lucy Budge

1. **Basic Principles - Safeguarding Children Young people and adult at risk** Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from significant and serious harm and keeping them safe. It involves identifying children and vulnerable adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect and working with them and other agencies in order to protect them from avoidable harms.

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO recognises that safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is a shared responsibility with the need for effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and skills.

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO recognises that effective safeguarding is underpinned with:

* Up to date safeguarding policies and procedures
* Robust Risk assessment processes
* Clear reporting and communication systems and clear lines of accountability
* An effective recruitment and vetting process and safer working practices
* Clear guidance for staff and expected behaviours and standards
* Policies being applied equitably to children and adults at risk
* Staff training appropriate to role and continuous professional development in safeguarding
* Appropriate supervision and support for staff
* Review and monitoring processes
* Effective interagency information sharing

**Definitions- What is Safeguarding?**

### Safeguarding Children (under 18yrs)

Safeguarding Children is the process of protecting children and young people (under 18years) from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

A child is someone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday

In ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015’ 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 grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
* taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Toget> [her\_to\_Safeguard\_Children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf)

### Significant Harm

Significant harm is the level of harm that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children, and gives Local Authority’s a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

There are no absolute criteria upon which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm; sometimes a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm. More often, however, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and long- standing, which interrupt, change or damage a child’s physical and psychological development.

### Children Act Guidance and Definitions

Within the Children Act 1989, the following guidance is offered:

Significance is not defined within the Children Act although it is to be ‘measured’ in terms of:

* a child’s health and development; and that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.
* **‘Harm’** means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development.
* **‘Development’** means physical, intellectual, social, emotional or behavioural development.
* **‘Health’** means physical or mental health; and
* **‘Ill treatment’** includes sexual abuse and forms of treatment that are not physical, including for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

To begin with, in order to understand and establish significant harm, it is necessary to consider:

* The child’s development within the context of their family and wider social environment.
* Any special needs and how they impact at all levels (child and family);
* The nature of any harm and its likely impact upon the child’s health and development;
* The adequacy of parental care.

More specifically, how does the following contextual information shape your professional judgement about this situation?

* Age of child (developmental stage/needs, vulnerability, abilities)?
* The ‘act(s)’ described or referred to – what is being described? Possible criminal act or investigation required? (10 is the age of criminal responsibility – e.g. if the concern relates to the actions of one child against another)
* Severity of ill-treatment?
* Degree and extent of physical harm?
* Duration and frequency?
* Extent and degree of premeditation?

Degree of threat or coercion?

* Immediate risk?
* Nature of risk and evidence of risk – when and how is the child at risk?
* Impact upon the child’s health and development?
* What am I being asked to do and what am I required to do in response to this information?

### Safeguarding Adults at Risk (18yrs and over)

The term ‘vulnerable adult’ which originated from previous adult protection guidance ‘No Secrets- DoH 2000’ has been replaced by the term ‘Adults at Risk of abuse or neglect’ in the Care Act 2104. Both terms are interchangeable and mean the same. These two terms are now used by a host of different agencies. They mean the same and are inter-changeable.

“Adult safeguarding” is the process of protecting adults with ‘care and support needs’ from abuse or neglect. It is an important part of what many public services do, and a key responsibility of local authorities. (Care Act 2014).

The aims of adult safeguarding are to:

* stop abuse or neglect wherever possible.
* prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs.
* safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live.
* promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned.
* raise public awareness so that communities as a whole, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect.
* provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the
* different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult; and
* address what has caused the abuse or neglect

### Duty to Safeguard Adults at Risk

Safeguarding is mainly aimed at people with care and support needs who may be in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of abuse or neglect by others. In these cases, local services must work together to spot those at risk and take steps to protect them”

The safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

* has **care and support needs** (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
* is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
* as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

### ‘Care and Support Needs’

The threshold for eligible care and support needs is based on identifying how a person’s needs affect their ability to achieve relevant outcomes, and how this impacts on their wellbeing.

If an adult has a physical or mental impairment or illness and they are unable to achieve at least two of the below wellbeing outcomes, and as a consequence of being unable to achieve one of the outcomes there is, or is likely to be a significant impact on the adult’s wellbeing then they are eligible for care and support by the local authority. (See Section 3 of these Procedures for more information)

### Wellbeing areas:

* personal dignity (including treatment of the individual with respect
* physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing
* protection from abuse and neglect
* control by the individual over day-today life (including over care and support provided and

the way it is provided)

* participation in work, education, training or recreation
* social and economic wellbeing
* domestic, family and personal relationships
* suitability of living accommodation
* the individual’s contribution to society

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO staff and volunteers will always promote the adult’s wellbeing in their safeguarding arrangements.

1. **Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO .

The policy applies to all Trustees, staff (including temporary staff), volunteers working for or delivering services on behalf of the MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO to both adults and children.

The policy covers all activity and service delivery by MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO staff and volunteers:

* on MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO premises
* other public or privately owned premises whether temporary or permanent
* during the transportation of any client in staff /volunteer owned vehicle

## Purpose of the Policy

These policy and procedures are there to safeguard and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who are subject to, or at risk of abuse or neglect.

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO understands its responsibility for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and will promote effective and early identification of all safeguarding concerns.

The MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO Directors, staff and volunteers will promote a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults to live full and happy lives within their communities.

Its purpose is to ensure that that good governance and quality standards are maintained within the MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO and to establish best practice, guidelines and outcomes in safeguarding and promoting the welfare (wellbeing) of both their clients and their children.

## My Sisters ‘House CIC – Safeguarding’ Statement

*“Safeguarding is Everyone’s business – MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare/wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment”.*

## Safeguarding Governance- Roles and Responsibilities

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO is committed to providing support to all those involved within the organisation in working (or volunteering/mentoring) with children and vulnerable adults (or those adults deemed at risk), and to provide a clear structure of Safeguarding accountability.

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring that individuals are aware of and understand the principles of this policy.

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO will ensure that it has arrangements in place to fulfil its commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of both children and vulnerable adults (or those adults deemed at risk) in the same way as statutory bodies and the public sector.

### MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO Board members

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for:

* The approval of all safeguarding policies and procedures
* Ensuring adequate resources for effective safeguarding training
* Developing a culture within the CIC that promotes effective safeguarding practices.

The Directors play a vital role in ensuring that they are legally compliant in order to manage their charity’s resources effectively and provide a long-term vision and protect their charity’s reputation and values. In order to fulfil these responsibilities, the Board of Directors may delegate some or all of these responsibilities to the Safeguarding Lead.

###  Senior Management Team (SMT)

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO Senior management team will provide a robust commitment to safeguarding arrangements in the delivery of all services, contracts and sub-contracts.

They will also assist in the safer recruitment and selection of staff and volunteer / mentors by the implementation of robust vetting and recruitment processes.

The SMT will also ensure that:

* The policy is accessible and implemented
* The policy is monitored and reviewed annually
* Sufficient resources are allocated to ensure that the policy can be effectively implemented through allocation of those resources i.e. training
* Clear and effective communication pathways in safeguarding to all staff and volunteers

**The role – Designated Safeguarding officer (DSO)**

The **Domestic Abuse & First Response Service Manager:** *Natalie Everson* is the appointed, named Safeguarding management lead for My Sisters’ House Women’s Centre, and will provide the designated safeguarding Officer (DSO) role for the Centre.

They will provide ready and accessible support and guidance to all staff and volunteers/mentors on safeguarding matters and will have attended a higher level of safeguarding training. They are responsible for responding to initial concerns or disclosures from staff and volunteers/mentors.

* The DSO will take lead responsibility for all child protection matters arising at My Sisters House Women’s Centre and will support all other members of staff in relation to any safeguarding or child protection concerns that aris .
* The DSO will take lead responsibility for all adult safeguarding matters, including vulnerable adults arising at My Sisters House Women’s Centre and will support all other members of staff in relation to any safeguarding concerns that arise.
* The DSO will take lead responsibility in responding to any other safeguarding concerns reported by and staff member or service user of the centre.
* The DSO will undergo appropriate and regular training to fulfil their duties.
* The DSO has the status and authority within My Sisters House Women’s centre to carry out the duties of the post including committing resources, arranging training, supporting and directing other staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults accessing any division of the service.
* The DSO is responsible for maintaining an overview of safeguarding within My Sisters House Women’s centre, to maintain open channels of communication with local statutory agencies and to monitor the effectiveness of policies and procedures in place.
* The DSO is responsible for keeping detailed, accurate and secure records of concerns, allegations and referrals for any Child Protection issues, or issues relating to safeguarding concerns regarding vulnerable adults

**Main duties and responsibilities**

• To refer all cases of suspected abuse or risk of significant harm promptly to the local authority children’s or adults’ social care. In the case of children’s safeguarding concerns, these will be actioned in the soonest possible timeframe and will be escalated to the WSCC MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) Vulnerable adult concerns will be referred directly to Carepoint 2 within WSCC adult social care framework.

* To take lead responsibility for referring to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) team all child protection concerns which involve a member of staff with direct involvement of children, or concerns where disclosures are made by clients with direct involvement with children
* To liaise with the CEO ensuring prompt referrals are made to the police where a crime may have been committed which involves a child or vulnerable adult (My Sisters’ House Women’s Centre, makes clear in confidentiality and info share documents, which require discussion and signing before the commencement of any key working, or group working, that should feel there is sufficient risk, a third party police report will be completed. We will endeavour to discuss this with the client prior to completion, however reserve the right to do this without the client’s knowledge or consent where risk of serious or imminent harm is present)
* To liaise with the CEO ensuring prompt referrals are made to police where imminent harm is suspected regarding service users that are victims of domestic abuse
* To ensure that MARAC referrals are completed in an appropriate time frame for victims at serious risk of harm
* The DSO will attend any strategic safeguarding meetings for clients of My Sisters’ House where there is a statutory requirement to do so.
* The DSO will liaise with the management team completing case file management to ensure best and consistent practice.
* The DSO will attend any Child safeguarding review, or domestic homicide review if required as appropriate, on behalf and in representation of My Sisters’ House women’s centre.
* The DSO will regularly review My Sisters House Women’s centre safeguarding policy in line with agreed centre policy review frameworks.

### MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO Workforce - staff and volunteers/mentors

Staff and volunteers/mentors have a shared responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk and need to know how to respond when they have a safeguarding concern about a client.

All staff and volunteers/mentors are responsible for reporting any abuse or neglect or suspected

abuse or neglect of any child or adults at risk immediately to their Project Safeguarding named lead. In an emergency situation staff and volunteers/mentors will be expected to report urgent cases direct to statutory agencies, including, for example, Police, Children’s Services.

1. **Consent and Capacity**

It is a fundamental principle of English law that adults have the right to make decisions on their own behalf and are assumed to have the capacity to do so. This is known as the ‘presumption of capacity’ and extends to decisions that may entail personal risks and that may not be in accordance with an objective view of their best interests.

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO is open and honest with all clients from the start and seeks the consent of clients in a written ‘Consent Agreement’. This acknowledges and recognises the times when staff and volunteers will need to act and contact a third party when safety is an overriding concern.

If consent is refused however information may still be shared when interventions are needed to protect either the client or other vulnerable groups. i.e. children and vulnerable adults.

### Adults Lacking Capacity

Adults lacking capacity to make decisions that would protect and promote their own interests are potentially extremely vulnerable. Although, in accordance with the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, adults lacking capacity should be at liberty to participate as far as possible in decision- making, and express their views, emphasis should shift to ensuring that decisions made on patients’ behalf promote their overall best interests.

MY SISTERS’ HOUSE CIO will ensure that all staff and volunteers who are required to make a decision on behalf of a

someone who lacks capacity will do so in that person’s best interest, using the common checklist of factors in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice.

## Sharing Information

Sharing of information between practitioners and organisations is essential for effective identification, assessment, risk management and service provision. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk of abuse or neglect

Personal information held by MY SISTERS’ HOUSE CIO is subject to a legal duty of confidentiality and will not normally be disclosed without the consent of the individual. However, the right to confidentiality and respect for private and family life (Article 8, Human Rights Act, 1998) is not absolute.

MY SISTERS’ HOUSE CIO recognise that information sharing between key organisations is essential to safeguard children and vulnerable adults at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation. A key factor in many serious case reviews has been a failure to record information, to share it, to understand the significance of the information shared, and to take appropriate action in relation to known or suspected abuse or neglect.

MY SISTERS’ HOUSE CIO will ensure that confidential information is only shared where it is lawful and ethical to do so.

MY SISTERS’ HOUSE CIO will ensure that all staff is clear about situations when they can share information with appropriate agencies and professionals working together within local information sharing protocols. i.e. when they believe an adult at risk is likely to suffer serious harm.

MY SISTERS’ HOUSE CIO staff and volunteers will give due regard to relevant legislation, guidance and local information sharing protocols when making decisions on sharing information including the following:

* The Data Protection Act 1998
* The Children Act 2004
* The Care Act 2014

MY SISTERS’ HOUSE CIO will also refer to local LCSB/LASB multi agency sharing agreements and protocols for further guidance.

My Sisters House Women's Centre **aims to reduce harm and increase safety** for those accessing our services, as well as their families and the wider community. Where possible we will contribute to and coordinate our priorities for safeguarding alongside those of West Sussex Safeguarding Children's Board's and West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board's.

## Recruitment, Selection and Training

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO will ensure that all staff and volunteers are safe and trustworthy to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults by enforcing robust recruitment procedures.

We pride our self on being a positive ‘recruit with conviction’ employer and where possible we will promote a non-judgemental and professional environment to ensure a safe and effective and sustainable employment for people with criminal convictions.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 requires the organisation to carry out specific vetting (enhanced DBS) and checks on ‘references’ on staff or volunteers if they are to perform ‘regulated activity’. i.e. work closely with children or vulnerable adults.

The advertisement, recruitment and training of all MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO employees and volunteers /mentors will comply with current Safeguarding guidance. This means that all new ‘regulated activity’ positions will make clear in advertisements and application forms of the need for to undergo and clear an enhanced DBS disclosure check.

In order to deter unsuitable individuals and inappropriate behaviour the MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO will include their Safeguarding statement (below) in the following recruitment and selection process and documents.

* Publicity materials
* Job/ Role Advertisements
* Recruitment websites
* Candidate information packs
* Person specifications
* Job descriptions
* Competency frameworks
* Induction training

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In addition, the MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO will provide:

1. Job or role descriptions for all roles involving contact with vulnerable adults and/ or children will contain reference to safeguarding responsibilities.
2. Person specifications for relevant roles which contain a statement on core competency with regard to child and or vulnerable adult safeguarding
3. Short listing is based on formal application processes/forms and not on provision of CVs
4. Interviews are conducted according to equal opportunity principles and where relevant includes questions about safeguarding
5. DBS checks for specific roles for all staff (paid or unpaid) working with vulnerable adults and children. Portable/ carry over DBS checks from another employer will not be deemed to be sufficient. It is a criminal offence for individuals barred by the ISA to work or apply to work with children or vulnerable adults in a wide range of posts.
6. No formal job offers are made until after checks for suitability are completed

**Training**

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO identifies that training and raising awareness of safeguarding issues, policies and procedures is fundamental to the development and maintenance of a safe environment and safer organisation.

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO will also ensure that all current staff and volunteers are trained to the appropriate standards in safeguarding to maintain and promote safer staff, safer culture and a safer organisation.

All members of staff and volunteers will receive training in safeguarding to a level which is commensurate to the level of responsibility of the role that is being performed.

Safeguarding training will not be regarded as a 'once only' activity, but as on-going development of skills and knowledge of safeguarding. Safeguarding refresher training events will be provided at least every three years and in response to staff turnover.

## Safeguarding Allegations against staff

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its staff (paid or unpaid) within the organisation or by a professional from another partner organisation.

Staff and volunteers must comply with the MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO Code of Conduct when performing their role within the MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO in order to promote safer working practices for safeguarding.

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO will deal appropriately and promptly with such allegations or concerns and refer all safeguarding concerns or allegations about its employees who are working in ‘regulated activity’ immediately to the appropriate local authority social services safeguarding team (adults or children).

It is a matter of policy that any employee who performs ‘regulated activity’ and about whom a safeguarding allegation is made will be suspended without prejudice immediately, pending investigation. This will be the case even if the allegation is not linked to their role or activity with

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO. Such instances will be rare occasions and any decision to suspend will not be taken lightly. The decision will be taken after full discussions with the Chief Executive Officer.

During any investigation of an allegation against an employee suspended from the work place the Company recognises that it has a continuing duty of care. It will ensure a link person is nominated (not connected to the investigation) to provide support and guidance and be able to signpost those suspended to other external support networks. e.g. local trade union reps, Occupational Health, G.P., Samaritans etc.

### DBS requirement and duty to Report

The legal duty to make referrals to the ISA began on 12 October 2009 and remains in force. The duty to make referrals continues to apply now the ISA and CRB have merged to form the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO recognises its legal duty to report any concerns about unsafe practice by any of its paid or unpaid staff to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

If at any time the MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO removes an individual from ‘regulated activity’ due to relevant conduct, risk of harm or receiving a caution or conviction for a relevant offence (or the person has resigned or left that post in circumstances where they may have been removed), then they will refer the matter to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

## Support for staff

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO recognise that staff and volunteers/mentors who work directly with children and vulnerable adults are sometimes faced with complex and challenging decisions on some of the most vulnerable members of the community. Involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be stressful for staff concerned.

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO will provide safe and confidential environments for staff to discuss their work and their personal and professional responses to their work.

The mechanisms in place to support staff include:

* Debriefing support for paid and unpaid staff so that they can reflect on the issues they have dealt with
* Seeking further support as appropriate e.g. access to counselling.
* Clinical supervision (routine)

All complaints that are received about the conduct or behaviour of the MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO staff or volunteers will be dealt with according to its Complaints Procedure.

If a complaint is identified as a potential safeguarding concern, then the MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO will ensure that it is directed through to the MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO Safeguarding Procedures.

## Whistleblowing

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 introduced protection for workers from reprisals for disclosing information in the public interest. It emphasises the importance that the role ’whistle-blowing’ can play in deterring and detecting malpractice and abuse of children and Vulnerable Adults.

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO will promote practical arrangements for whistle-blowing to enable its staff and volunteer helpers to voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Any member of staff or volunteer who uses the ‘whistle blowing’ procedure will be made aware that their employment rights are protected.

Staff members and volunteers will be supported in this individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults may be at risk.

We have our own **MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO Whistle Blowing Policy WB/01/18**

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO will:

* Ensure it has appropriate whistle-blowing policies in place
* Ensure that it has clear procedures for dealing with allegations against staff.
* Encourage and support staff and volunteers to report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern regardless of source.

## Quality and Review

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO is committed to striving for excellence in the provision of all its services. We do this by actively engaging our Internal Audit and Quality and Standards team in the safeguarding systems. We will use an electronic recording and alert system to capture all relevant data in order to evidence and monitor compliance in safeguarding. This quality assurance mechanism is a crucial and integral part of the governance structure and workings of the MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO Safeguarding Group.

In order to continuously monitor, develop and deliver excellence within our business the will work with MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO partners and participate in reviews set out in National and local guidance. i.e. Serious Case Reviews (SCR’s) (children), Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR’s), Child Death Overview Processes (CDOP), Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) Multi- Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) and Channel reviews.

## Equality and Diversity

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO is an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to ensuring within the framework of the law that our workplaces are free from unlawful or unfair discrimination because of Protected Characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. We have adopted this policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims.

The Protected Characteristics are –

* Age
* Disability
* Gender Reassignment
* Race
* Religion or Belief
* Sex
* Sexual Orientation
* Marriage and Civil Partnership

### Pregnancy and Maternity

We aim to ensure that our employees achieve their full potential and that all employment decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria.

1. **Local Safeguarding Boards**

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO will work together with the LSCB’s / LSAB‘s in order to promote the welfare and safeguard children and vulnerable adults they work with. MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO will also ensure that its own Safeguarding Policies and procedure are based upon and reflect the local multi agency safeguarding policies and procedures.

### Local Safeguarding Children’s board (LSCB)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children requires effective co-ordination in every local area. The Children Act 2004 required each local authority to establish a local safeguarding children’s board. The LSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations will co- operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

They are responsible for developing multi-agency policies for Safeguarding children in their area and together with Children’s Trust Board ensure that there are clear local arrangements for delivering services to children in need e.g. Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process.

Other responsibilities include training standards for all professionals/volunteers working with children and a monitoring and an evaluation function especially in respect of undertaking reviews into all child deaths.

### Local Safeguarding Adult’s Board (LSAB)

The overarching purpose of a Safeguarding Adult Board SAB is to help and safeguard adults with care and support needs. It does this by:

* assuring itself that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance
* assuring itself that safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome-focused
* working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect where possible
* ensuring agencies and individuals give timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect have occurred
* assuring itself that safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of adults in its area.

The SAB must lead adult safeguarding arrangements across its locality and oversee and coordinate the effectiveness of the safeguarding work of its member and partner agencies. This will require the SAB to develop and actively promote a culture with its members, partners and the local community that recognises the values and principles contained in [‘Making Safeguarding Personal’.](http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/5854661/Making%2BSafeguarding%2BPersonal%2B-%2BGuide%2B2014/4213d016-2732-40d4-bbc0-d0d8639ef0df) It should also concern itself with a range of issues which can contribute to the wellbeing of its community and the prevention of abuse and neglect, such as:

* the safety of people who use services in local health settings, including mental health
* the safety of adults with care and support needs living in social housing
* effective interventions with adults who self-neglect, for whatever reason
* the quality of local care and support services
* the effectiveness of prisons in safeguarding offenders
* making connections between adult safeguarding and domestic abuse.
1. **Publicity**

MY SISTERS HOUSE CIO encourages opportunities to gain positive press attention to increase funding and raise awareness of the organisation. The responsibility of publicising a local event would fall to the organisers but must have prior approval from the CEO.

If any of the organisation’s staff or volunteer are asked to make comment or give information in respect of a sensitive issue (e.g. regarding a subject currently under investigation within the organisation or by the Police), they must not engage with the query independently. Sensitive press queries must be referred to the Chief Executive Officer for consideration and response.

Where a specific incident has taken place the MY SISTERS’ HOUSE CIO approach to communication should be as honest and open as possible. Where possible this should be jointly agreed with relevant partners, usually the commissioning authority and/or statutory authorities.