



Policy Number	Review Date	Next Review Date
1	March 2026	March 2027

## Little Village Adult Safeguarding Policy

### 1. Statement of intent

Little Village is committed to safeguarding adults at risk who come into contact with our work. We recognise that some adults we interact with, including parents, carers, volunteers and community members, may have care and support needs and may be at risk of abuse and/or neglect.

We want everyone connected to Little Village to be treated with dignity, care and respect, and to feel safe when engaging with our services and spaces. It is everyone's responsibility across the organisation.

We aim to create an environment where:

- concerns are noticed and taken seriously
- people feel safe to speak up
- staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities
- concerns are reported promptly
- actions are proportionate and recorded
- decisions are made with fairness and accountability

Little Village is not a statutory care provider. We do not investigate safeguarding concerns ourselves, our role and duty of care is to recognise, record, report and cooperate with statutory agencies. All staff; volunteers and representatives are expected to follow this policy and associated operating procedures.

This policy forms part of our wider safeguarding and assurance framework, alongside our Child Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Data Protection and Data Retention Policy and Safer Recruitment Policy.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all adults aged 18 and over who come into contact with Little Village through our services, sites, programmes, partnerships or activities.

This includes:

- parents and carers accessing support
- adult family members attending hubs
- adults supported through signposting and guidance
- volunteers
- staff

- trustees
- contractors and agency workers
- partners delivering work on our behalf

It applies across:

- hubs and warehouses
- family sessions and community spaces
- delivery and outreach activity
- phone and digital contact
- online platforms and communications
- events and partner settings

This policy applies to both in-person and remote contact

### **3. What we mean by adult safeguarding**

Adult safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. Under the Care Act 2014, safeguarding duties apply where an adult:

- has care and support needs
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect
- is unable to protect themselves because of those needs

Concerns may arise through something we are told, something we observe, or patterns we notice.

Little Village staff and volunteers are not responsible for determining eligibility under the Care Act, only for recognising and reporting concerns. Categories and indicators of abuse are set out in Annex B.

### **4. Key principles**

Our adult safeguarding approach is guided by the principle that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is embedded in our culture, everyday practice and decision-making across the organisation. We take concerns seriously and act on them promptly, while also working proactively to reduce risk through safer recruitment, training, supervision and inclusive practice. Adults who come into contact with our work are treated with dignity and respect, and we listen carefully to disclosures without dismissing or minimising them.

We do not carry out investigations ourselves; instead, we recognise, record and report concerns to the appropriate people or agencies. Decisions are made in a proportionate and risk-aware way, with information shared on a need-to-know basis and clearly recorded. We support a culture of speaking up through our Whistleblowing Policy and safe reporting routes, and we regularly review our safeguarding arrangements to stay aligned with current legislation, statutory guidance and sector best practice.

### **5. Roles and responsibilities**

All staff, volunteers and everyone working with or on behalf of Little Village have a duty of care towards adults experiencing risk. Safeguarding adults is a shared responsibility, and everyone is expected to remain alert to safeguarding concerns and to follow reporting procedures without delay.

Everyone is responsible for recognising possible signs of abuse or neglect, responding appropriately to disclosures, maintaining professional boundaries, and reporting concerns through the correct internal safeguarding channels. They must not attempt to investigate concerns themselves.

Managers (including line managers and volunteer managers) are responsible for creating an environment where safeguarding can be raised openly, ensuring their teams understand the

reporting routes, and supporting safe and timely escalation. They are also responsible for ensuring safer working practices, appropriate supervision, and role boundaries are maintained in day-to-day operations.

The Safeguarding Manager, deputised (Designated Safeguarding Leads) DSLs and the Safeguarding function are responsible for receiving and triaging safeguarding concerns, advising on risk, onward referrals where appropriate, maintaining safeguarding records, monitoring and evaluating records, and leading on decision-making. They also provide guidance, training and continuous improvement of safeguarding practice across the organisation.

The People and Volunteering teams are responsible for embedding safeguarding within safer recruitment, onboarding, training and conduct processes, and for aligning recruitment and suitability decisions with safeguarding and equality requirements.

Safeguarding responsibilities also sit across operational and support functions. Service delivery, hubs, logistics and programme teams are responsible for embedding safe practice in frontline activity and environments. Digital, communications and fundraising teams are responsible for safe and appropriate engagement, content and contact with families and communities, including online safety and ethical storytelling. Data and systems owners are responsible for secure handling of safeguarding information in line with data protection and retention requirements. Safeguarding advice and oversight is available to all teams to support safe and proportionate decision-making.

Trustees and CEO hold overall accountability for safeguarding governance, oversight and organisational culture with input from the Safeguarding Manager. A named safeguarding trustee provides challenge and assurance at board level.

## **6. Recognising adult safeguarding concerns**

An adult safeguarding concern can arise where an adult with care and support needs experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and may be unable to protect themselves. Concerns may become known through direct disclosure, observation, patterns of behaviour, third-party reports, complaints, operational contact, or information shared by our Referral Partners or during support conversations. Concerns may relate to abuse by others, organisational harm, domestic abuse, exploitation, neglect, discrimination, or self-neglect.

Little Village does not require proof before reporting a concern. Staff and volunteers are expected to report reasonable concerns, not to verify or investigate them. See detailed categories and indicators of abuse set out in Annex A.

## **7. What to do if you have a concern**

If someone is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical help, emergency services should be contacted without delay. Safeguarding reporting should still follow internally as soon as possible afterwards.

Where there is no immediate danger, concerns must be reporting promptly through Little Village's safeguarding report pathway using the Incident Reporting Form or agreed systems such as contacting [safeguarding@littlevillagehq.org](mailto:safeguarding@littlevillagehq.org) for advice and guidance, where appropriate next steps will be shared. All staff should inform their manager where they have reported a safeguarding concern. Volunteers should inform their session lead, hub manager or volunteer manager, who must ensure escalations to safeguarding as occurred and to monitor the wellbeing of those reporting.

When responding to a disclosure, staff and volunteers should listen, remain calm, non-judgemental, avoid leading questions, avoid making promises of confidentiality, and explain that concerns must be shared with the safeguarding team. The concern should be recorded factually and escalated via the Incident Reporting Form within 24 hours.

Little Village does not conduct safeguarding investigations. Where threshold is met, referrals are made to the relevant local authority safeguarding team or other appropriate statutory body. We will

cooperate with local authorities, police and other statutory safeguarding partners and will provide relevant information to support safeguarding enquiries where required.

## **8. Allegations against staff, volunteers, trustees or representative**

Where concerns relate to the conduct of a staff member, volunteer or trustee, appropriate safeguarding and people management procedures will be followed. This may include role restriction, suspension, or removal from duties while concerns are assessed by appropriate authorities. Where legal criteria are met, referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service will be made.

Whistleblowing routes are also available where concerns relate to organisational practice or where internal reporting feels unsafe.

## **9. Serious incidents, escalations and organisational learning**

Where a safeguarding concern involves serious harm, risk of serious harm, alleged abuse by someone connected to Little Village, or a significant failure of safeguarding controls, it will be escalated immediately through senior safeguarding and leadership routes. This includes notification to the Safeguarding Manager / DSL, relevant directors, and the named safeguarding trustee where appropriate.

Little Village will assess whether the matter meets the threshold for external reporting and will submit reports without undue delay where required. This may include reporting to the Charity Commission as a serious incident, referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service where legal criteria are met, and notification to relevant funders, local authorities or regulators. Decisions and rationale will be clearly recorded.

Where appropriate, managers and safeguarding leads will carry out proportionate case reviews to understand what happened, whether procedures were followed, and what could be improved. The purpose of review is learning and strengthening practice, not blame. Agreed actions are tracked, and learning from incidents and near misses is used to improve policy, training, safer recruitment, supervision and operational safeguards across the organisation.

## **10. Information sharing and confidentiality**

Safeguarding information is handled sensitively and shared only where necessary to protect safety and wellbeing. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis and in line with data protection and GDPR laws and safeguarding guidance. Lack of consent does not automatically prevent information sharing where there is a risk of serious harm or abuse. Decisions about sharing without consent are made proportionately and recorded with rationale by those who hold organisational DSL responsibilities.

Safeguarding concerns and incident records are stored securely and retained for six years from the date of closure, unless there is a clear safeguarding, legal, insurance or regulatory reason to retain them for longer. After the retention period, records are securely deleted or anonymised in line with our Data Retention Policy. Records relating to serious harm, high-risk cases, or matters involving statutory investigations may be retained for a longer period following advice from safeguarding leads and data protection advisors.

## **11. Safer recruitment, training and culture**

Safeguarding adults is supported through Little Village's safer recruitment and suitability processes.

All staff and some volunteer recruitment follows the Safer Recruitment Policy, including proportionate to roles background checks, references, code of conduct expectations and inductions. All staff and volunteers receive safeguarding awareness training or briefing appropriate to their role.

Safeguarding expectations, reporting routes and professional boundaries are included in induction and refresher learning.

Little Village promotes an open and accountable safeguarding culture. Individuals are encouraged to raise concerns, challenge unsafe practice, and speak up where something feels wrong. Concerns about organisational practice or staff behaviour can also be raised through the Whistleblowing Policy and escalated through the Incident Reporting Form.

Safeguarding practice is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect legislative changes, statutory guidance and sector best practice.

## **12. Support for staff and volunteers**

Safeguarding concerns can be difficult and emotionally demanding to witness or hear. Staff and volunteers who raise safeguarding concerns may feel worried, uncertain or affected by what they have heard of seen. Little Village recognises that responding to safeguarding concerns can have emotional impact and that appropriate support is an important part of safe practice.

Anyone who reports or manages a safeguarding concern should have access to timely, supportive follow-up from their manager or safeguarding manager. This may include check-in conversations, updates where appropriate on escalated concerns, the opportunity to hold lesson learned conversations where correct steps were not taken, and to address any immediate worries. The aim is to provide reassurance, practical clarity, ensure practice consistency, and emotional support. We do not have a blame culture at Little Village.

Little Village provides access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for staff, which offers confidential wellbeing support and counselling. Staff should be reminded of this option following difficult safeguarding cases where appropriate. Volunteers may be offered supportive follow-up conversations with their staff or volunteer manager and signposted to appropriate wellbeing support routes where needed.

## **13. Working with other policies and procedures**

Adult safeguarding policy at Little Village operates as an organisational support function as well as a frontline responsibility. It informs and supports safe decision-making, risk management and practice across teams, including service delivery, volunteering, people and culture, recruitment, communication, fundraising and digital activity. Safeguarding learning and data are used to strengthen governance, processes, training, supervision and operational guidance across the organisation.

This policy should be read alongside related organisational policies and procedures, including the Child Safeguarding Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, Volunteering Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Ethical Fundraising, Data Protection and Retention Policy, and relevant safer working and online safety guidance. It also links to our approach to ethical safeguarding, safe communications, and responsible use of digital platforms and data. Together, these policies and processes form Little Village's wider safeguarding and safe practice framework and are designed to work together in a practical, joined-up way.

This policy may also be reviewed earlier where there are legislative changes, serious incidents, regulatory recommendations or significant organisational learning.

## **14. Responsible persons for safeguarding**

Little Village has a designated safeguarding officer (DSO) and acting designated safeguarding leads (DSL) who hold organisational responsibilities for the organisations safeguarding strategy, culture, escalation and overall advice and guidance. Named DSL and deputies are published internally and kept up to date. A named safeguarding trustee provides board-level oversight. Contact details and reporting pathways are available to all staff volunteers through induction materials, escalation trees and internal systems.

### **Annexes to this policy**

- Annex A: What to do if you have a concern about safeguarding (escalation tree)
- Annex B: Types and indicators of abuse
- Annex C: Responding to a disclosure (conversation guide)

Signed:

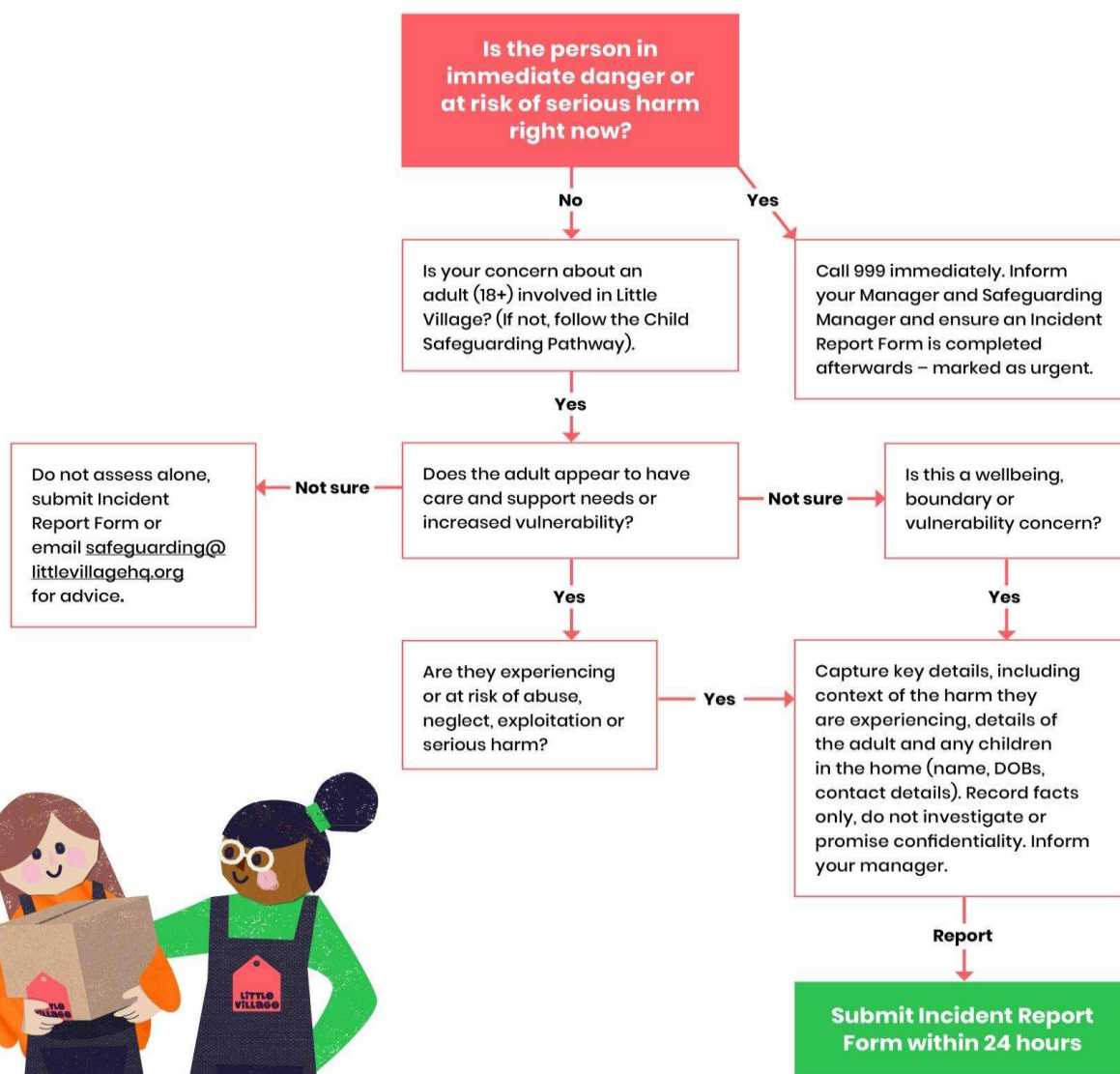
Sophie Livingstone,  
CEO, Little Village

### **Reviewers:**

Hinda Omar, Safeguarding & Family Insights Manager  
Kate Husselbee, Trustee

Review Date: **March 2026**

# What to do if you have a concern about safeguarding



### If someone makes a disclosure...

- Listen
- Stay Calm
- Do not investigate
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Explain you must report
- Record their words
- Submit incident report form

When in doubt, please report or seek safeguarding advice on [safeguarding@littlevillagehq.org](mailto:safeguarding@littlevillagehq.org)



## Types and indicators of abuse and neglect

### Summary

Under the Care Act statutory guidance, adult safeguarding recognises ten categories of abuse and neglect. Abuse may be a single incident or a repeated pattern. It can happen in any setting and may be caused deliberately or through neglect, poor practice or lack of understanding. The indicators listed below are examples only. They are not proof that abuse has occurred. Staff and volunteers are not expected to determine the category of abuse — only to recognise concerns and report them.

1. Physical abuse includes hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or other physical harm. Possible indicators include unexplained bruises or injuries, repeated “accidents,” someone appearing in pain, or seeming fearful around a particular person during hub visits, deliveries or appointments.
2. Domestic abuse includes controlling, coercive, threatening or violent behaviour by a partner or family member. Possible indicators include someone seeming afraid to speak openly, being closely monitored by another adult, cancelling contact suddenly, or expressing fear about going home or about their home during a session or call
3. Sexual abuse includes sexual assault, sexual activity without consent, or sexual exploitation. Possible indicators include distress, withdrawal, discomfort around certain people, or disclosures made directly or indirectly during conversations.
4. Psychological or emotional abuse includes intimidation, humiliation, threats or controlling behaviour. Possible indicators include low confidence, high anxiety, distress during interactions, apologising excessively, or appearing unusually fearful of getting things wrong
5. Financial or material abuse includes theft, fraud, exploitation or pressure around money, benefits or possessions. Possible indicators include someone saying money or essential items have been taken from them, expressing worry about finances being controlled by someone else, or asking for help because resources are being withheld
6. Modern slavery includes human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude or exploitation. Possible indicators include signs of coercion, restricted freedom, fearfulness, poor living conditions, or someone appearing under the control of others.
7. Discriminatory abuse includes harassment, slurs or unfair treatment based on disability, race, religion, gender, sexuality or age. Possible indicators include degrading language, exclusion, unequal treatment or hate-related behaviour.
8. Organisational or institutional abuse includes harm caused by poor or unsafe practice within a service or setting. Possible indicators include repeated concerns about how a service treats people, unsafe conditions, or patterns of being ignored when raising needs
9. Neglect or acts of omission include not meeting basic needs such as food, warmth, medical care or support. Possible indicators include poor hygiene, unsuitable clothing for weather, untreated health issues, repeated unmet needs, or someone saying they are not being properly supported.
10. Self-neglect includes difficulty or unwillingness to care for personal health, hygiene or safety. Possible indicators include severe neglect of living conditions, hoarding, untreated medical needs, or refusal of essential support where risk is increasing.

Staff and volunteers should report concerns based on what they see, hear or are told. including during short interactions, phone support, deliveries or hub sessions. You do not need proof or certainty to raise a safeguarding concern.

**Responding to a disclosure (conversation guide)**

**Practical guide for staff and volunteers**

When a safeguarding concern comes up, we follow five simple steps: **Recognise, Respond, Report, Record and Refer**. Notice the concern, respond calmly and supportively, report it through the safeguarding route, record what you saw or were told, and let the safeguarding team refer and take next steps. You are not expected to investigate or prove anything and if you are worried, always pass it on.

Step	What this means	What to do	Helpful words you can use
<b>Recognise</b>	Notice when something feels wrong or worrying. This could be something you see, hear, are told, or pick up through behaviour or tone, including in hub interactions, deliveries, or phone support calls.	Trust your concern. You do not need proof. Abuse and neglect are often hidden, and it can take courage for someone to say something. Take what you notice seriously.	“Thank you for telling me.”
<b>Respond</b>	Stay calm and supportive if someone shares a concern or disclosure. Your role is to listen not investigate. Be clear and honest about what happens next.	Listen carefully. Do not interrupt or challenge. Do not “interview” or press for detail. Ask only simple, necessary questions to understand the basic facts. Do not be judgemental. Do not promise confidentiality. Explain that you will need to share the concern with the safeguarding manager so the right support can happen. Reassure them you will only share with people who need to know. Support communication needs where possible.	“I’m glad you told me.” “I’m going to listen.” “You’re not in trouble.” “I can’t keep this private, but I will only share it with people who can help.” “You’ve done the right thing.”
<b>Report</b>	Pass the concern on through the correct safeguarding route. Do not keep it to yourself.	Submit a Safeguarding Incident Report Form as soon as possible (within 24 hours). If risk is immediate, call emergency services first, then report internally. Tell your manager or session lead that you have reported.	“I’m going to pass this to our safeguarding manager so they can look at how to help.”

Step	What this means	What to do	Helpful words you can use
<b>Record</b>	Write down what you saw, heard or were told.	<p>Record facts only. Use the person's own words where you can. Include dates, times, location and who was present. Do not include opinions or guesses. Do not investigate or try to verify. Do not delay reporting while writing, submit first and add detail if needed.</p>	
<b>Refer</b>	Safeguarding leads decide next steps and external referrals.	<p>The Safeguarding Manager / DSL team will assess risk and, where threshold is met, refer to the local authority or other statutory services. Staff and volunteers should not make external referrals themselves unless directed or in an emergency. Continue to cooperate if asked for information.</p>	<p>"Our Safeguarding Manager will look at what happens next."</p>