

Angels Homecare Safeguarding Policy and Community Services

Safeguarding People Using a Care Service from Abuse or Harm in Domiciliary Care (England): Overarching Policy

Policy Aims

This policy articulates Angels Homecare's unwavering commitment to safeguarding individuals receiving care, ensuring protection from abuse or harm, and maintaining full compliance with all applicable legal requirements and established best practices. The policy specifically incorporates:

- Regulation 13: Safeguarding Service Users from Abuse and Improper Treatment, as outlined in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.
- The Care Quality Commission's (CQC) Quality Statement on safeguarding, which informs service assessments: "We work with people to understand what being safe means to them as well as with our partners on the best way to achieve this. We concentrate on improving people's lives while protecting their right to live in safety, free from bullying, harassment, abuse, discrimination, avoidable harm and neglect. We make sure we share concerns quickly and appropriately."
- Statutory guidance for the Care Act 2014 (Chapter 14: Safeguarding), which delineates the responsibilities of local authorities and partner organizations to protect adults with care and support needs from abuse, neglect, and other forms of harm, including the duty to conduct enquiries when abuse is suspected or confirmed.
- Relevant policies and procedures set forth by the local safeguarding adults' authority.

Safeguarding Framework

Angels Homecare upholds the vision of the local safeguarding authority by empowering and protecting adults at risk of abuse and neglect, as defined by pertinent legislation and guidance. The organization's approach aligns with the government's safeguarding strategy, which encompasses the following principles:

- Empowerment: Enabling individuals to make informed decisions and actively participate in their own care.
- Protection: Offering targeted support and advocacy for those most vulnerable.
- Prevention: Implementing proactive measures to prevent the occurrence of abuse or harm.

- **Proportionality:** Delivering safeguarding interventions that are commensurate with the level of risk while upholding human rights.
- **Partnership:** Collaborating with communities and relevant services to devise effective local solutions.
- **Accountability:** Maintaining transparency and responsibility in all safeguarding practices.

Safeguarding Responsibilities

In accordance with best practice standards, Angels Homecare designates a safeguarding lead, or “champion,” who serves as the principal point of contact for safeguarding matters within the service and facilitates communication with external agencies, particularly the local authority adult safeguarding team.

Name:	Casey Goodchild
Position:	Manager
Contact details:	Manager@angelshomecare.uk

Related Policies

This policy should be considered in conjunction with other safeguarding-related policies, including those concerning complaints, physical restraint, management of financial affairs, recruitment, induction, staff development and training, staff supervision, and whistleblowing. In certain situations, the mental capacity policy may also apply.

Safeguarding requires a range of tailored responses to various forms and sources of abuse; therefore, this policy should be applied alongside complementary policies to promote the safety of service users and effective risk management.

Key related policies include:

- Antisocial Behaviour
- Safeguarding Vulnerable People in Domiciliary Care from Financial Abuse
- Safeguarding from Bullying, Harassment, Exploitation, and Other Forms of Social Abuse
- Safeguarding People Who Use Services from Abuse and Harm: Restraints, Including Physical Controls, and Restrictive Practices in Domiciliary Care
- Keeping Staff Safe: Addressing Aggression Towards Staff and Appropriate Responses
- Safeguarding Children and Young People from Bullying, Harassment, Exploitation, and Other Forms of Social Abuse in Domiciliary Care (England) Policy
- Safeguarding: Persons Missing from Their Home
- Safeguarding Service Users at Significant Risk of Harm
- Safeguarding Service Users from Harmful Actions and Behaviours of Peers and Social Contacts
- Whistleblowing

Local Authority Safeguarding

Angels Homecare has established comprehensive policies and procedures for sharing safeguarding and other pertinent information with agencies and professionals, ensuring compliance with confidentiality and data protection legislation. These policies are developed following local Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) guidelines, with documentation on raising alerts and staff training available via the SAB website.

The designated multi-agency Adults Safeguarding Board/Hub for this care service is Suffolk County Council.

- Local Authority Services: Contact Customer First at 08088004005 or the Professional Consultation Line at 03456 061 499 to reach MASH. Suffolk County Council customer services: 01473 260588 (available 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday).
- Local Safeguarding Children Board/MASH: Contact Customer First at 08088004005.
- Police: Dial 999 or contact the local police station.

Policy Statement

This policy outlines the principles and values underpinning Angels Homecare's approach to safeguarding, detailing the measures implemented to prevent abuse or harm, protocols for incident response, and procedures for learning from events to minimise recurrence.

- Vulnerable individuals receiving care have the right to protection from abuse or harm. Ensuring their safety is central to promoting their wellbeing and quality of life.
- The organisation is dedicated to safeguarding individuals in receipt of care by identifying and managing specific cases of abuse or harm and adhering to all required procedures and best practices.
- Angels Homecare strives to deliver exemplary standards of care, responding swiftly and effectively to prevent and address any instances of abuse or harm.
- The service adheres to local authority safeguarding adult policies, Care Quality Commission (CQC) guidance, and complies fully with current safeguarding laws and regulations.
- Particular attention is given to those lacking mental capacity, in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, with independent advocates involved where necessary, consistent with the Care Act 2014.
- Systems are maintained for monitoring incidents, complaints, disciplinary actions, and safeguarding concerns, enabling the identification and resolution of emerging patterns of potential abuse or harm.

Defining Abuse

Angels Homecare uses the definitions of abuse outlined in the Care Act 2014 statutory guidance, recognizing that abuse or harm can take various forms, including:

- Physical abuse or harm
- Social abuse (bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, personal exploitation)
- Social isolation, scapegoating, ostracism, stigmatisation
- Financial or material exploitation, abuse, or harm
- Psychological or emotional abuse or harm
- Sexual abuse, harm, or exploitation
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Discriminatory abuse or harm
- Self-harm, including self-neglect
- Inhuman or degrading treatment
- Inappropriate or excessive restraint and restrictions
- Organisational abuse or harm

Additionally, antisocial behaviors such as excessive noise, invasion of privacy, or rowdiness can result in harm and may require action in coordination with responsible authorities. The scope of safeguarding includes addressing domestic abuse, modern slavery, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage if evidence of such abuse is present among service users.

Identifying Perpetrators of Abuse/Harm

Angels Homecare recognises that abuse or harm can be perpetrated by a range of individuals, including:

- Staff and management of the care service
- Volunteers
- Visiting health and social care practitioners and official visitors
- Relatives and friends of people receiving care
- Contacts made while users are temporarily outside
- Neighbors, community members, or strangers
- Individuals seeking to exploit vulnerable persons

Staff Responsibilities

All staff at Angels Homecare are required to:

- Provide the highest possible standard of care
- Never engage in abusive or harmful actions
- Report any witnessed or suspected abuse or harm
- Cooperate in any investigation into alleged abuse
- Participate in relevant training on safeguarding and protection

Managers' Responsibilities

Managers are expected to:

- Develop and maintain systems for delivering quality care

- Foster a culture intolerant of abuse or harm
- Produce and regularly update safeguarding policies and procedures
- Operate personnel policies to identify and address potential or actual abusers
- Provide staff training on safeguarding and protection
- Investigate evidence of abuse or harm promptly and sensitively
- Implement improvements following investigations or enquiries
- Collaborate with other agencies to combat abuse and improve safeguarding
- Work closely with safeguarding authority teams and follow their guidance
- Report all instances of abuse to the Care Quality Commission using the appropriate procedures

Safe Recruitment Practices

Angels Homecare employs rigorous recruitment procedures to ensure staff suitability, including comprehensive background checks and cooperation with national initiatives on sharing information about unsuitable care workers. All employees in regulated activity undergo Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks in accordance with current requirements.

Preventing Abuse

To prevent abuse or harm, Angels Homecare:

- Communicates clear procedures for reporting suspicions or evidence of abuse/harm
- Enforces thorough recruitment policies, including reference checks and DBS clearance, with equivalent checks for overseas staff
- Incorporates safeguarding content into staff training at all levels
- Maintains vigilance concerning potential abuse/harm from any source
- Fosters a culture of openness and awareness to encourage reporting
- Regulates staff contact with users' property, money, or financial affairs
- Communicates concerns to the local Adults' Safeguarding Board or Safeguarding Children Board as appropriate
- Supports people receiving care to avoid or manage situations that could make them vulnerable

Angels Homecare identifies abuse or harm through:

- Open and trusting communication structures for staff and users to raise concerns
- Ensuring everyone knows where to turn for advice or action
- Encouraging staff to prioritize service users' welfare over loyalty to colleagues
- Making clear that failure to report abuse is itself abusive and could result in disciplinary or criminal proceedings
- Implementing management, supervision, internal inspection, and quality control systems to reveal abuse where it exists

Procedures for When Abuse Has Occurred or is Alleged

Initial Procedures

A staff member witnessing actual or imminent danger must use their judgment to intervene appropriately, whether by personal intervention, summoning help, using a panic alarm, or contacting management or police. Risk assessments and contingency plans are in place for likely events, and staff are trained in emergency procedures.

If abuse or harm is reported, the manager or senior staff must act immediately to protect and support the affected person. The manager will discuss actions with the individual and consider overriding their wishes only if necessary for public interest or to prevent further harm, especially for children or those lacking capacity. Capacity assessments and “best interests” decisions will be made as needed.

Referring Incidents

With consent, or when it is in the person’s best interests, the manager or senior staff will alert the local Safeguarding Adults’ or Children’s Authority and follow established procedures. This may involve a strategy meeting and the implementation of a safeguarding plan. In some cases, police involvement is required, and their investigation takes precedence.

The manager ensures no further risk to the victim and arranges additional care or support as needed. If a staff member is implicated and there is sufficient evidence, they will be suspended pending a disciplinary investigation. If evidence is insufficient, the staff member will not have unsupervised contact with service users until the matter is resolved.

Enquiring into Alleged Abuse

Enquiries are person-centered, focusing on the victim’s wellbeing. External agencies may lead investigations, or a designated staff member may conduct them, involving the victim and, where appropriate, their representatives. Considerations include the person’s fears, risks of intimidation, need to protect witnesses, confidentiality, agency involvement, and keeping all parties informed.

Victims are assured that their concerns are taken seriously, treated confidentially, and that they will be protected from reprisals. Support and advocacy are provided if needed. If the victim does not wish to proceed, the enquiry will assess the risk to others and take precautionary measures as necessary.

The enquiry will discreetly gather all relevant evidence, interview involved staff and witnesses, and consult with other agencies or experts as needed. Staff providing evidence are treated fairly and informed of their rights. The victim and their representatives are kept informed throughout, and the investigation is completed within an agreed timescale, with findings presented to the safeguarding strategy group for further action.

Following the Enquiry

If abuse or harm is substantiated, disciplinary action against staff may include dismissal and referral to the DBS barred lists. Other sanctions or retraining may be applied as appropriate. Service users and their representatives are informed of the outcome and consulted about potential redress or apology, in line with the duty of candor.

All actions are thoroughly documented, with attention to the victim's sensitivity. If the perpetrator continues to be involved with the victim, a plan is developed to address ongoing concerns, referencing related policies as appropriate.

Planning Further Action

After an incident, managers review the situation to assess culpability or negligence, learn lessons, and revise policies, procedures, or training as necessary. Advice may be sought from safeguarding authorities.

Contacts and Sources of Assistance

1. The local Adults' Safeguarding Authority
2. The Care Quality Commission
3. The police
4. Advocacy and victim support services which might be needed
5. Any medical practitioners who might be needed
6. Other relevant statutory/voluntary organisations that could be of help

Record Keeping

All details related to allegations of abuse or harm are recorded clearly and securely by Angels Homecare, following confidentiality rules. Reports are made to the CQC and other safeguarding agencies as required.

Referrals to DBS Barred Lists

Legal obligations are met by referring staff found guilty of misconduct resulting in harm or risk of harm to the DBS barred lists, following DBS procedures.

Training

All staff receive training to recognize abuse or harm and fulfill their safeguarding responsibilities, starting with induction and continuing with regular updates, at least annually. Training aligns with standards set by social and healthcare workforce development organizations and local safeguarding authority policies.

- New care staff achieve Care Certificate Standards 10 (Safeguarding Adults) and 11 (Safeguarding Children).
- Other new staff must have equivalent baseline training and are assessed for knowledge and competencies.

Document Created by: Casey Goodchild
Position: Nominated Individual
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- All staff receive additional training as required and are familiar with local Safeguarding Adults' Boards policies and procedures.
- Post-induction, staff are expected to complete Foundation Level 2 and Multi-agency Level 2 safeguarding training.
- Managers and safeguarding staff receive Specialist Safeguarding Training as appropriate to their roles.

Review

Please Sign to state you understand Angels Homecare Policy

Staff Name: _____

Date: _____

Staff review date: _____