



## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **1 Policy Statement**

After Matters has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects our clients.

Trustees and volunteers will come into contact with clients who may be classed as vulnerable or at risk. Therefore, trustees and volunteers should be aware of how they and the organisation should respond should they be made aware or observe any behaviours or have concerns about the wellbeing of people who use After Matter services.

### **2 Related After Matters Policies:**

- Confidentiality Policy
- Privacy Policy

### **3 Trustee Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the board of trustees are:

- to ensure that all trustees, volunteers and clients have access to and are aware of this policy
- to ensure that safeguards are in place to protect the interests of the client, trustees and volunteers

### **4 Scope**

This policy applies to all trustees and volunteers of After Matters.

### **5 Policy Guidance**

If we are really worried about you and think that you are at risk or danger, we will talk to you about the need for somebody outside the After Matters team to know what has happened or what is happening to you.

We would only do this if:

- your life is at risk because of something you are doing
- you are at risk from somebody else
- you are a risk to somebody else

In these cases, After Matters will ask you to consent to share your details so that they can refer you to the appropriate services or get the help you need. If you do not consent and our trustees/volunteers feel it is a safeguarding issue, then they may refer/share any details which we have.

In this case, we will:

- Let you know who we are passing details to and why
- Keep you informed of any actions we intend to take
- Where possible, we will work with you to agree to every step taken.

Sometimes, if the situation is very serious, we may have to take action without talking to you first.

#### 5.1 Referral from After Matters to external services

Sometimes getting extra help for you can be really helpful. Depending on where you live you may be given the option of a referral to another service in your area.

If you self-refer, you could provide personal details directly to the organisation. If you wish the After Matters team to make a referral on your behalf you would need to share personal data which we would need to pass on to enable us to complete the referral. This personal data will be stored on the After Matters record system and is only accessible to the chair and the secretary of the After Matters team and the organisation you are being referred to. We will always seek your consent to pass over your details and let you know who we are passing details to.

#### 5.2 Induction and training

This policy must be adhered to by all After Matters trustees and volunteers. As a part of the induction process relevant policies including safeguarding and confidentiality will be included and communicated to ensure the safety of clients in our care.

Safeguarding means protecting an client's right to live safely. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the client's wellbeing is promoted, where appropriate, with regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding any action. At After Matters we must recognise that clients sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

Therefore, we should follow the core principles embedded in the Care Act 2014 which are:

- **Empowerment** - presumption of person led decisions and informed consent
- **Protection** - support and representation for those in greatest need
- **Prevention** - it is better to take action before harm occurs
- **Proportionality** - proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- **Partnership** - local solutions through services working with their communities

### 5.3 Reporting

Where possible, you must act in accordance with the wishes of the client at risk. Circumstances where their wishes may be overridden or where other considerations may apply, will be dependent on capacity.

It is important to follow these guidelines in order to be able to follow best practice:

#### **Do**

- Listen carefully to the information given
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing and have a right to be safe
- Tell the person what you are going to do and why – unless by doing so you are increasing the risk of harm to them or others
- Seek consent to share information if possible
- Ask the person if there is anything else they want you to do, or anyone they want to contact
- Be supportive and ensure the person knows how to contact the relevant service or additional support if they wish

#### **Do Not**

- Appear frightened, panicked or unable to cope with what the person is telling you
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Trivialise or minimise any aspect of abusive behaviour
- Speculate, judge, or make assumptions about the information or circumstances
- Make promises you can't keep, such as promising that everything will be alright
- Promise to keep the information a secret
- Ask leading questions
- Probe for additional information; you are not responsible for investigating the allegation

### 5.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be adhered to at all times in accordance with After Matters Confidentiality Policy when recording and making a referral, or for raising an alert. The alert should not be discussed with anyone else unless it is necessary to protect the vulnerable person, or to secure evidence.