
LGBT Lincs Safeguarding Policy

Our policy

LGBT Lincs is a non profit organisation that works to improve the lives of parents who have children who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Intersex or Transgender. We believe that every individual who accesses our services should be treated with dignity and respect, have their choice respected and not be forced to do anything against their will. LGBT Lincs is committed to safeguarding [1] all parents and their children coming into contact with the organisation, regardless of gender, orientation, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. Personnel want to act with responsibility and accountability in all our interactions, respectful of individual emotional and relational needs and need for privacy.

LGBT Lincs personnel come into direct and indirect contact with parents through delivery of a range of services. Some of these parents may be vulnerable [2] adults. Principally LGBT Lincs services are delivered to adults; however, there may be occasions when personnel may come into contact with children of parents. This policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all staff who, during the course of their employment have direct or indirect contact with children or vulnerable adults, or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare.

This policy applies to personnel under the remit of LGBT Lincs.

This vulnerable adult safeguarding policy statement will be available on the LGBT Lincs website.

An annual audit of safeguarding concerns, action taken and staff training and support will be conducted annually and safeguarding policy and procedures will be reviewed every three years or in the light of significant changes to best practice or legislation.

Date of last review	July 2015	Date of next review	July 2018
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For LGBT Lincs this means ...

1. ensuring **safe environments**, ensuring services are provided in safe environments and that sufficient safeguards are in place.
2. raising awareness of how and when to **signpost vulnerable adults** to appropriate services.
3. building a **culture** that values and respects all adults and modelling appropriate conduct in line with our values
4. setting out clear **roles and responsibilities** for safeguarding

We set out below the steps LGBT Lincs is taking and requires all LGBT Lincs personnel to take in order to safeguard vulnerable adults.

1. Personnel

At any meeting with parents at least one person will hold a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check which will be renewed every 2 years.

2. Safe environments

a. Safe environments

LGBT Lincs will ensure that all environments where services activities are delivered will not cause harm to vulnerable adults.

b. The media

Parent case studies are frequently used to support and illustrate the issues faced by parents. All material will be confidential and will not identify any individual.

LGBT Lincs's use of images on social media are limited to images in the public domain.

3. Signposting vulnerable adults to support_

Personnel come into contact with parents by phone and through face to face meetings. They may also interact with parents via online forums, social media and other written communication.

Some of these parents may be particularly vulnerable, experiencing distress (for example due to family conflict or experience of domestic violence) or have mental health issues. For the majority of these adults their situation will not be of a nature that requires a member of staff to report a concern. However LGBT Lincs believe it is important to recognise the vulnerability of these adults. LGBT Lincs does not have appropriate expertise to deal directly with these issues although our intervention may be helpful, nor do we provide counselling support, so it is vital that staff understand how to identify signs and signpost effectively.

LGBT Lincs will provide up to date signposting information for use by personnel which details organisations that can be contacted to support parents in a range of situations.

In addition parents will be able to download information, helping them through difficult situations.

4. Child and adult protection

Contact with children

Although LGBT Lincs personnel are encouraged not to meet with the children of the parents they support, there are a small number of situations where contact with children might occur including:

- parents bringing their children with them to interviews.
- visits to LGBT Lincs group meetings where children may be present.

Personnel will not be alone with a child face to face in any of the above situations.

It is LGBT Lincs's policy not to undertake home visits for example to carry out interviews for research.

Contact with vulnerable adults

LGBT Lincs has contact with parents either face to face, online, over the telephone and in writing. These situations include;

- Use of the parent helpline
- Focus group or engagement session
- Online – forums, online advice, website enquiry form and other social media

Awareness of LGBT Lincs's policies

All personnel are required to read LGBT Lincs's *Safeguarding Policy* and to know their responsibilities in their role.

Alert to the signs of abuse

Our role in protecting vulnerable adults is to pick up cues that the child or adult may need protecting and pass this information to those who can assess the situation and act when required. In the event of being informed that harm could occur to the parent or to other persons LGBT Lincs personnel are to contact the **Lincolnshire County Council Safeguarding Adults Team on 01522 782155.**

Aware of duty to report concerns.

All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately (this may require a referral to children's services and / or emergencies, the Police). Personnel have a duty to report concerns in line with LGBT Lincs's procedures. Failure to comply with these responsibilities will be seen as a serious matter.

Confidentiality.

While LGBT Lincs personnel should be open to the possible abuse of vulnerable adults in all situations, we envisage that there will be very few instances where personnel will need to report adult protection concerns. The situations where this is most likely to happen and where personnel will be expected to act are:

- An adult has been assessed as being at high risk of suicide
- There is a significant risk that the adult will be seriously physically harm another person.

In respect of vulnerable adults all action, including referrals to Social Services (**Lincolnshire County Council Safeguarding Adults Team on 01522 782155**) and the police, must be subject to the consent of the service user. In every situation it will be assumed that a person can make their own decisions and action will only be taken in the absence of consent from the service user where;

- they or others are in physical danger
- after seeking advice from an appropriate agency you have been advised to report the concern as it is believed that the vulnerable adult is unable/incapable of making an informed decision for himself or herself.

Personnel should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to anyone wishing to tell them about something serious.

Aware of how and when to take action

All incidents should be recorded on the recording form (TBC) and passed to the Chair of LGBT Lincs. This form will be stored securely in compliance with relevant legislation.

Allegations of abuse or concerns raised against personnel will always be treated seriously. Where there is an allegation against LGBT Lincs personnel the Chair of Just Lincolnshire should be informed and a disciplinary investigation will be carried out. There may also be criminal (police) investigations.

5. Culture

a. Online forums and Facebook

LGBT Lincs works to ensure that our online forums and Facebook page are safe and supportive places where parents feel comfortable to express themselves and share their experiences.

While we encourage lively debate, we do not tolerate behaviour which makes other users feel uneasy or unable to contribute to the page. As such, we reserve the right to remove posts which are aggressive in tone, abusive towards other users or disruptive to how the forum or page operates. Racist, sexist, homophobic or bullying posts will be removed without delay. This is common practice and corresponds with Facebook's terms and conditions. The forum netiquette is discussed prior to parents joining the forum.

6. Definitions

[1] Safeguarding

The term 'safeguarding' refers to inward facing procedures such as awareness raising, reporting concerns, responding appropriately to issues of abuse and exploitation and preventing harm through sound recruitment and safe programming. (*organisation Commission's Strategy for dealing with safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Issues in Charities*, April 2012)

[2] Vulnerable adult

For the purpose of this policy a vulnerable adult is defined as

“anyone over the age of 18 who: is or may be in need of Community Care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself or is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation” *No Secrets*, DOH (2000).

People who may be included in a definition of a Vulnerable Person:

- People with learning disability
- People with physical disabilities
- People with sensory impairment
- People with mental health needs including dementia
- People who misuse substances of alcohol
- People who are physically ill or mentally frail

Service users outside these definitions may also be vulnerable due to low self-esteem, social exclusion, offending history, homelessness, domestic abuse, ethnicity, immigration status etc.