Obesity UK Volunteer Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

Obesity UK is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all individuals involved in our activities, especially vulnerable adults and children. This policy outlines the principles and procedures to ensure a safe and supportive environment for everyone associated with our charity.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:
- Protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults who participate in our activities.
- Provide volunteers with guidance on how to recognize and report safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure that all volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all volunteers, trustees, staff, and anyone working on behalf of Obesity UK.

4. Definitions

- Safeguarding: Protecting the health, wellbeing, and human rights of individuals, ensuring they live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.
- Vulnerable Adult: A person aged 18 or over who may need community care services due to disability, age, or illness and is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.
- Child: A person under the age of 18.

5. Legal Framework

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Care Act 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- The Charity Commission's safeguarding guidance

6. Principles

- The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount.
- All individuals, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have the right to equal protection from harm.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- A safe environment is promoted where everyone feels valued and respected.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Volunteers

- Attend safeguarding training provided by Obesity UK.
- Understand and adhere to the safeguarding policy.
- Report any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Lead on safeguarding matters within the charity.
- Ensure all volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training.
- Handle and report safeguarding concerns to the relevant authorities.
- Maintain up-to-date records of all safeguarding concerns and actions taken.

Trustees and Management

- Ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and reviewed annually.
- Support the DSL in their role.
- Promote a culture where safeguarding is taken seriously.

8. Safeguarding Procedures

Recognizing Abuse

Abuse can take many forms, including:
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Financial abuse

Volunteers should be aware of the signs of abuse, which may include unexplained injuries, changes in behavior, withdrawal, fear, anxiety, or a reluctance to engage.

Reporting Concerns

If a volunteer has a safeguarding concern, they should:
- Report the concern to the DSL as soon as possible.

- Record the concern accurately and factually.
- Maintain confidentiality and share information only with the relevant authorities.

Responding to Disclosures

If someone discloses a safeguarding concern:
- Listen carefully and do not interrupt.
- Do not ask leading questions.
- Reassure the individual that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
- Inform them that the information will be shared with the appropriate authorities to ensure their safety.

9. Confidentiality

All safeguarding concerns and information should be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Information should be shared only with those who need to know to protect the individual at risk.

10. Training and Support

Obesity UK is committed to providing regular safeguarding training for all volunteers. This includes:
- Induction training for new volunteers.
- Regular refresher courses.
- Access to additional resources and support.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains up-to-date and effective. Feedback from volunteers and staff will be considered in the review process.

12. Contact Information

For any safeguarding concerns, please contact:

Alison Lake
alison.lake@obesityuk.org.uk

Conclusion

Obesity UK takes the safeguarding of all individuals seriously. By adhering to this policy, we ensure a safe environment for everyone involved with our charity. Thank you for your commitment to safeguarding and for helping to create a safe and supportive community.