

## Safeguarding – Protecting Adults at Risk of Abuse Policy

### 1 Our approach to protecting adults at risk of abuse or neglect

- 1.1 All our residents and users of our services have the right to live safely from harm and abuse. We recognise that some of our residents and users of our services are adults (aged 18 or over) with a need for care and support, who may be at risk of abuse or neglect.
- 1.2 We put preventative measures in place, report allegations of abuse to the relevant authorities, and work with partner agencies to stop abuse where it occurs and put the right support in place. We will ensure that:
- We value, listen to and respect the adult concerned and their family
  - All Octavia employees and volunteers recognise the signs of abuse
  - Suspected or allegations of abuse are reported quickly
  - Support is arranged for the adult concerned
  - We work closely with investigating and support agencies to protect the adult concerned from further abuse
- 1.3 This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Octavia, including senior managers and board members, paid staff, volunteers, contractors and agency staff.

### 2 What we mean by

- 2.1 **An ‘adult at risk’:** a person aged **18 or over** who has a need for care or support (whether or not they are eligible for, or receiving, services); is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and, as a result of their support needs, is unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.
- 2.2 **Safeguarding:** the term ‘safeguarding’ refers to the process of protecting adults (and children) from harm. This includes all procedures designed to prevent harm to an adult.
- 2.3 **Abuse:** Abuse is any form of physical, emotional, financial or sexual mistreatment or neglect that leads to injury or harm. Other types of abuse include institutional abuse, discriminatory abuse and modern slavery or exploitation.
- 2.3.1 Abuse may be intentional or unintentional (for example neglect from a family carer who can’t cope). Whether it is intentional or not, we will take appropriate action to safeguard the adult concerned.

### 3 What you can expect from our service

- Where Octavia believe an adult with support needs is being abused or neglected, we will respond to immediate risks and alert appropriate emergency services and social services as soon as possible.

- If a crime is alleged, we will contact the police as soon as possible following disclosure, and will secure the area of the alleged crime.
- If domestic abuse is alleged, we will implement the Domestic Abuse policy where appropriate (see our Domestic Abuse policy for more information).
- We will ensure the relevant line manager is alerted to the safeguarding concern at the earliest opportunity.
- We will take appropriate measures to continue to safeguard the adult at risk, which may include moving them temporarily to alternative accommodation.
- We will conduct our own investigation and work with social services and the police to undertake any multi-agency enquiry.
- We will share relevant information from our own investigations throughout the course of any social services or police enquiry to ensure appropriate action is taken at all stages to protect and support the adult at risk. Information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. We will manage and process personal data in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). For further information on how we process personal data, see the Octavia Privacy Notice.
- Where an alert concerns an Octavia employee, the line manager will review the implications of the alert on staff. If any concerns or risks are identified, the line manager will alert the HR department and agree appropriate action in line with Octavia's disciplinary policy. Where an alert concerns a volunteer, the volunteer's line manager / mentor will review the volunteer's position with Octavia and take appropriate action.
- We will continue to support the adult during any investigation and will involve them in safeguarding decisions.
- We will assess the person's capacity to make relevant decisions, and where someone is assessed as not having capacity, these will be made on their behalf and in their best interests, in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- We have rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures. All care and support staff, and all other staff who have unaccompanied contact with adults at risk as part of their work, are checked using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before they are confirmed in post.
- We ensure all of our staff and volunteers receive regular safeguarding training relevant to their roles, and managers support them to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and to follow the safeguarding policy and procedure.

### 3.1 What you can expect from our service during a public health incident or emergency

- Managers will keep up-to-date with the latest government and local authority information and advice.
- When it is not possible to meet in person, we will maintain contact with you in the ways that you prefer. For example, through phone calls, emails and video calls.
- We will monitor local and national safeguarding resources to identify increased risks of abuse and neglect. We will ensure staff are aware of which types of abuse may be more prominent during these periods and what to look out for to spot the abuse.

- We will speak to you about increased risks at these times and advise you on things you can do to keep safe. We will signpost you to support and resources that are available.

3.2 When working with adults at risk of abuse, we will apply the six safeguarding principles of:

- **Empowerment:** People being supported to make their own decisions and informed consent
- **Prevention:** It's better to take action before harm occurs
- **Proportionality:** The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- **Protection:** Support and representation for those in greatest need
- **Partnership:** Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting concerns of abuse and neglect
- **Accountability:** Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

3.3 Our approach to safeguarding adults complies with the Care Act 2014 and Mental Capacity Act 2005.

## 4 How we will seek to keep adults safe

4.1 Anyone working on behalf of Octavia has a duty to act upon and report actual, suspected or allegations of abuse.

4.2 We have two appointed safeguarding champions (our Assistant Director of Care and Support and our Youth Programme Manager) who lead on advising staff about what to do when safeguarding concerns are raised.

4.3 We respond to any allegations of or suspected abuse by Octavia employees or volunteers through our internal procedures.

4.4 We raise safeguarding awareness amongst all Octavia employees and volunteers, and share best practice in training, inductions, supervision, staff meetings and informal settings.

4.5 When we are unable to work with you in person, for example during a public health emergency, we will continue to look out for signs of abuse or neglect when speaking with you on the phone or online.

4.6 We will keep up to date with changing legislation, advice and guidance from government, local authorities and partner agencies.

4.7 During public health emergencies, we will also consider information and advice from relevant scientific bodies, such as the World Health Organisation and Public Health England. We will review our services as situations develop.

- 4.8 We will monitor the situation in our local communities and identify increased risks. We will alert you to additional risks and signpost you to support available. We will put in place appropriate safety measures to help keep you safe.
  - 4.9 We oversee our approach through our Safeguarding Coordination group, focused campaigns, annual reviews of our safeguarding policy and procedure, and annual safeguarding report to our Board.
  - 4.10 We work closely with local authorities and police to ensure a coordinated approach to safeguarding enquiries and make sure safeguarding plans are implemented for the protection of adults at risk.
- 5 How to report concerns about an adult at risk's welfare, or to contact us about safeguarding
- 5.1 If you want to discuss your concerns with us, please speak to a member of staff or their manager who can talk to you about your concerns.
  - 5.2 You can contact our Customer Services Team on 020 8354 5500 who will put you through to a member of staff or their manager who can talk to you about your concerns or you can ask to speak to our Safeguarding Champion for adults.
  - 5.3 Alternatively, if you have concerns about the welfare of an adult at risk, you can report this directly to your Local Authority Social Services department.