

Selig Safeguarding Adults Policy

Policy developed by	Policy approved or reviewed by	Date policy approved or reviewed	Policy to be reviewed by	Date for next review
Selig Business Manager and HiA UK	Selig Board of Trustees	May 2018	Selig Board of Trustees	September 2018
Selig Business Manager and HiA UK	Selig Board of Trustees	September 2018	Selig Business Manager	September 2019
Selig Charity Manager and HiA UK	Selig Charity Manager	September 2019	Selig Charity Manager	September 2020
Selig Charity Manager and HiA UK	Selig Charity Manager	September 2020	Selig Charity Manager	September 2021
Selig Charity Manager and HiA UK	Selig Charity Manager	September 2021	Selig Board of Trustees	September 2022
Selig Charity Manager and HiA UK	Selig Charity Manager	September 2022	Selig Charity Manager	September 2023
Selig Charity Manager and HiA UK	Selig Charity Manager	September 2023	Selig Board of Trustees	September 2024

Policy Statement and Purpose

Selig takes its responsibilities to the people we work with very seriously. We also recognise a particular responsibility for adults at risk of abuse or neglect. We recognise that many of those we work with might be 'at risk'. Policies and procedures have been developed to assist staff, volunteers, trustees and those we work with. By acting on and reporting at the earliest possible opportunity any suspected abuse, we can safeguard the adults that we work with. Depending upon the nature of services or the requirements of partner agencies, our policy may be supplemented by local procedures.

Which adults are 'at risk'? An 'adult' means a person aged 18 years or over. Our definition of an 'adult at risk' follows that for a 'vulnerable adult' in 'who decides?' (Lord Chancellor's Department, 1997): a person: "who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation".

What constitutes abuse? The term 'abuse' can be subject to wide interpretation. The following is used as a starting point: "Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons". Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal, or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

There are many kinds of abuse, including:

- Physical abuse, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions
- Sexual abuse, including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult, young person or child has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting
- Psychological abuse, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks
- Financial or material abuse, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
- Neglect and acts of omission, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating
- Discriminatory abuse, including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment
- Domestic abuse and violence, including controlling, threatening or coercive behaviour. This can encompass but not be limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. It also includes honour-based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. Domestic abuse is not a 'one-off' occurrence but is frequent and persistent
- Professional abuse, the misuse of power and abuse of trust by professionals, the failure to act, poor care or neglect
- Spiritual abuse, a form of emotional and psychological abuse characterised by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context

Responsibilities of Staff and Volunteers

- Employees and volunteers have a responsibility to be aware of and alert to signs that all is not well with someone that we work with. However, they are not responsible for diagnosing, investigating or providing a therapeutic response to abuse
- It is important to keep an open mind and consider what is known about the person and their circumstances. No action should be taken without discussion with management and/or trustees
- Our residents and tenants should be encouraged to make use of the empowerment we provide to promote their independence, safety, social inclusion and to prevent homelessness. We must always plan and agree to any proposed empowerment and /or support
- If a vulnerable person discloses that they are being abused or if any service user discloses that they are involved in the abuse of a vulnerable person, action must proceed urgently and without delay
- There may be circumstances when a volunteer or member of staff suspects that a vulnerable person is being abused or neglected. If this is the case, they should raise their concerns immediately with staff/management/trustees
- In all cases of suspected abuse, the manager and staff member should discuss whether issues relevant to different cultures and lifestyles have any bearing
- Always record in writing concerns and discussions about a vulnerable adult's welfare using our incident reporting form

- Ensure that you reach clear and explicit recorded agreement about who will be taking what action, or that no further action will be taken
- A staff member or volunteer informed of abuse should remind the service user that the charity cannot guarantee confidentiality where a vulnerable person is at risk of abuse or further abuse
- Volunteers should consult with the staff member coordinating their service before taking any action. The safeguarding officer in the organisation should also be informed immediately of any disclosure
- In circumstances where a service user declines to disclose, despite some work having been done towards disclosing, it may be necessary to report the alleged abuse without the service user's agreement
- In these circumstances, a service user must be notified in advance of the decision to report to social services
- It is important for staff and volunteers to make written records of any incidents or concerns that they have as soon as possible. It is also important to make a record of conversations with the adult at risk using the same language they used, especially names used for body parts or sexual acts
- The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the lead agency with responsibility for coordinating a response to allegations or concerns of abuse. All referrals should be made by staff in consultation with their professional helpline
- If the MASH Team considers that our concern is not a safeguarding issue, we need to pass the concern on to Customer First
- If we have concerns about the welfare, capacity or safety of someone we work with (that is, concerns that are not safeguarding), we need to contact Customer First
- Staff should immediately contact Customer First if the vulnerable person is at risk of serious physical harm, or a serious criminal act has taken place, and evidence will need to be kept safe
- Staff should contact Customer First within 24 hours if it relates to a specific incident which is, or may be still going on, or may happen again or within 7 days if it is a more general concern, which does not indicate immediate harm
- We will support employees and volunteers if MASH or Customer First need further involvement from our staff following a report of abuse. A member of our management team will liaise with MASH/Customer First and discuss with them the nature of their needs and how they might be met
- Employees and volunteers may be subject to abuse allegations. We will offer support in these circumstances. We will assist MASH/Customer First in their investigation. As a result of the investigations, the disciplinary procedure may be implemented. Any allegation of abuse made against a church volunteer must be immediately referred to that church's safeguarding officer
- Confidentiality is central to our work. The attention of all staff and volunteers is drawn to our confidentiality and data protection policies. Discussions about those we work with, staff, volunteers and those who we may routinely meet are kept to those who need to be involved or have a direct involvement with the person whose information is being shared
- It is important that all prospective employees or volunteers who will be working alone with adults at risk are vetted thoroughly before being employed. This means as well as references being checked, there may also be a requirement for offences to be declared and a Disclosure and Barring Service DBS check to be undertaken

- It may be very hard for a worker to report a concern about a colleague to a line manager but the safety and protection of the adult at risk must be the priority in any decision that is made
- Domestic Violence is a form of abuse that many of those we work with may have experienced in their past. It warrants special attention and handling. When reporting incidents of domestic violence, we must remember that on average there will have been at least 7 prior incidents before the victim has been able to report any incidents. This means that although we would want to (and always seek to) gain the victims permission to report, if in discussion with the safeguarding officer, it is considered that for the victim's safety and wellbeing reporting may be necessary without permission.

Safeguarding Contacts

If you are worried that one of our guests or tenants is at immediate risk, call 999

Selig's safeguarding lead is Julia Hancock – Charity Manager:

07900 073 721 (office hours)

julia@selig.org.uk

Selig's safeguarding trustee is Elizabeth Whitehead:

e.whitehead@eln.ltd

Customer First is our point of contact – they will refer us to the MASH helpline as needed:

0808 800 4005 (24/7)