



The
Compassionate
Friends

Adult safeguarding policy, guidance and procedures

Adult Safeguarding Policy

Policy Overview

The Charity Commission asserts that safeguarding policy and procedures are vital for the effective operation of any charity that works with vulnerable groups.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and trustees at The Compassionate Friends (TCF). It also applies to all situations where The Compassionate Friends supports bereaved parents, adult siblings and grandparents in person, on the telephone and online, as well as at fundraising events and in our national office.

The guidance in this policy helps TCF trustees, volunteers and staff identify serious incidents. It also explains how to report them and what to report.

Policy Scope

This policy and procedure covers all staff, volunteers, trustees and areas of work and layers of support provided by TCF.

Safeguarding means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from harm, abuse and neglect.

TCF believes that no adult, bereaved or otherwise, should experience harm or abuse of any kind. TCF has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all adults and to keep them safe. We are committed to practicing in a way that protects people. We work to make sure that people's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

Safeguarding concerns could include:

- Acute suicidal ideation or high-risk self-harm
- Serious mental illness such as psychosis, depression or severe post-natal depression
- Domestic abuse
- High-risk substance misuse
- Adults who disclose that they have harmed, or are at risk of harming, either a child or another adult
- 'Honour'-based abuse or forced marriage
- Any concerns about radicalisation and extremist views or behaviours must also be reported as a safeguarding concern in line with Prevent Duty 2015 guidance and may involve consulting with local Prevent Coordinators where necessary

TCF know that bereaved parents and close family members can often be in a very vulnerable state having suffered the traumatic event of the death of their child, sibling or grandchild. They may be particularly susceptible to thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide, and we strive to support them to take the appropriate steps to protect and care for themselves. We may act on their behalf to contact emergency support, either when they give their consent or are considered not to have the mental capacity to act independently.

Mental Capacity and Decision Making

UK Law assumes that all people over the age of 16 have the ability to make their own decisions, unless it has been proved that they can't. It also gives us the right to make any decision that we need to make and gives us the right to make our own decisions even if others consider them to be unwise. We make so many decisions that it is easy to take this ability for granted.

The Law says that to make a decision we need to:

- Understand information
- Remember it for long enough
- Think about the information
- Communicate our decision

A person's ability to do this may be affected by things such as learning disability, dementia, mental health needs, acquired brain injury and physical ill health. Most adults have the ability to make their own decisions given the right support however, some adults with care and support needs have the experience of other people making decisions about them and for them. If someone has a disability that means they need support to understand or make a decision this must be provided.

A small number of people cannot make any decisions. Being unable to make a decision is called 'lacking mental capacity'. Mental capacity refers to the ability to make a decision at the time that decision is needed. A person's mental capacity can change. If it is safe and/or possible, wait until they are able to be involved in decision making or to make the decision themselves.

Mental capacity must also be considered when we believe abuse or neglect might be taking place. It is important to make sure an 'adult at risk' has choices in the actions taken to safeguard them, including whether or not they want other people informed about what has happened, however, in some situations the adult may not have the mental capacity to understand the choice or to tell you their views.

Each home nation has legislation that describes when and how we can make decisions for people who are unable to make decisions for themselves. The principles are the same:

We can only make decisions for other people if they cannot do that for themselves at the time the decision is needed.

- If the decision can wait, wait – e.g. to get help to help the person make their decision or until they can make it themselves.
- If we have to make a decision for someone else then we must make the decision in their best interests (for their benefit) and take into account what we know about their preferences and wishes.
- If the action we are taking to keep people safe will restrict them then we must think of a way to do that which restricts their freedom and rights as little as possible.

Each home nation also has legislation about the circumstances in which decisions can be made on behalf of an adult who is unable to make decisions for themselves:

- * England and Wales - [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)
- * Scotland - [Adults with Incapacity Act 2000](#)
- * Northern Ireland – [Mental Capacity Act 2016](#)

TCF recognises that:

- The welfare of people is paramount.
- All persons, regardless of age, ability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, sexual identity, social and economic circumstances have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some people are especially vulnerable because of the impact of their bereavement, the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

TCF seeks to keep bereaved parents and their families safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting safeguarding practices, as in staff contracts, trustee code of practice and the volunteer agreement which includes confidentiality requirements, a code of conduct and has regard to the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support and training.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring that all necessary checks are made, including an

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG) checks.

- Recording and storing information professionally and securely and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with beneficiaries, staff and volunteers.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to manage any allegations against staff, trustees and volunteers appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that TCF has a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- Ensuring that TCF has effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for staff and volunteers, and bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

Staff, volunteers and trustees will appropriately share information in cases of safeguarding concern. All staff and volunteers in our organisation who have contact with adults, or associated children, who could be at risk of abuse, serious harm or neglect have a duty to act if they have any safeguarding concern.

Guiding Principles

There are 2 main elements in The Compassionate Friend's safeguarding work:

Prevention – TCF has put sensible measures in place to prevent harm, including the use of safe recruitment practices, promoting safe working environments and raising awareness of safeguarding for staff, volunteers and trustees. We are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion practices for all staff, volunteer and trustee applications and aim to select volunteers and staff based on their relevant skills, abilities, experience, knowledge and, where needed, qualifications and training.

Protection – The Compassionate Friends will provide policy, procedures, information and training to enable all TCF staff, volunteers and trustees to identify and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns that may be affecting an adult or associated child who needs care and support.

Where there are reasonable doubts about the ability of the person raising concerns to obtain the right support for themselves or others, or where allegations concerning The Compassionate Friends staff or volunteers are raised, more complex responses may be required. Detailed information on how all safeguarding issues should be managed within The Compassionate Friends can be found in the Breaches of Policy section of this Adult Safeguarding Policy.

Trustees

The Trustees of The Compassionate Friends have responsibility for the general control and management of the administration of the charity. Trustees of TCF have a duty of care to their charity, which includes taking the necessary steps to safeguard those at risk from abuse or harm, managing risk and protecting the reputation of the charity.

Trustees will ensure that safeguarding is included, where appropriate, in the strategic plans, risk assessments, communications and quality assurance processes of TCF. In some cases, they will be required to make decisions in relation to complex or serious safeguarding concerns, in consultation with the CEO.

An adult safeguarding contact person will be identified in the trustee board, in case any member of staff or volunteer has concerns about safeguarding practices in TCF and do not feel able to speak with a member of the safeguarding team.

Breaches of Policy

Failure to comply with TCF safeguarding policy, guidance and procedures may be managed in a number of ways, depending on the nature and consequences of any incident. In some cases, a combination of responses may be required.

- Disciplinary process – where there are concerns regarding staff misconduct or competence.
- TCF coordinated safeguarding investigation – where concerns about the actions or inactions of a member of staff, volunteer or trustee necessitate referral to the local authority adult safeguarding team where the abuse is alleged to have taken place. This may also result in referral to Disclosure & Barring Service
- Police led investigation – where the actions or inactions of a member of staff or volunteer appear to be criminal in nature.
- Serious incident reporting to The Charity Commission.
- Additional or repeat training – where the concern does not meet the threshold for the processes outlined above but does indicate a need for further development of safeguarding competence.

The Charity Commission requires charities to report serious incidents. If a serious incident takes place within TCF, it is important that there is prompt, full and frank disclosure to the Commission. Individuals need to report what happened and, importantly, let the Commission know how TCF are dealing with it, even if the incident has also been reported to statutory authorities, the police, donors or another regulator.

Safeguarding Guidance and Procedures

Managing concerns about an adult – process

Where TCF staff or a volunteer is concerned about the safety or welfare of an adult, the following steps must be taken:

- Wherever possible, the staff member or volunteer should **relay to the adult that they are concerned and seek to empower the adult to take action themselves**. There should be a **discussion regarding the sharing of information which will include members of the TCF Safeguarding Team** and the reasons for this, and consent should be obtained if possible.
- If the staff member or volunteer is relaying information about an adult to a GP for example, they should **seek the adult's consent to share information**. There may be circumstances in which this discussion should not take place, for example, if it would place the staff member or volunteer at immediate risk of harm. It may also be necessary to go against the expressed wishes of the adult in relation to making a referral (e.g. if there are child protection concerns).
- The staff member or volunteer must **record their concerns immediately after the incident in concise anonymised written notes**. Notes may be handwritten or typed, using the framework of the TCF Safeguarding Concern Form as guidance. The TCF Safeguarding Concern Form is located in the Volunteer Hub of the TCF website.
- The staff member or volunteer **contacts a member of the Safeguarding Team** (see below) immediately after writing their notes and on the same day as the concern, when possible, or immediately at the start of the next working day.

- The **Safeguarding Team member completes the TCF Safeguarding Concern Form** whilst in discussion with the staff member or volunteer who has raised the concern.
- The staff member or volunteer should treat their anonymized notes as **confidential**. Once the safeguarding concern has been closed these notes should be safely disposed of.
- If a staff member or volunteer become concerned about their own safety whilst working with an adult, they must inform a member of the TCF safeguarding team.

If your direct manager or usual TCF contact is not available, then another member of the safeguarding team or appointed Safeguarding Trustee should be contacted.

Safeguarding Team

- Ruth Mercier (Volunteer and Helpline Manager, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) **07891 523844** email: ruth@tcf.org.uk
- Shirley Gower (Grief Companion Manager, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) **07786 933563** email: shirley@tcf.org.uk
- Carolyn Brice (CEO, Designated Safeguarding Lead) **07787 767713** email: carolyn@tcf.org.uk
- Jackie Hewitt (Appointed Safeguarding Trustee) **07403 276766** email: hewittj123@hotmail.com

- The staff member or volunteer will agree a course of action with a TCF Safeguarding Team member. This could include the following:
 - No further action (where appropriate actions have already been taken)
 - Follow-up contact with the parent by the volunteer or TCF manager/safeguarding team member (as most appropriate)
 - Referral to GP (or Health Visitor)
 - Referral or signposting to other agencies, such as Samaritans, NHS 111, SHOUT.
 - Referral to the Community Mental Health Team
 - Referral to Police
 - Referral to Adult Social Care
- The discussion with the TCF Safeguarding Team member must also include consideration of whether there are child protection issues that need addressing and referring. If there is uncertainty about which agency to refer to, the staff member/volunteer and Safeguarding Team member must try to resolve this as soon as possible. It may be appropriate to seek guidance from a local 'gateway' service, such as a Community Mental Health Team. Arrangements should be made to obtain feedback from the agency to which the referral was made.
- The Safeguarding Team member will be responsible for updating further actions on the TCF Safeguarding Concern Form and ensuring that the concern is brought to an agreed closure statement. The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Carolyn Brice, will need to approve the final closure statement.
- Safeguarding concerns will be reviewed monthly by the Safeguarding Team.

- An overview of safeguarding concerns will be provided to trustees at their meetings by the CEO, particularly highlighting any incidents which were “borderline” for external reporting or highlighted opportunities for improvement.

See also Safeguarding Flowchart below.

Related policies

This policy sits alongside The Compassionate Friends Trustee Code of Conduct and the policies set out in the Staff Handbook. This includes the following key policies:

- Bullying and Anti-harassment
- Trustees Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary and Grievance
- Whistleblowing
- Privacy and Data Protection
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Associated relevant legislation and guidance

- Charities Act 2011
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by TCF Trustees and Safeguarding Team.

Revision history

Version	Type (e.g., replacement, revision etc...)	Date	History (reason for changes)	Signature/Job Title
V1	Original	01/10/2023		Carolyn Brice/CEO
V2	Replacement	26/04/2025	Detailed addition of process	Carolyn Brice/CEO
V3	Review	26/04/26		

Adult Safeguarding Flowchart

The staff member or volunteer will explain to the adult that they are concerned and that they wish to discuss the options for addressing the concern with the adult. Explain that they will be seeking to empower the adult to take action themselves. **If there is immediate danger, act immediately and alert a member of the TCF Safeguarding Team and emergency services as appropriate to circumstances.**



Inform the adult of the need to share information with your direct manager or another member of the TCF Safeguarding Team and with external agencies where required.



After making concise, anonymised factual notes about the concern and any discussion with the adult at risk, contact your direct manager or TCF Safeguarding Team member and agree actions jointly.



The Safeguarding Team member will enter the concern into the TCF Safeguarding Concern Form including details shared by the staff member or volunteer who has raised the concern.



Once actions are agreed and by whom, do this without delay and keep the concern regularly updated on the TCF Safeguarding Concern Form. Provide feedback to the adult on the action/outcomes if appropriate.



Agreement on closure of the concern/closing statement should be sought from the Safeguarding Lead or Trustee Safeguarding Lead (and noted on the TCF Safeguarding Concern Form) when

1. A referral has been made to another agency and the agency has responded to this referral
and/or
2. TCF are satisfied that the response/actions have been sufficient to safeguard the adult
and/or
3. The adult concerned has taken appropriate action themselves in order to protect themselves or reduce their vulnerability.

Appendix – Types of Adult Abuse & Neglect

Signs of abuse can often be difficult to detect. This appendix aims to help people who come into contact with people with care and support needs to identify abuse and recognise possible indicators. Many forms of abuse are also criminal offences and should be treated that way.

What are the ten different types of abuse?

The care and support statutory guidance identifies ten types of abuse, these are:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect

The Social Care Institute for Excellence has produced a useful document outlining the difference types of abuse and neglect and the potential signs and indicators. This can be [accessed here](#)