

Safeguarding policy

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Audience	All CIH staff and relevant contractors	Approval date:	December 2024
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1. Aim and scope of the policy

The following policy set out CIH's responsibilities for staff and representatives with regards to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. It is for both internal and external use.

Safeguarding is a term which is used to protect health, well-being and human rights of individuals which then allows them to live free from abuse, harm, or neglect.

2. Definitions

A safeguarding policy covers people who might be at risk of harm or mistreatment. This includes children, adults who may face challenges due to age or disability, individuals with health issues, and those in vulnerable situations. The policy aims to protect them from abuse, neglect, or any form of harm, ensuring their safety and well-being.

CIH uses definitions of the term 'safeguarding' from statutory guidance.

A child is any person who has not reached the age of 18.

An adult at risk of harm is used in this policy to mean an adult who by virtue of a physical or mental impairment or circumstances is at risk of physical or mental harm.

CIH staff are employed by CIH, representatives could be External Quality Assurance's (EQA's), Internal Quality Assurance's (IQA's), End Point Assessors (EPA's), regional representatives, committee/board members and/or consultants working on behalf of CIH.

3. Specific principles of safeguarding for children and adults at risk from harm

CIH has examined their working environments (including who they work with and how, when, where and under what circumstances permanent staff or representatives work with candidates and interact with them) and the products and services they offer.

The six principles of the Care Act 2014 are as follows:

Principle 1 – Empowerment

Support decision making and informed consent

Principle 2 – Prevention

Better to act before harm occurs

Principle 3 – Proportionality

The least restrictive and intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented should be taken

Principle 4 – Protection

Support and representation for those in greatest need

Principle 5 – Accountability

Accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice, both internally and externally.

Principle 6 – Partnership

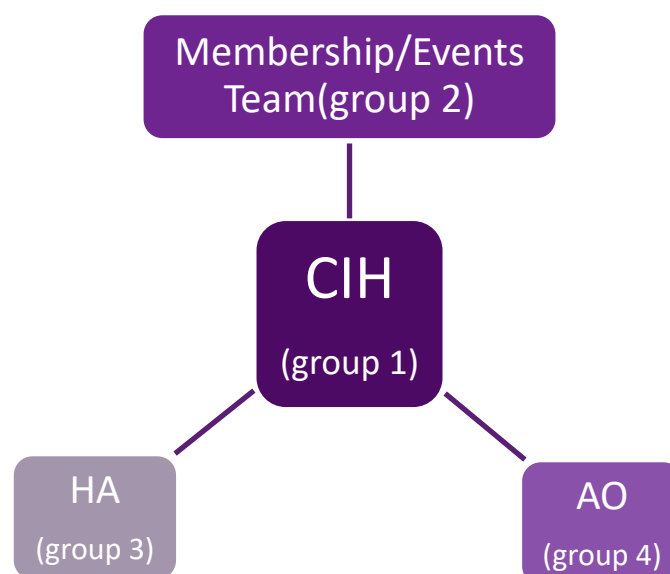
Services working with their communities, including other voluntary and statutory sector partners

Safeguarding should be personal; this allows safeguarding concerns to be person centred.

Through these six principles, CIH seeks to ensure that they can develop and promote practice which safeguards the vulnerable in society from abuse and exploitation. They additionally seek to meet regulatory and legislative requirements.

These principles of safeguarding are the responsibility of the designated staff within CIH and will review the process annually.

4. Operational framework



For Safeguarding, CIH comprises the following grouped directorates:

Group 1

- Executive team
- Finance
- HR
- IT
- Policy & External Affairs
- Marketing
- Sales

Group 2

- Membership
- Events

Group 3

- CIH Housing Academy

Group 4

- CIH Awarding Organisation/EPAO

There will be one Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a number of Designated Safeguarding Assistants (DSA) working across the whole organisation.

Once an employee has identified him/herself as having a caring role and is being supported by CIH the employee must notify his/her line manager if there are any changes in the nature of the caring role

The responsibilities of CIH DSL are:

- Act as a source of advice on safeguarding matters
- Act as the primary contact for safeguarding concerns
- Respond to communications made in regard to safeguarding
- Be a member of the Safeguarding Panel (SP)
- Co-ordinate action within CIH and liaise with the appropriate authorities or agencies about suspected or actual cases of child or vulnerable adult abuse
- Provide guidance and support to those dealing with any issues about safeguarding children or vulnerable adults involving the inappropriate behaviour or actions of a member of CIH or representatives
- Advise on safeguarding training within CIH
- Own the Safeguarding Policy and review the contents.

The DSL will be an employee of CIH and where possible, they will be identified and nominated. The DSL will be required to complete approved training annually. The name of the current DSL will always be available via HR. The DSL is accountable to the SP.

The DSA will be employed by CIH, and where possible, they will be identified and nominated. The DSA's will be required to undertake training annually and will support the DSL. The DSA's are accountable to the DSL.

5. Structure for safeguarding



6. Safeguarding panel

The Safeguarding panel (SP) will comprise the appointed Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Designated Safeguarding Assistants, they will be responsible for reviewing all safeguarding concerns that are reported by member of CIH, representatives or external sources (e.g., learners, parents, members, or centre staff).

The SP will make a judgement about what action, if necessary, should be taken in relation to any reported concern. The SP will appoint a chair who will lead the panel and be responsible for reporting to the executive team annually.

The SP will meet when required but will formally come together once a year to review the policy and collate information on the previous year's activities to be presented to the executive team.

7. Reporting policy and procedure

(a) Roles and responsibilities

It is vital that any member of CIH staff and representatives who suspects that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm or abuse, take personal responsibility to report their concerns. Not reporting concerns may put children and/or vulnerable adults at further risk of harm. It is not CIH responsibility to investigate a child or adult safeguarding concern but to review the information provided and, where necessary, escalate to the relevant authorities.

(b) Responding to a safeguarding concern

Concerns about safeguarding children and/or vulnerable adults may arise in different situations. Staff and representatives may:

- Witness or observe something first hand
- Receive information by phone/email/letter/in person
- Receive learners work that raises potential safeguarding concerns

Examples could include:

- A CIH member attending an event and mentioning to a CIH staff member they feel scared to go home because of an issue with a partner.
- An EQA identifies concerns when reviewing centre assessments, content relates to self-harm for example.
- A tutor/assessor identifies bruises or change in personality with a learner which is out of character.
- IT identify web searches on computer equipment for self-harm or who to ask for help due to cohesive behaviour.
- A member rings in and asks for help in paying for membership and mentions they do not control their own finances and will need to ask permission from a partner for the funds and is scared to do this.

The following guidance must be followed if staff or representatives receive an allegation of a child or vulnerable adult abuse or if a disclosure or allegation of abuse is being made to them by a child or vulnerable adult. Staff should:

- Listen to what is being said with an open mind
- Not ask probing or leading questions designed to get them to reveal more
- Never stop a person who is freely recalling significant events
- Check their understanding of the situation, without being investigative
- Explain that they cannot keep such information confidential, and that they have responsibility to report what has been said to CIH. It is important to record if the person has consented to having the information shared

- Make a note of the discussion, taking care to record the timing, setting and people present as well as what was said on the safeguarding concerns report form
- Ensure that any medical attention needed is addressed as a priority

CIH Safeguarding Concerns Report Form (see Appendix 1) should be used to record as much information as possible about the situation. This should include:

- What has happened
- Where and when
- Who was involved
- Any contact details
- What action, if any, has so far been taken

(c) Reporting information

Staff and representatives must inform either one of the appointed DSA or the DSL and share the completed safeguarding concerns report form. (HR maintain a list if unsure who this is).

Staff and representatives must pass on what information they have, even if the informant has only divulged a little or will not give their details. The information may join up with reports from someone else. All information should be treated as confidential, and staff and representatives must not talk about this information with anyone other than their agreed contact as rumour spreads quickly, can be damaging and might even hinder any investigation that may result. Any criminal offences should be reported immediately to the Police.

Referrals to relevant external agencies such as police and social services teams, should be made by the person who the safeguarding concern has been reported to whilst carrying out their job role, supported by their DSL representative, normally within 24 hours of an incident being reported.

This information should be passed to the DSL immediately (within five working days).

(d) Further action

The DSL/DSA may discuss any raised concerns with staff and/or representative who is reporting the possible safeguarding issue and decide if they feel there is a possible case. The DSL/DSA will not start a safeguarding investigation but will make sure if necessary that the relevant authorities have the information they need to decide themselves what to do next.

Either the DSA or DSL will call together the SP and they will review and decide on the next steps to take. They will treat all information received with complete discretion and will maintain as much confidentiality as possible whilst making sure that action is taken to safeguard a child or vulnerable adult. All information given will be treated seriously and with respect for the person providing it.

(e) Information sharing

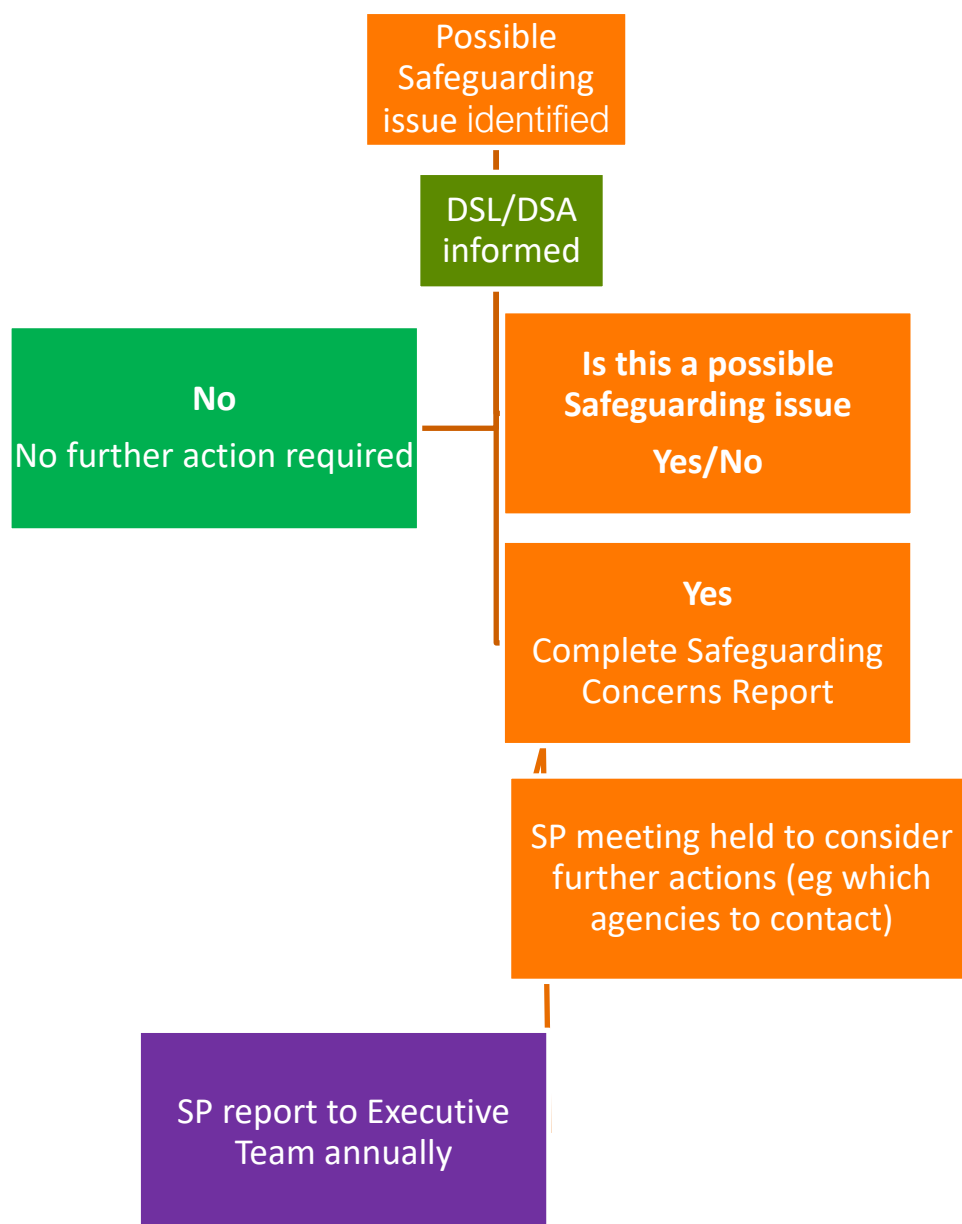
If the allegation could constitute a potential risk of abuse to a child or vulnerable adult, then CIH will **always** share the information with relevant agencies in order to protect the child or vulnerable adult. If there is insufficient information to enable a referral, then the reasons for this will be recorded.

CIH recognises its responsibility to protect the identity of anyone reporting suspected or actual abuse and no information will be made available externally without careful consultation and prior approval.

(f) Monitoring/Reporting

The SP will write a report detailing the number of concerns raised, the decisions made and suggestions on improvements to the policy and training for CIH staff and representatives. The report will be issued to the Executive team annually. The report will not include personal information on concerns but where relevant will contain an overview of the types of concerns being raised. These will be analysed to address areas of improvement within CIH.

8. Safeguarding process



Appendix 1

CIH Safeguarding Concerns Report Form



Chartered
Institute of
Housing

Name of Child/Vulnerable Adult (If known)		Age and DOB (if known)	
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Are you reporting (please tick as app):

- your own concerns
 - or
 - concerns raised with you by someone else
- If so, by whom?

Description of what has prompted concerns about a child/vulnerable adult (please include details of any specific incident, date, time)

Have you or anyone else spoken with the child/vulnerable adult and/or parents/carers/other adult, **OR** with the person against whom the allegation has been made **OR** your manager.

If so with whom have you spoken and what was discussed and when?

To whom reported		Date and time	
Your name			
Your position			

Outcome

Is this safeguarding concern?	Yes (please record reason)	No (please record reason)
Action taken	Detail all actions taken (including SP meeting date, outcome of meeting, organisations contacted outside of CIH with date/time)	
Executive team informed	Date Executive team notified via annual report	

Possible agencies

There are various agencies and organisations you can contact depending on the nature of the situation.

1. Police - If there is an immediate risk of harm or danger, contacting your local police is crucial.
2. Safeguarding – a website in Warwickshire containing relevant links to organisations for referral if appropriate <https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/>

Other relevant CIH policies

- CIH Domestic abuse policy
- CIH Dignity at work policy
- CIH Data protection policy

Appendix 1

Example Safeguarding Scenarios

E is a learner undertaking a Level 3 qualification and they work for a large housing association. She has told her assessor that she is struggling to complete her qualification work due to personal and home problems. She has confided in the assessor that her impending marriage has been called off and she has become homeless and had to move back in with her mum and stepdad. She is tearful when talking about this and she seems to be depressed and that she has had to take time off work. However, she is able to explain her issues and has some plans to get back on track.

Would this be a safeguarding issue? **No**

What action do you take?

Support the apprentice, with her consent talk to her manager to check they are supporting her, suggest an interruption to study?

S is 19 years' old completing an apprenticeship. During your Zoom sessions with her, you notice that she no longer has her camera on. She has also missed several scheduled sessions recently. She mentions that she is having 'personal problems' and seems stressed to you. She has not been submitting any work for 2 months now.

Is this a safeguarding issue? **Possibly**

What action do you take?

With the apprentice's consent, report your concerns to her manager. Also report this to CIH Safeguarding Lead. Further action may be needed depending on what comes from these reports.

H works for a large housing association and attends an event as part of their membership with CIH. H has confided in you that he is having some serious family issues. His manager has also told you that this is impacting on his work.

Is this a safeguarding issue? **Possibly**

What action do you take?

With the members consent, discuss what support can be offered with his manager. Also report this to CIH Safeguarding Lead. Further action may be needed depending on what comes from these reports.

G is a young 18-year-old learner, he rings you one day unexpectedly. He is very distressed and confused and asks for your help. He tells you he is in present danger from his stepdad.

Is this a safeguarding issue? **Yes**

What action do you take?

Report this to the police with the learner's consent or persuade them to ring the police. Report this to CIH Safeguarding Lead and the employer.