

## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 *Nurse Lifeline* is committed to the safety and welfare of all who come into contact with its services, whether this is the Charity trustees, volunteers, or those who access the services provided.
- 1.2 It is the policy of *Nurse Lifeline* to fully comply with all the requirements of the Charity Commission. The Charity Commission states that safeguarding should be a key governance priority for all charities, regardless of size, type, or income, and not only those charities working with children or vulnerable adults. It also stipulates that it is essential for charity trustees to have and implement safeguarding policies and procedures and that they must be adequate and appropriate for the charity's particular circumstances.
- 1.3 This policy describes the Safeguarding practices that are in place within the Charity *Nurse Lifeline*, and ensures that all those who represent the Charity are aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, and that all those who access the services provided through *Nurse Lifeline* understand how safeguarding concerns will be managed.

### **2. Commitment to safeguarding**

- 2.1 Those who receive services provided by the Charity or are beneficiaries of the Charity, are referred to in this Policy as our '**Service Users**'.
- 2.2 Service Users contacting Nurse Lifeline, may be at risk due to; their circumstances, age, illness, disability, and physical or mental health. The Charity is committed to working in their best interests, to promote their welfare, and to put in place safeguards and measures to protect them. In providing peer-support platforms to Service Users, the Charity will endeavour at all times to minimise risk to them and to ensure that they are as safe as the Charity can make them.
- 2.3 The Charity aims to protect all of its Service Users from any act or behaviour of any member of staff or volunteer of this Charity which, whether deliberately or unknowingly on the part of that member of staff or volunteer, gives rise to harm or ill treatment.
- 2.4 Such harm or ill treatment includes abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, discriminatory, institutional or organisational, financial or material), neglect, or impairment of the health or development of the Charity's Service Users.
- 2.5 The Charity recognises that it has a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse or neglect. It adopts a "zero-tolerance" policy of abuse within the Charity.
- 2.6 The Charity maintains a Safe Working Practice Guidance. This includes:
  - (1) details about when and how risk assessments for:
    - a) volunteering roles; and
    - b) particular circumstances or activitiesshould be carried out.



(2) guidance on use of ICT related activities such as use of social media, email and internet.

The Charity will ensure that the Guidance is implemented by all within the Charity and, for that purpose, it will ensure that its staff and volunteers have read and understood the contents.

2.7 The Charity will work in partnership with local / national agencies to put in place appropriate procedures for reporting, making referrals, and accessing training and specialist support, as and when required.

### **3. Safe recruitment**

3.1 To aim to protect its Service Users, the Charity will seek to recruit trustees, staff and volunteers using appropriate procedures, safeguards and checks.

3.2 The Charity will take up at least two references for all staff posts and volunteer roles prior to appointment.

3.3 The Charity will provide an induction programme for all new volunteers and staff, and appropriate training and ongoing/refresher training for them at regular intervals, to enable all volunteers and staff to undertake their roles safely, effectively and confidently. Evidence of external safeguarding training within civilian health professional roles will be sought from volunteers. The induction will make it clear to them that they have an obligation to implement this Policy and to learn about protection issues and their related responsibilities.

3.4 Where the Charity should do so, it will use the Disclosure & Barring Service ("DBS") checks to help it to assess suitability of a candidate for a particular volunteer or staff role which is treated by the DBS as Regulated Activity and is therefore subject to a barring list check. In relation to a post or role which is eligible for an enhanced DBS check, where it is considered appropriate an enhanced DBS check will need to be evidenced. The Charity will assess any criminal record information that is disclosed in line with its data protection and equalities (treating ex-offenders fairly) policies.

3.5 The Charity will regularly review its recruitment and other human resources procedures in response to changes in legislation and systems external to the Charity, e.g. DBS and barring list checks.

### **4. Safeguarding our Service Users**

4.1 Nurse Lifeline is a peer-support service aimed at offering emotional support to individuals within frontline healthcare professions. By nature of our Charity's purposes and objectives, individuals calling our peer-support service are likely to be suffering from some form of anxiety or emotional stress. Such anxiety or stress may be due to a variety of reasons and our aim is to listen and support anyone that accesses our services.

4.2 When our call handlers are concerned about the safety of our service users (i.e. due to harm they may cause to themselves, harm they may cause to others or harm they may be at risk of from others), our aim will be to talk to them and encourage them to find a way to keep themselves and others safe.

- 4.3 We will listen to their concerns and worries and aim to help them identify a way to keep safe. However, there may be occasions where our call handlers feel that the service user is not in the right state of mind to be able to make decisions that will keep themselves or others safe in their current situation.

In these circumstances, we may need to disclose our concerns to another organisation. Triggers that may cause us concern for the immediate safety of a service user or others may be where a service user has described a situation that clearly puts them at risk to themselves or others, and they do not seem to understand the risks involved, or where a service user becomes unconscious whilst they are on the call.

- 4.4 In addition, if a service user tells us about potential harm that could be caused to a child in their care, or a vulnerable adult, we may need to contact other relevant services.

- 4.5 One of the objectives of Nurse Lifeline is to enable service users to contact the peer-support service anonymously, therefore where risks to service users are identified, action can only be taken if identifiable information on an individual is obtained. Where we identify serious safeguarding concerns, we will endeavour to gain the consent of the service user to share their contact details so we can access the appropriate emergency support required on their behalf.

- 4.6 Where we feel we need to act to safeguard a service user, or other(s) (inclusive of children and vulnerable adults) that may be at risk of harm, our action may include:

- passing the identifiable information we have obtained to emergency services that can help, such as the ambulance or police service;
- contacting social services to arrange for them to speak with the Service User about how they may be able to help.

- 4.7 The nature of Nurse Lifeline is a confidential helpline therefore we will always strive to safeguard the confidentiality of any information provided to us. Any sharing of information would only be considered where serious risk of harm has been identified, and after talking through these concerns with the Service User.

- 4.8 The Charity is unable to discuss fitness to practice issues. Where a Service User is distressed about a situation in relation to their professional work, and we feel someone has been or may be at risk of harm, we will talk to them and encourage them to contact the support available through their professional governing bodies.



## **5. Safeguarding Officer**

- 5.1 The Charity's appointed Safeguarding Officer as of 28th April 2020 is Sahar Nikpour and is supported in this role by the other Charity Trustees. They will have access to appropriate training to support them in this role.
- 5.2 The safeguarding officers will be available to all staff, volunteers and Service Users to contact when they have any concerns, issues, or complaints regarding the safety, well-being or conduct of volunteers or staff.
- 5.3 The Safeguarding Officer and Charity Trustees will liaise with appropriate local and national agencies, contribute to appropriate policies, maintain records, keep confidentiality, adhere to and promote this Policy within the Charity, and support or provide access to support for individuals suffering harm or abuse.

## **6. Awareness of harm and abuse within the Charity**

- 6.1 Any reported incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour (inclusive of but not limited to; physical, psychological, sexual, emotional or financial harm or abuse, and prejudicial attitudes, both deliberate and unintentional) within the Charity (directed at members of the Charity or Service Users) will be fully investigated and legal action will be taken where necessary. Such incidents may result in an individual being reported to their professional governing body and/ or police services.
- 6.2 It is mandated that all volunteers abide by the Charity's Code of Conduct, in addition to the code of conduct set by their professional governing body, and should not act in such a way as to increase the risk of harm to others (inclusive of children or vulnerable adults).

## **7. Confidentiality**

All reports and logs (including personnel records) will be kept securely and confidentially according to the Charity Privacy Notice, until or unless it is necessary to share this material with the agencies named above in section 6 of this Policy. Information will be shared by the Charity on a "need-to-know" basis only.

## **8. Reports of possible or actual harm**

- 8.1 The Charity supports and encourages all Service Users and volunteers to promptly speak up and contact the Safeguarding Officer or Charity Trustees where there is a concern (i.e. a worry, issue or doubt about practice or about treatment of a Service User or colleague, or their circumstances), or a disclosure (i.e. information about a person at risk of or suffering from significant harm) or an allegation of an incident or a possibility that a volunteer associated with the charity or Service User has caused harm or could cause harm to a person in their care.
- 8.2 Staff can report, and have a responsibility to report, something that they become aware of if they suspect or discover that it is not right or is illegal, or if it appears to them that someone at work is neglecting their duties, putting someone's health and safety in danger, or covering up wrongdoing. They may become aware of any of these things directly from what they see or hear, or from something another person has disclosed to them.

- 8.3 The Charity prefers that anyone should initially use internal processes whenever possible to make a report as above to facilitate the correct level of escalation, but this does not prevent them from making a report or referral, in their own right as a private individual, to statutory agencies such as social services or the police.
- 8.4 The Charity cannot promise confidentiality to staff or volunteers making an internal report (to the Safeguarding Officer or a trustee of the Charity) where it has to be shared with any statutory agencies.
- 8.5 The Charity actively encourages its staff or volunteers to raise concerns or to disclose information, which they believe shows malpractice i.e. whistle-blowing (disclosure in the public interest).

## **9. Safeguarding Officer's actions**

With reference to section 4 of this policy, where there is risk of significant harm to any Service User, volunteers or staff, the Safeguarding Officer and Charity Trustees have the power to act as necessary and, in particular, as follows:

- log all conversations regarding the issue
- sign and request signatures on reports and statements
- confidentially seek advice from expert sources
- share concerns (with consent where required and appropriate) internally with senior staff / Chair of the Board of trustees
- share concerns and make referrals to external agencies such as ambulance, police or social services, as appropriate to the circumstances

## **10. Communication by the Charity about safeguarding and this Policy**

- 10.1 All those working within the Charity have an obligation to learn about protection issues and their related responsibilities.
- 10.2 The Charity will communicate this Policy (using appropriate methods, formats and language to communicate the content) to all of its trustees, volunteers, and Service Users. The policy will also be available in the public domain via the Charity website.
- 10.3 To encourage everyone involved in the Charity to understand the importance of safeguarding, and to assist all staff in learning about protection issues and their related responsibilities, the Charity will hold open meetings relating to such. Meetings will be conducted with a view to reflect, review and promote continued learning and improvement in relation to the Charity's safeguarding responsibilities.



## **11. Implementation of this Policy**

11.1 This Policy must be followed by all trustees and volunteers of the Charity and must be promoted by all of its trustees and senior staff. Failure to follow the procedures set out within the Policy will be treated as a serious incident.

11.2 This Policy needs to be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures of the Charity:

- Safe Working Practice Guidance
- Health & Safety Policy
- Code of Conduct (Trustees and Volunteers)
- Data Protection Policy
- Privacy Notice
- Equal Rights and Diversity Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy

## **12. Adoption, coming into effect, and review, of this Policy**

12.1 This Safeguarding Policy was approved by the Board of trustees of Nurse Lifeline on 28/04/2020 and comes into effect on this date.

12.2 The Board will, as appropriate, monitor and enforce this Policy.

12.3 The Board will revise this Policy from time to time. The next date for review of this Policy by the Board will be 12 months from the date of publication of this policy.