

# **Safeguarding Policy (Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults)**

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## **Contents**

|                                                                       |          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>1. Policy Statement.....</b>                                       | <b>4</b> |
| <b>2. Policy objectives .....</b>                                     | <b>4</b> |
| <b>3. What is meant by abuse? .....</b>                               | <b>4</b> |
| <b>4. Safeguarding children and young people .....</b>                | <b>5</b> |
| <b>5. Safeguarding adults .....</b>                                   | <b>5</b> |
| <b>6. Corporate responsibilities for safeguarding .....</b>           | <b>5</b> |
| <b>7. Confidential reporting policy .....</b>                         | <b>6</b> |
| <b>8. Recruitment and selection.....</b>                              | <b>7</b> |
| <b>9. Induction and training .....</b>                                | <b>7</b> |
| <b>10. Commissioning and procurement.....</b>                         | <b>7</b> |
| <b>11. What to do if you have a concern.....</b>                      | <b>7</b> |
| <b>12. Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy .....</b> | <b>8</b> |

## Version control

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The purpose of this policy is to outline Transport for the North's policy and approach in relation to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

## **1. Policy Statement**

Transport for the North (TfN) believes that every child, young person and adult, regardless of their background, age, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, ethnicity or religious belief, should be able to participate in a safe society without any fear, violence, abuse, bullying, discrimination or exploitation.

All TfN employees, elected members and contractors, particularly those who come into contact with, or who share information about, children, young people or adults in the course of their work - but not exclusively so - have a duty of care to safeguard the welfare of the most vulnerable people young or old.

Other TfN policies linked with this policy include Code of Conduct, IT Policy, Recruitment & Selection, Confidential Reporting, Disciplinary, Dignity at Work and Diversity.

## **2. Policy objectives**

This policy defines the roles and responsibilities for all employees, managers, and elected members in the safeguarding of children, young people and adults. TfN will:

- Promote safeguarding as everybody's business; ensuring employees, managers and elected members understand their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding
- Where required implement clear guidance to ensure TfN meets its obligations towards the safeguarding of children, young people and adults
- Ensure its services and activities are planned and delivered in a way which seeks to safeguard children, young people and adults; and employees are able to conduct themselves safely
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## **3. What is meant by abuse?**

The list below is taken from examples in the Care Act 2014 and the Children Act 2004; it is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but, an illustrative guide as to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to safeguarding concerns.

- Physical abuse – such as assault, misuse of medication, restraint and inappropriate physical sanctions
- Domestic violence – such as psychological, physical, sexual and financial abuse
- Sexual abuse – such as rape, assault, sexual harassment, exploitation, sexual photography, and sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting
- Psychological or emotional abuse – such as threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, intimidation, verbal abuse, cyber bullying and isolation

- Financial or material abuse – such as theft, fraud, internet scamming and coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs
- Modern slavery – such as human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude
- Discriminatory abuse – such as harassment because of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion
- Threat from terrorism – TfN has a duty under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 to have ‘due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’,

#### **4. Safeguarding children and young people**

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. ‘Children’ therefore means ‘children and young people’ throughout. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate for children and young people, does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 2004.

Whilst local authorities and care professionals play a lead role, safeguarding children and protecting them from harm is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone within TfN who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

#### **5. Safeguarding adults**

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited, this includes adults who has a need for care or support, are experiencing, or who are at risk of, abuse or neglect.

Again, whilst local authorities and care professionals play a lead role, safeguarding vulnerable adults and protecting them from harm is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone within TfN who comes into contact with a vulnerable adult has a role to play.

#### **6. Corporate responsibilities for safeguarding**

TfN’s Chief Executive has overarching responsibility for ensuring that there are effective safeguarding arrangements for children, young people and adults and that there are where required processes and guidance in place; that they are implemented with effective corporate governance arrangements; and that all statutory requirements are met.

TfN’s Human Resources Team will ensure appropriate and up-to-date policies are in place in relation to recruitment practices, including criminal records checks (where applicable) and verification of references. Specifically, they will:

- Annually review and update TfN policies and guidance as appropriate to reflect children, young people and vulnerable adults’ protection needs

- Oversee disciplinary investigations if any concerns, disclosures or allegations of abuse by a staff member are made
- Ensure robust processes are in place for undertaking the relevant checks which form part of the recruitment and selection process e.g. criminal records, right to work etc
- Make arrangements, where required, for general safeguarding training to be available for all groups of employees.

Line managers will, where required:

- Ensure they fully understand the safeguarding policy
- Ensure all employees in their area receive appropriate safeguarding information commensurate with the responsibilities of their role
- Ensure any safeguarding responsibilities are highlighted during team meetings, catch-ups and performance and development reviews
- Ensure any concerns reported to them regarding safeguarding issues are passed to the Human Resources Team for action.

All employees (including contractors) will, where required:

- Ensure they undertake any awareness raising/training appropriate to the level and responsibilities of their role
- Ensure they raise concerns or allegations of abuse and neglect without delay to the Human Resources Team for action
- Ensure they act in a way which protects them against false allegations of abuse as far as possible in accordance with this policy.

Elected Members:

All elected members have an important part to play to ensure that TfN is discharging its statutory responsibility to safeguard vulnerable children, young people and adults.

Scrutiny Committee offers a key way in which elected members can fulfil their safeguarding responsibility, by giving them the opportunity to ask searching questions and assure themselves that safeguarding processes are working properly.

## **7. Confidential reporting policy**

This policy provides the means to raise matters of concern regarding safeguarding issues related to the work environment. It is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within TfN which are in the public interest and makes it clear that employees can come forward and express their concerns without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage.

If an employee has a concern which they believe is in the public interest to raise, they may do so either in writing or verbally with the Head of Human Resources, Head of Legal Services, Business Capabilities Director or the Chief Executive (although specific safeguarding concerns must also be raised via the channels referenced in this policy).

## **8. Recruitment and selection**

In order to ensure that children, young people and adults are protected, TfN will make sure that all employees are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. In particular, TfN will ensure that the following checks are satisfactorily completed before a person takes up a position within the TfN:

- Check the applicant is who they claim to be - e.g. having sight of an applicant's birth certificate, passport and/or driving licence
- Check the applicant has the right to work in the UK
- Check the applicant's academic qualifications are genuine
- Check that satisfactory professional and character references have been received and verified for the applicant
- Check the applicant's previous employment history has been examined and any gaps have been satisfactorily accounted for
- Undertake a criminal-records check at the right level
- Check the applicant is registered with the relevant professional body and there are no active restrictions against them (where applicable).

This also applies to agency workers who will be working or coming into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

## **9. Induction and training**

All new employees will receive induction training which should include how to report safeguarding concerns within the appropriate levels of confidentiality. Where required, employees will be expected to undertake awareness raising/training on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults at a level appropriate to their role.

## **10. Commissioning and procurement**

TfN will ensure that all relevant externally procured and commissioned services have a safeguarding policy in place, and that service specifications include a section on safeguarding and a requirement to be compliant with Section 11 of the Children Act 2004, where this is required.

Procurement and commissioning will ensure that safeguarding principals are embedded for all contracts, especially those who come in to contact with children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

## **11. What to do if you have a concern**

Any employee with concerns regarding the safety of an individual, or the behaviour of colleagues towards a child or adult should contact TfN's Human Resources Team immediately. If a child or adult is in immediate danger 999 should be used to contact the emergency services.

## **12. Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy**

TfN's Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required. This will include an on-going review of guidance, both nationally and locally, to ensure that TfN meets requirements to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults, and there are appropriate protocols in place.

[info@transportforthenorth.com](mailto:info@transportforthenorth.com)  
0161 244 0888

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Transport for the North  
Level 6, Town Hall Extension,  
Lloyd Street  
Manchester  
M2 5DB