

Important

The Safeguarding Officer for Pecan is currently **Katie Kelly**, the Moving On Project Manager.

In Katie's absence any issues should be reported to **Sharon Burton**, the Safeguarding Deputy.

In Katie and Sharon's absence any issues should be reported to **Val Freeman**, the HR and Volunteers Manager.

In Katie, Sharon and Val's absence any issues should be reported to **Chris Price**, the Executive Director.

Chris and Val should be informed of all referrals.

Purpose

Pecan aims to demonstrate a clear commitment and responsibility to safeguarding children and young people as well as vulnerable adults. Pecan recognises that these groups are valuable and they have much to give as well as to receive. Pecan aims to provide a safe and secure environment within which children, young people and vulnerable adults will be treated with respect and dignity. We will value their opinions and feelings and give them opportunities to be heard.

Introduction

Pecan is committed to the welfare and protection of everyone that uses or has contact with our services. We recognise that children, people with a physical disability, mental illness, sensory impairment or learning difficulty, along with older people and those who are otherwise socially excluded are amongst the most vulnerable individuals in society, and are therefore at greater risk of exploitation or abuse. They are often less able to protect themselves, adequately communicate concerns or even recognise abuse when it happens.

Pecan recognises that everyone who has a role in working with children, young people and vulnerable adults has a duty to safeguard and promote their welfare, along with a responsibility to shape a culture that recognises that prevention is better than cure and works to minimise opportunities for abuse.

We acknowledge that protection issues for children, young people and vulnerable adults are complex and may cause anxiety. Children and young people are always protected when they have employees or volunteers supporting them who are well trained, and are actively engaged in supporting and offering protection. They require commitment, energy and active participation from everyone involved in the organisation, whether paid employees or volunteers.

Policy Statement:

Pecan...

- Takes seriously the responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults entrusted to its care.

- Recognises that the welfare and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount and their needs must take priority.
- Considers the wishes and feelings of children, young people and vulnerable adults in light of their age and understanding.
- Recognises that all children, young people and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation have the right to protection from harm and abuse.
- Is committed to encouraging and supporting carers and parents and working in partnership with them.
- Considers the impact of its plans and decisions on children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Ensures that workers are responsibly appointed and given support and training.
- Adheres to good practice guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Has detailed guidelines and procedures relating to abuse suspicions or allegations, and ensures that these procedures are known to, and followed by, all workers.
- In relation to working with children and young people, is committed to following the Home Office code of practice for keeping children safe from harm (2008).
- Is committed to working closely with Social Care, Police Child Protection Team and the Police (for adult protection issues).

All those volunteering to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are subject to a stringent application process including references and declaration of convictions.

Specifically for Children and Young People

"Children and young people" refers to everyone under the age of 18. All new workers with children and young people will be briefed in child protection issues. Copies of this document including the 'Good Practice Guidelines' are given to all workers and are available to others via the Safeguarding Officer and staff must sign to confirm they have read these.

In addition, all staff and volunteers undertake basic training in Safeguarding Children during their probation period and at 2 yearly intervals while at Pecan. Currently we use the Southwark Safeguarding Children E-Learning course.

Specifically for Vulnerable Adults

"Vulnerable adult" refers to people aged 18 or over who are either:

- In need of community care services due to a disability (mental or physical), age or illness; or
- Unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against harm or exploitation.*

The legal procedures for working with adults are different from those related to children and young people. However, vulnerable adults are protected under **The Care Standards Act 2000**, **The Mental Health Act 1983** and **The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004**. All of the protection issues listed in regard to children also apply to vulnerable adults. The only difference is that these issues would be handled by the Executive Director and HR and Volunteers Manager, in conjunction with the Police as appropriate. The Safeguarding Officer would not be involved.

Definition of Abuse

Defining abuse is not easy and so one of the most important aspects of doing so is to use sound professional practice. Judgements need to be made supported by evidence from observation, research and thorough assessments.

Four categories of abuse are in general use in England and Wales. These can be found in the guide **'Working Together to Safeguard Children'** (2015) Dept for Education.

Definitions from London Child Protection Procedures 5th Edition 2015:

- ***Physical abuse-***
Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child;
- ***Neglect***
Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse, maternal mental ill health or learning difficulties or a cluster of such issues. Where there is domestic abuse and violence towards a carer, the needs of the child may be neglected. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent failing to: Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional, social and educational needs.
- ***Sexual abuse***
Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, including on Forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. This includes rape, incest and any form of sexual activity including pornography and prostitution.
- ***Emotional abuse***
Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve: Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person; Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond

the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction; Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another e.g. where there is domestic violence and abuse; Serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger; Exploiting and corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Responding to Allegations

Pecan will act in a professional manner whenever an allegation of abuse is made and will take action when there is cause for concern. All allegations will be taken seriously. We are committed to implementing measures to support the individuals involved and to work in co-operation with the appropriate agencies, Social Care and police.

We shall deal with all protection concerns and allegations of abuse as much as possible in a confidential manner; confidentiality cannot be maintained when safeguarding allegations are made by a child, young person or vulnerable adult. It may be necessary to share information with the local authority but service users will always be informed. Comprehensive records will be kept in relation to all concerns, allegations and investigations that fall within the area of this policy statement.

Operational procedures

To support this policy statement we shall maintain operational practice procedures and guidelines, along with stringent personnel procedures to:

- Ensure a robust process is in place when recruiting staff. Applications, CVs and references will be thoroughly checked in advance of the person commencing employment.
- Screen all job applicants for paid and voluntary work that might involve contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults to establish their suitability for the post.
- Ensure that staff read this policy in their first week of employment as part of their induction. Staff must also sign to confirm that they have read it.
- As part of their probationary period, all staff must complete a safeguarding course (currently this is Southwark Council's online course). This should be repeated at two yearly intervals.
- Additionally there will be regular training in safeguarding at team meetings.
- Ensure staff and volunteers know how to respond appropriately in the event of disclosure or discovery of abuse, including historical abuse.
- Enable staff and volunteers to take action when an allegation of abuse is made or suspected, or when there is a perceived risk of it.
- Define and clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of staff and external agencies in safeguarding children.
- Establish clear requirements of and expectations for staff in relation to practice and conduct that help to minimise the risk of false accusations being directed at them.

It is vital to ensure that all those involved in the care and well being of children and vulnerable adults have a clear understanding of what signifies abuse and what must happen should abuse

be suspected or discovered. Any training required should be delivered within the probationary period. It should be followed by focused, job appropriate training and by subsequent refresher courses as necessary.

Principles

Pecan's approach to protection is based on and reflects principles recognised in law, and stated in regulations and international agreements and that reflect best practice:

- The welfare and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount whatever the circumstances.
- All children, young people and adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religious belief and sexual orientation or identity have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse.
- Working in partnership with the individual, their carers, advocates, parents and other agencies including those of diverse communities is vital.
- All staff members have a duty to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults.
- Anyone affected by an incident of abuse will receive appropriate levels of support.
- Staff are supported through supervision, training and awareness raising activities to minimise and where possible prevent abuse.
- All organisations working with or on behalf of Pecan actively demonstrate a commitment to protection, within a culture that is aware of and promotes positive practice.

As a Christian organisation we acknowledge there is a place for forgiveness and redemption, although we recognise that within the context of protection, forgiveness is entirely the province of the individuals concerned. Whilst certain individuals may be willing and able to forgive particular abusive behaviours, we shall not exert influence over our clients to do so. If a client decides to bring an action or prosecute the perpetrator of an abusive act, we shall provide all the necessary assistance and support to do so.

We shall not tolerate abuse or risk recurrence of abusive behaviour that could place our clients, or the organisation, in jeopardy.

Reporting a concern

The guiding principle is that the safety of the child or vulnerable adult is always the overriding consideration

No Pecan representatives will prejudice their own position or standing with Pecan by responsibly reporting potential or suspected abuse. Responsible reporting is defined as being in accordance with this policy. Any allegation or concern regarding abuse will be treated seriously and for this reason it is important for anyone raising a concern to strictly follow the reporting model below. Particular care should be taken in regard to confidentiality and the sharing of information with appropriate people.

A concern and hence the need to report arises in the following instances:

- Abuse is observed or suspected
- An allegation of abuse is made
- Abuse is disclosed

There are absolutely no exceptions to this. However vague or unbelievable an allegation may appear this procedure must always be adhered to.

What is a disclosure?

This is when a child or vulnerable adult tells another person about a situation which indicates that abuse may have taken place. This information could also be given by a friend.

What to do if a child or vulnerable adult raises a concern?

If they inform you that they are concerned about someone's behaviour to them or makes a direct allegation you should take them seriously by:

- Reacting calmly
- Reassuring them that they were right to tell but do not promise confidentiality. Tell them who you will need to share the information with.
- Being aware that they may have been threatened and fear reprisals or that they are breaking a big secret in speaking to someone else.
- Allowing them to speak at their own pace.
- Taking what they say seriously, even if it involves someone you feel sure would not harm them. We know from experience that we must listen to what we are told even if it is difficult to believe.
- Listening to what they have to say but do not put words in their mouth.
- Avoiding leading questions, just ask enough clarifying questions to ensure you have a clear understanding of what is being said to pass information on.
- Being accepting if at any point they decide not to continue, and letting them know that you are ready to listen should they wish to continue at any time.

Helpful things to say

- I take what you say seriously.
- I am pleased that you have told me. Thank you for telling me.
- It isn't your fault and you are not to blame.
- I am sorry that has happened to you.
- I am going to enable you to get help.

Things not to say

- Why didn't you say something before?
- I really can't believe it.
- I am surprised that person would do a thing like this.
- Are you sure this is what happened?
- Don't ask why? where? when? who? what? how?
- Never say 'make sure you don't tell anyone else.'

- Everything will be alright now.

After the disclosure

- Ensure the safety of the child or vulnerable adult. If they need urgent medical attention make sure doctors or hospital staff know that this is a child protection issue (or, in the case of a vulnerable adult, that the Police will have to be involved).
- As soon as possible write down as carefully as possible what was said, how it was said, and how the child or vulnerable adult appeared both physically and emotionally.
- Parents and/or carers should only be contacted once further advice and guidance has been sought from Pecan's Safeguarding Officer/ HR and Volunteers Manager, the host partners or external agencies.
- Do not be tempted to try and investigate further the claims.

After hearing a disclosure of abuse, the Pecan Safeguarding Officer / HR and Volunteers Manager must decide if a referral needs to be made to Social Care. The safeguarding lead or manager can ring the local authority MASH (multi agency safeguarding hub) to seek advice on how to proceed. At this stage a decision will need to be made whether the child or young person is safe to return home.

An adult discloses abuse

In cases where an adult discloses details of abuse when they were younger, and the alleged abuser is known and may continue to pose a threat to other children, the case should follow the same initial reporting procedure as for a child disclosing abuse.

In other circumstances where the alleged abuser is not known, or where they do not have contact with children, then the adult survivor should be supported in making a decision whether or not they wish to inform the authorities. In this way some power is given back to the survivor.

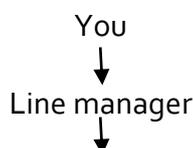
In circumstances where an adult discloses details of abuse they suffered as a child and you are concerned for the safety of children today you should give the adult the opportunity of talking to the statutory authorities, and should they feel unable to do so, then explain that you are going to contact them and what details you propose to give.

Who should you report your concern to

If a concern is raised you should report it to you line manager. In your line manager's absence, report directly to Pecan's Safeguarding Officer or, in her absence, the Safeguarding Deputy.

The line manager should report to Pecan's Safeguarding Officer or, in her absence, the Safeguarding Deputy, who should liaise with the HR and Volunteers Manager.

In brief:





A concern should be raised as soon as possible and usually within 24 hours. Where the concern is about the person to whom reports should be given then reports should be made to that person's line manager.

Pecan representatives (employees or volunteers) may also report their concerns directly to the Safeguarding Officer, the Safeguarding Deputy or the HR and Volunteers Manager should they prefer to do so.

Making Reports

- After liaising with the Safeguarding Officer, the Safeguarding Deputy or the HR and Volunteers Manager, contact the duty social worker of the appropriate social services department (e.g. Southwark Children's Service if it is a child based in Southwark).
- Follow the guidance agreed with the social worker, which may involve completing their own referral form. In this case keep a copy of the form. If for any reason it is decided that a referral is not appropriate, complete Pecan's internal reporting form. All records should be signed and dated and kept safe in confidential storage.
- Records should be detailed and precise, focusing on what was said or observed, who was present and what happened. Speculation and interpretation should be clearly distinguished from reporting.
- Any concern, disclosure or allegation is alleged rather than proven at this point.
- All such records should be treated as extremely confidential. They should be passed only to the persons specified in the stated reporting model above. It is the responsibility of each individual in possession of the information to maintain confidentiality. It is very important that Pecan representatives never promise confidentiality to a child disclosing abuse or to an adult disclosing concerns about another adult or information about their own behaviour. Pecan representatives and others must make it clear that they are obliged to follow this policy and explain the possible outcomes that will result from information being given to them.

An important concept in deciding whether a child or vulnerable adult has been, or is being, treated in an abusive way is that of significant harm. By considering whether a child or vulnerable adult is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, the focus is placed on the likely consequences to them and the impact of the harm. It is clearly difficult to define significant harm but all aspects of their present and future well-being should be considered, as well as the nature of the abuse and the context in which it takes place.

How will Pecan respond

The guiding principle in responding to any concerns around child and vulnerable adult protection is:

The best interests of the child/young person/vulnerable adult and the desire to secure the best outcomes for the child/young person/vulnerable adult should always govern decisions regarding what action should be taken in response to concerns.

In the UK (and many other places) what is in the 'best interests' of the child or vulnerable adult will not necessarily be the reporting organisation's decision (in this case, Pecan). In serious cases of abuse, outside agencies will be responsible for the care of the child or vulnerable adult and they will decide on any further action. In these circumstances it is the responsibility of Pecan representatives to assist these agencies wherever possible.

The general procedure for responding to reports of concern is as follows. (NB Moving On have their own procedure.)

- 1) Concern received by Pecan line manager
- 2) Pecan line manager immediately contacts Pecan's Safeguarding Officer or Deputy
- 3) Pecan line manager and Safeguarding Officer or Deputy in liaison with the HR and Volunteers Manager discuss nature of concern and agree further action. Is the concern around the behaviour of Pecan staff or volunteers? Does the concern need reporting to the statutory authorities?
- 4) Liaise with the Executive Director
- 5) Investigate the concerns
- 6) Decide further Pecan response

The Moving On procedure is as follows:

The Moving On team has its own process, as follows:

- Moving On specific matters – Safeguarding Officer (Katie)
- Moving On specific matters –Safeguarding Deputy (Sharon)
- External "sounding board" (Janet Lee - registered social worker and independent trainer and consultant)

Chris and Val should be informed of all referrals.

The responsibility for investigating allegations of child abuse in the UK (and many other countries) rests with the Police and local Social Care Department. The Safeguarding Officer will usually seek the advice of the Social Care, Police or NSPCC in deciding whether a formal referral is necessary. Police and Social Care procedures will then be followed.

If it is decided that external reporting should not take place then there must be a clear rationale for that decision which should be recorded. The decision not to report in such circumstances should be unanimously approved by the HR and Volunteers Manager, the Safeguarding Officer, the appropriate line manager and the person making the report.

The responsibility for dealing with concerns involving Pecan representatives rests with the Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding Officer will work closely with the HR and Volunteers

Manager. An internal enquiry may be delegated to a suitable Pecan line manager where appropriate although it will still remain under the supervision of the Safeguarding Officer.

Where the concerns raised about Pecan representatives or others are deemed to be fully or partially valid then a number of further responses will normally follow. These could include recommendations for further training, possible disciplinary procedures and a decision about the need for external reporting. The Safeguarding Officer along with the HR and Volunteers Manager will then agree how to proceed with matters from that point. These responses are likely to commence after the Police have completed their investigations (if involved).

Good Practice Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

The following guidelines are not 'law' but (as the document says) 'good practice'. Please read them carefully they are there to protect both children and workers.

For Individual Workers

- You should treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults with dignity and respect in your attitude, language and actions.
- You should avoid any physical contact that could be considered sexually suggestive.
- You should respect the privacy of children in a way befitting their age when they are showering, toileting, etc. Where appropriate, ask the child if help is required.
- You should never engage in intrusive touching of a child or vulnerable adult in any form. Any physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult should be related to their needs, should be appropriate to the actual or mental age of the child or vulnerable adult and should normally be initiated by the child.
- You should be aware of any excessive attention-seeking behaviour from children or vulnerable adults, especially any behaviour that is physical or overtly sexual and should avoid being drawn into such situations. Consult your supervisor as soon as any such situation develops.
- Physical punishment should not be used on any child or vulnerable adult in your care. You should learn how to use positive discipline where appropriate. Seek help if you have problems with discipline and control.
- You should never 'lose your temper' with a child or vulnerable adult. Discipline (where appropriate) should be explained and exerted in a calm and authoritative manner.
- There may be occasions when it is necessary to restrain a child or vulnerable adult to ensure their physical safety, or that of other clients or workers. Such restraint should only be used in an emergency, should last for as short a time as possible, should use only the minimum force necessary to ensure safety and should always be immediately reported to your line manager. If safety permits, do not engage in restraint without another worker present.
- You should only be alone with a child or vulnerable adult in exceptional circumstances. In a counselling situation with a young person or vulnerable adult have two adults present where possible. If not, where privacy and confidentiality are essential, you should make sure another adult knows that the interview is taking place and where. Another adult should be in the building, and the young person or vulnerable adult should know this. Such counselling should generally be by an adult of the same gender as the young person or vulnerable adult.
- If you are seeing a child or young person individually off-site for any reason (e.g. mentoring) this should be with the knowledge of your supervisor and with parental knowledge and/or consent. If possible such meetings should be in public places or another adult should be present or nearby. No young person should be invited to your home alone unless you have discussed this in advance with his/her parents.
- If you have to give personal care to a child (e.g. changing a child who has been sick) this should be done in a way in which the privacy of the child can be maintained while ensuring that there is no undue intimacy. If possible more than one adult should be involved or you should ensure that another adult is within earshot. Sometimes it may

be more appropriate to take a child home or call the parents if a high level of physical intimacy is involved in the care needed.

- You should avoid any comments or remarks that could be construed as being sexually suggestive even in 'fun' and should avoid being drawn into such a conversation if a child or vulnerable adult initiates it.
- You should not allow or engage in making any a scapegoat, ridiculing or verbally rejecting a child or vulnerable adult or make any discriminatory remarks of any kind. You should at all times present a positive, affirming role model for children with words and deeds.
- You should be aware of any potential bullying situations within a group and should remember that bullying can be verbal as well as physical. You should confront any bullying and should avoid appearing to give encouragement by ignoring it or laughing at remarks.
- You should recognise the potential vulnerability of all workers both to temptation and to false allegation. You are accountable to other workers and they, in turn, are also accountable. If you see another worker acting in ways that might be misconstrued, it is your duty to speak to them and/or your line manager about your concerns.
- All accidents that occur during an activity should be written down not just made a 'mental note' of. Briefly describe the event, signing and dating it before passing it on to your supervisor. This is also good practice wherever some form of abuse is suspected.

For Managers

- Pecan, should, as far as possible ensure safe access to, and use of, its facilities and activities. Lighting, both external and internal should be adequate.
- As far as possible all small group activities should take place in an open environment. This may involve sharing space, leaving doors ajar, or using rooms with glass panelled doors.
- The ratio of adults to children should always be adequate to ensure safety. Activities should be planned to include more than the minimum adult requirement to account for unexpected shortfall.
- Mixed gender groups of older children should always be planned to have both male and female workers to enable children to relate to workers of the same gender. An adult of the same gender as the child or young person should handle all counselling or matters of a confidential nature.
- On-site activities when parents are not present should keep a register of names and should record arrival and departure of children and young people. When such activities are held occasionally for younger children there should be written permission from parents for them to attend as well as written agreement on their departure details.
- An incident log should be maintained for all activities that Pecan runs. A log book should be accessible for all workers who work with children and young people. The leaders of all activities should ensure that any incident that causes concern is recorded. This recording should include details of the incident, names of those involved, action taken and any future action required.
- First Aid kits can be found at the reception desk. A First Aid kit should be taken on outings. Where possible a qualified First Aider should be present at all regular activities of children and young people. That person must administer any First Aid. Minor First

Aid should be given either in public or in a room with the door ajar. If First Aid requires privacy two adults should be present. All instances of First Aid should be recorded in the logbook.

- When children and young people are taken on outings written parental consent should be obtained in advance. As far as possible, a child should not be alone in a car with an adult. Where this is unavoidable for short journeys (e.g. the last of a group to be dropped off at home) the child should be asked to sit in the back of the car.