



Alive Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures

October 2021

Aims of the Policy and Procedures

In line with Charity Commission guidance issued in December 2017, and March 2018, Alive and its trustees recognise the importance of:

- providing a safe and trusted environment that safeguards anyone who comes into contact with the charity, including beneficiaries, staff and volunteers
- setting an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding, so that it is safe for those affected to come forward and report incidents and concerns with the assurance they will be handled sensitively and properly
- having adequate safeguarding policies, procedures and measures to protect people
- providing clarity as to how incidents and allegations will be handled should they arise, including reporting to the relevant authorities.

This document aims to ensure that all staff and volunteers of Alive are aware of their responsibilities to protect all adults at risk whom they may come across in their duties for the organisation and that they follow clear procedures with the aim of protecting those at risk from harm and of safeguarding their wellbeing.

Context

Alive deliver a range of interactive workshops, projects and activities for older people in care homes, day centres and other care and community settings in the South and South West of England. Activities include music and poetry, reminiscence, dance and movement, social and therapeutic horticulture, art appreciation, practical art and energising activities. Our beneficiaries include adults who are very old, people living with dementia, physical and/or learning disabilities, brain injury or degenerative illnesses such as Parkinson's and motor neurone disease.

Principles of the Policy

The policy recognises the following principles:

- It is every adult's right to live in safety and to be free from abuse or fear of abuse from others.

- It is every adult's right to live an independent life based on self-determination and personal choice, and to be treated with dignity and respect at all times.
- It is the responsibility of Alive to help prevent the abuse of vulnerable adults. This will be achieved by raising awareness, empowering people to make their own decisions and putting safeguards in place.
- It is the duty of all Alive staff and volunteers to protect vulnerable adults with whom they have contact from abuse, and to be alert to the possibility of abuse.
- When a situation is discovered in which a vulnerable adult reports, or is thought to be at risk of, abuse, then Alive will react quickly in a co-ordinated manner to help them to overcome these difficulties.
- Alive recognises that people are discriminated against on the basis of race, culture, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation. We are committed to working with vulnerable adults in a positive manner that values them as individuals and puts their safety and welfare paramount.

Definitions and Recognition of Abuse

The characteristics of adult abuse can take a number of forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s). Victims may be too afraid or too embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach with their worries. There may be some situations where victims are unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this information to others. Furthermore, abuse may be intentional or unintentional.

The Care Act 2014's statutory guidance lists 10 types of abuse but states that local authorities should not limit their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect to those types, or the different circumstances in which they can take place.

These are:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological / emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Self-neglect

Abuse can consist of a single or repeated act(s); it can be intentional or unintentional or result from a lack of knowledge. It can affect one person, or multiple individuals. Professionals and others should

be vigilant in looking beyond single incidents to identify patterns of harm. In order to see these patterns, it is important that information is recorded and appropriately shared.

The main types of abuse include the following.: Please click [here](#) to see Appendix 1 of the Regional Safeguarding Adults Joint Multi Agency Policy (June 2019) for detailed information on abuse types and indicators:

- **Physical abuse:** Hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, punching; rough / inappropriate handling and other forms of assault that may not leave visible signs but may cause pain or discomfort; biting, deliberate burns, scalding; physical punishments / beating; inappropriate or unlawful use of restraint; making someone purposefully uncomfortable (e.g. opening a window and removing blankets); stabbing, strangulation, poisoning and wounding and other forms of assault that cause serious injuries or death; involuntary isolation or confinement; withholding, inappropriately altering or administering medication or other treatments; forcible feeding or withholding food; restricting movement (e.g. tying someone to a chair).
- **Domestic Abuse:** The cross-governmental definition of this is 'any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviours, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality'. It can encompass but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; emotional abuse.
- **Sexual abuse:** Rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment; inappropriate looking or touching; sexual teasing or innuendo; sexual photography; subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts; indecent exposure and sexual assault; sexual acts to which the adult has not or could not consented to or was pressurised into consenting; offensive or suggestive sexual language or action. Signs can include changes in behaviour or physical discomfort.
- **Psychological abuse:** This is the denial of a person's human and civil rights including choice and opinion, privacy and dignity, and being able to follow one's own spiritual and cultural beliefs or sexual orientation. It includes preventing the adult from using services that would otherwise support them and enhance their lives. It also includes the intentional and/or unintentional withholding of information (e.g. information not being available in different formats/languages, etc.). It includes: lack of privacy or choice; denial of dignity; humiliation, threats, blaming; use of coercion; treating an adult as if they were a child; preventing stimulation or meaningful occupation or activities.
- **Financial or material abuse:** Theft, fraud, internet scamming; coercion in relation to financial affairs or arrangements, including in connections with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions; misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions and/or benefits; deceiving or manipulating a person out of money or property; withholding or misusing money, property or possessions.
- **Modern Slavery:** encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.
- **Discriminatory abuse:** Includes unequal treatment or verbal abuse based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- **Organisational or institutional abuse:** Run-down, over-crowded establishment; authoritarian management or rigid regimes; insufficient staff or high turnover resulting in poor quality care; abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using the service;

inappropriate use of restraints; lack of respect for dignity and privacy; failure to manage residents with abusive behaviour, not providing adequate food and drink, or assistance with eating; not offering choice or promoting independence; misuse of medication.

- **Neglect and acts of omission:** Failure to provide or allow access to food, shelter, clothing, heating, stimulation and activity, personal or medical care; failure to provide care in the way the person wants; failure to allow choice and preventing people from making their own decisions; failure to ensure appropriate privacy and dignity. Abuse may take the form of isolated incidents or pervasive ill treatment.
- **Self-neglect:** this covers a wide range of behaviour involving neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings. It includes behaviour such as hoarding, inability to maintain a socially and culturally accepted standard of self-care with the potential for serious consequences to the health and well-being of the individual and sometimes to their community.

Under the Care Act 2014, safeguarding duties apply to any adult who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of these needs) and;
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

The statutory guidance enshrines 6 principles of safeguarding:

1. Empowerment – presumption of person led decisions and informed consent
2. Prevention – it is better to take action before harm occurs
3. Proportionality – proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
4. Protection – support and representation for those in greatest need
5. Partnership – local solutions through services working in their communities
6. Accountability – accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

People who abuse:

- Are often well known to their victims, but can be strangers
- Might be a relative, partner, son or daughter, friend or neighbour, a paid or voluntary worker, or a health or social care worker
- Could be another vulnerable adult or service user
- May not realise they are abusing

Abuse can take place in a wide range of settings such as:

- The adult's own home
- A day centre or care home
- A hospital
- The workplace or an educational institution

The Care Act 2014

Part 14 Safeguarding, of the Government's Care and Support Guidance on sections 42 to 46 of the Care Act 2014, outlines the responsibilities of those working or volunteering with vulnerable adults. This guidance, which replaces the earlier No Secrets document, is available on the gov.uk website under Government/Publications/ CareAct and can be found [here](#). All Alive staff and volunteers must be familiar with this document.

Guidance produced in March 2015 in relation to the Care Act 2014 on the Social Care Institute for Excellence website distinguishes between poor care and potential safeguarding issues as follows:

Differentiating between poor care and potential safeguarding issues

Poor care

- A one-off medication error (although this could, of course, have very serious consequences).
- An incident of understaffing, resulting in a person's incontinence pad being unchanged all day.
- Poor-quality, unappetising food.
- One missed visit by a care worker from a home care agency.

Potential causes for concern

- A series of medication errors.
- An increase in the number of visits to A&E, especially if the same injuries happen more than once.
- Changes in the behaviour and demeanour of an adult with care and support needs.
- Nutritionally inadequate food.
- Signs of neglect such as clothes being dirty.
- Repeated missed visits by a home care agency.
- An increase in the number of complaints received about the service.
- An increase in the use of agency or bank staff.
- A pattern of missed GP or dental appointments.
- An unusually high or unusually low number of safeguarding concerns.

Potential safeguarding and protection risk areas:

We recognise working with vulnerable adults in a care home adults raises the following key risks:

- **Workshop Facilitators** – staff facilitating workshops including children must act appropriately, and should be fully trained and aware of safeguarding regulations and procedures, and their role and responsibilities regarding safeguarding
- **Falls and trips** – by nature, Alive's sessions can be energetic and full of life. Care Staff must inform Alive's facilitator if a resident will have mobility issues, or if their condition has changed or if their needs are not being met through the particular session.
- **Abuse of Alive staff** – at times, residents due to their nature of their illness can unfortunately become abusive towards others consequently one member of care home staff should always be present in the session to
- **Hazardous activities** – all activities undertaken in the workshop should be safe and inclusive for all participants. Facilitators are trained to be aware of trip and falls hazards and should adapt the session if it is not safe.

- **Media consent** – the sharing and use of images, videos, or any other digital material which includes adults participating in workshops.

Procedures

Designated Officers

Alive will appoint two Safeguarding Officers, who will have responsibility for ensuring that this policy is reviewed and updated annually, and that all responsibilities are met. They will also guide and advise staff and volunteers on their responsibilities under this policy, and on dealing with specific safeguarding issues as they arise.

The designated officers will be the Chief Executive of Alive and Alive's nominated Safeguarding Trustee / and Alive's Services Manager

The Safeguarding Officers will receive external training, updated 3-yearly or more frequently as required, and it is their responsibility to keep abreast of local authority guidelines in each area where Alive delivers services. The Safeguarding Officers are also responsible for updating this policy.

Recruitment and Induction

- On appointment, all staff and volunteers who may have direct contact with vulnerable adults will be subject to the appropriate level of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.
- Staff, sessional facilitators and volunteers receive training on appointment to ensure they are able to recognise abuse and are therefore alert to potential signs and symptoms. Long-serving staff may be asked to attend a refresher course at 3-yearly intervals.
- A log of safeguarding training undertaken will be kept by line-managers and recorded centrally.
- The Safeguarding Officers take responsibility for ensuring the organisation follows up-to-date best practice around safeguarding adults and prevention of abuse.
- A culture of openness is promoted within the organisation and efforts are made to ensure staff, sessional facilitators and volunteers feel able to discuss concerns within Alive.

Reporting Procedures

It is the responsibility of all staff, sessional facilitators and volunteers to be alert to, and recognise any signs of abuse or potential abuse, and act on any concerns which may arise. It is important that any allegations or suspicions of abuse are acted upon and reported as specified in this procedure.

If there is a serious risk to the vulnerable person which could involve injury or serious harm the Police must be contacted immediately. You must ensure the person is safe if the risk is immediate.

Remember. It is not Alive's responsibility to investigate the abuse. This is the responsibility of the local authority or the Police.

Doing nothing, ignoring what you've seen or heard and hoping you are wrong are not options. Here are some tips for how to handle the situation:

Do:

- Stay calm and try not to show if you are shocked
- If someone makes a disclosure of abuse to you, listen carefully, be sympathetic and reassure the person they have done the right thing in telling someone
- Tell the person that what they have told you will be taken seriously
- Tell the person you will do your best to support them. Clarify whether the abuse requires an urgent response.
- Ask the person just enough questions to establish what has happened and whether there is ongoing immediate danger.
- Ensure the person is safe and supported. If there is immediate danger, or if the vulnerable adult is seriously injured, call the emergency services on 999.
- Try not to touch things and don't clean anything up – you may be destroying evidence.

Don't:

- Press for more details – this is the job of the investigation. Asking for more than is necessary could jeopardise any criminal proceedings
- Contact the alleged abuser
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Pass on information to anyone who doesn't have a legitimate need to know
- Make judgements

Step 1

Any allegation, suspicion and incidence of abuse must be reported to the appropriate staff member (see below) by calling their mobile phone. This should be done immediately. Even if there is uncertainty, the concerns must be reported as soon as possible. A member of staff will take over responsibility from a volunteer if the volunteer is the first person to notice the abuse or potential abuse.

All areas:

Services Manager, Nicola Taylor: 0117 377 4756 / 07767 148774

Chief Executive, Isobel Jones: 0117 377 4756 / 07967 040956

Incidents should be reported to the Services Manager, as above, in the first instance

Step 2

The reporter of the abuse must record what they have observed, heard or any other information gained including; information to identify the person concerned, details of reason the abuse was suspected or observed or described, and anyone else was spoken to, what they said, and what action was taken. This information should be recorded on the Alive incident form (see Appendix 1 below) and sent to the Services Manager within 24 hours of the incident taking place. The Services Manager will take and log any further action necessary and keep the Chief Executive fully informed.

All staff, sessional facilitators and volunteers will be made aware of this responsibility.

Step 3

There must be agreement between the relevant Manager and member of staff, sessional facilitator or volunteer about what happens next. Where the concerns are unclear this may involve seeking more information.

There may be indications or statements that the matter is already under investigation. The concerns from Alive must still be reported to whoever is investigating as further information may assist this investigation.

All Managers will be made aware of this responsibility and will undertake training to ensure they are able to carry out this role. Managers are encouraged to seek further advice if required.

Step 4

The Services Manager and the Chief Executive have the responsibility for ensuring that the abuse or potential abuse is reported to the local authority without delay. Also, that all necessary steps have been taken to make sure the person is safe, and that the member of staff reporting the allegation is supported to continue their work and is clear about their responsibilities.

See Appendix 2 for a list of local authority safeguarding contact numbers.

Safeguarding Contacts

See Appendix 2 for a list of local authority safeguarding adults contacts. You will need to give the following information:

- Why you're concerned
- The vulnerable adult's name, age and address
- If anyone lives with them
- If they're getting help from any organisation
- Who may be doing the abuse

Regardless of the local authority, if a crime is suspected the police must also be contacted by telephoning 101 (or in an emergency, 999).

Allegations against Alive staff and volunteers

Any allegation concerning a member of Alive staff being a suspected perpetrator of abuse must be reported by the Chief Executive to the nominated Safeguarding Trustee, or in their absence, the Chair of Trustees. Further action, including the suspension of the member of staff concerned is to be agreed and the Board of Trustees has the responsibility for overseeing the action decided. Alive will provide full co-operation with any investigation by the Police or the local authority undertaken as a result of the allegation. The Board of Trustees may commission an external independent investigation following the statutory investigation to ensure lessons are learned from such an incident.

Central records

A record of all allegations of abuse and the outcome and action taken, together with the original notes, will be kept centrally by Safeguarding Officers who will be aware of this responsibility. Records will be kept in a confidential locked cabinet and/or in a secure area of Alive's HR drive.

'Whistleblowing'

It is acknowledged that there may be times where the staff 'witness' an incident, action or event that may give them cause for concern.

All staff are required to share any concerns in regard to any staff practices that compromise the safety of the adult to Alive's designated safeguarding officer. Any staff member who discloses a concern will be given assurance of confidentiality as far as practically possible, without jeopardy to any investigations by external authorities or our own investigation. Any staff member expressing a concern about their safety following a disclosure will be given all necessary support to enable them to continue in their role with security safely.

Code of Conduct

All staff working for Alive, in whatever role will adhere to Alive's Code of Conduct. Please See Appendix 3.

If it is found that a member of staff is not following the Code of Conduct above they will be subject to an internal investigation following Alive's disciplinary procedure.

Please see Appendix 4 for our Social Media Policy for how Alive staff should behave on-line.

Appendix 1

Alive Safeguarding Incident Form

You must report any allegation, suspicion, or incidence of abuse to the Services Manager / immediately **by phone**. Please refer to Alive's Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy for more information.

Please record what you observed and what action was taken on the form below and email or post it to the Services Manager within 24 hours.

Your name:
Name of care home / day centre/ other care setting:
Name of person affected:
Date and time of incident:
Where did the incident take place?



Please describe exactly what happened: (you can expand this box as needed)

Name(s) of any witnesses:

Please describe how you or a member of staff responded to the incident. (you can expand this box as needed)

Please describe any other action taken

Did you phone and then inform an Alive Manager of the incident by email or post? Y/N

If yes, name of person at Alive:

Your signature:

Date you completed this form:

Name of Safeguarding Officer / Manager receiving this form

Date received:

Action taken by Safeguarding Officer:

APPENDIX 2

Safeguarding Adults: contacts and phone numbers Updated October 2021

If it's an emergency call the Police on **999**

Local authority area:	Report concerns to:	Links / Notes
Bath & North East Somerset	Tel: 0300 247 0201	https://bristolsafeguarding.org/media/42651/20190625-final-joint-safeguarding-adults-policy.pdf
Bristol City Council	Tel: 0117 9222 700	https://bristolsafeguarding.org/media/42651/20190625-final-joint-safeguarding-adults-policy.pdf Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership https://bristolsafeguarding.org/adults/
Gloucestershire	Adult Help Desk Tel 01452 426868 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday <i>Or:</i> Emergency Duty Team 01452 614758	http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/article/104986/Report-suspected-abuse-safeguarding-adults-at-risk
North Somerset	Tel: 01275 888 801	https://bristolsafeguarding.org/media/42651/20190625-final-joint-safeguarding-adults-policy.pdf
South Gloucestershire	Tel: 01454 868 007	https://bristolsafeguarding.org/media/42651/20190625-final-joint-safeguarding-adults-policy.pdf

Appendix 3 Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct

1. *Principles*

As an adult working and representing Alive, whether as a member of staff or a volunteer – you have a responsibility to ensure that everyone, including staff and in particular children and vulnerable adults and children attending Alive’s activities, are protected from harm. It is the responsibility of each adult working and representing Alive to ensure that:

- their behaviour is appropriate at all times;
- they are not acting illegally
- they observe the rules established for the safety and security of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- they follow the procedures following suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse;
- they recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed; and
- in every respect, the relationships they form with the vulnerable adults and children in their activity are appropriate

All persons who wish to work with Alive must accept and understand this policy. They must also agree to put Alive’s policies on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults into practice.

2. *Meeting your responsibilities*

To give positive guidance the Code of Conduct (below) provides a list of 'do's and don'ts' to help you ensure that:

- the welfare of vulnerable adults and/or children for whom you are working with is safeguarded;
- you avoid compromising situations or opportunities for misunderstandings or allegations.

2. *Code of conduct*

- **DO** put this code into practice at all times;
- **DO** treat everyone with dignity and respect;
- **DO** respect everyone’s rights and do not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, colour, disability, sexuality, age, marital status, occupation or political opinion
- **Do** listen to everyone in the meeting or activity;
- **DO** set an example you would wish others to follow;
- **DO** treat all people equally - show no favouritism;
- **DO** dress appropriately for the activity;
- **DO** be on time for all activities and meetings;
- **DO** plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least are within sight and hearing of others;
- **DO** follow recommended adult/young people ratios for meetings and activities;
- **DO** respect the right to personal privacy of a vulnerable adult or child

- **DO** avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust, *eg*: a sexual relationship with a young person or vulnerable adult over the age of consent;
 - **DO** allow vulnerable adults and children to talk about any concerns they may have;
 - **DO** encourage others to challenge any attitudes or behaviours they do not like;
 - **DO** avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour, *eg*: tantrums and crushes;
 - **DO** follow *Alive's* 'no alcohol' guidance when working;
 - **DO** make everyone aware of *Alive's* procedures for safeguarding children, and vulnerable adults;
 - **DO** remember this code even at sensitive moments, *eg*: when responding to bullying, bereavement or abuse;
 - **DO** keep other members of staff/volunteers informed of where you are and what you are doing;
 - **DO** remember someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned;
 - **DO** take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer immediately.
 - **DO** follow our social media policy
 - **DO** follow all current health and safety policy and guidelines
- **DO NOT** trivialise abuse;
 - **DO NOT** form a relationship with a member of staff, child or vulnerable adult that is an abuse of trust;
 - **DO NOT** engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact - physical, verbal, sexual;
 - **DO NOT** make suggestive remarks or threats to a member of staff or vulnerable adult or child, even in fun;
 - **DO NOT** use inappropriate language - writing, phoning, email or internet;
 - **DO NOT** let allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse go unreported;
 - **DO NOT** just rely on your good name to protect you.

If there are any concerns regarding a Member of Staff's behaviour, this must be reported to the Chief Executive, or to the Chair of Trustees if it concerns the Chief Executive Officer. All complaints raised will be fully considered and, where necessary, investigated formally under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Appendix 4 Social Media Policy

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A guide for staff on using social media to promote the work of Alive and in a personal capacity

Date of last review: 13/2/2020

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. Alive will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Introduction

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Why do we use social media?

Social media is essential to the success of communicating Alive's work. It is important for some staff to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise the profile of Alive's work.

Why do we need a social media policy?

The difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred on social media, particularly if you're discussing issues relating to Alive's work. While we encourage the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which we require everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy is intended for all *staff members of all levels, volunteers and trustees* and applies to content posted on both an *Alive* device and a personal device. Before engaging in work-related social media activity, staff must read this policy.

Setting out the social media policy

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of Alive and the use of social media by staff in both a professional and personal capacity. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help staff support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the charity and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

Internet access and monitoring usage

There are currently no access restrictions to any of our social media sites in the Alive office. You are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of personal social media activity during your lunch breaks. But usage should not be excessive and interfere with your duties.

Point of contact for social media

Our CEO is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to the CEO. Currently, the PALS project manager and volunteer coordinator are the only other staff members who can post content on Alive's official channels without the permission of the CEO.

Which social media channels do we use?

Alive uses the following social media channels:

Facebook
Twitter
Instagram

Guidelines

Using Alive's social media channels — appropriate conduct

1. The CEO is responsible for setting up and managing Alive's social media channels. Only those authorised to do so by the CEO will have access to these accounts.
2. The CEO and her support team will put up content in working hours during the week and at weekends when required.
3. Be an ambassador for our brand. Staff should ensure they reflect Alive's values in what they post and use our tone of voice. Our brand guidelines set out our tone of voice that all staff should refer to when posting content on Alive's social media channels.
4. Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for Alive and accurately reflects Alive's agreed position.
5. Bring value to our audience(s). Answer their questions, help and engage with them
6. Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.
7. Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate. If the comments are negative or relate the unsatisfactory service or conduct on the behalf of Alive, refer the comment to the CEO before responding.
8. If staff outside of the digital team wish to contribute content for social media, whether non-paid for or paid for advertising, they should speak to the digital team about this.
9. Staff shouldn't post content on Alive's page about supporters or service users without their written consent. If staff are sharing information about supporters, service users or third-party organisations, this content should be clearly labelled so our audiences know it has not come directly from Alive. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, staff must ensure they have the written consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media. Facilitators or staff should not be posting images from

activity sessions they have run on their own personal social media. They can provide content to members of the team who are able to post online but must not be put on their own accounts.

10. Always check facts. Staff should not automatically assume that material is accurate and should take reasonable steps where necessary to seek verification, for example, by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.

11. Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.

12. Staff should refrain from offering personal opinions via Alive's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about Alive's position on a particular issue, please speak to the CEO

13. Staff should not encourage people to break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.

14. Staff should not set up other Facebook groups or pages, Twitter accounts or any other social media channels on behalf of Alive. This could confuse messaging and brand awareness. By having official social media accounts in place, the Alive can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

16. Alive is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we can't tell people how to vote.

17. If a complaint is made on Alive's social media channels, staff should seek advice from the CEO before responding. If they are not available, then staff should speak to the Chair of Trustees.

18. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the charity's reputation. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting can be detrimental to the charity.

The CEO regularly monitors our social media spaces for mentions of Alive so we can catch any issues or problems early.

If any staff outside of the Alive become aware of any comments online that they think have the potential to escalate into a crisis, whether on Alive's social media channels or elsewhere, they should speak to the CEO immediately.

Use of personal social media accounts — appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflicts might arise. Alive staff are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with Alive's values and policies, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive Alive. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Alive. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about Alive's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent Alive's positions, policies or opinions."

2. Staff who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at Alive should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the **CEO**. Similarly, staff who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for Alive should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the CEO.
3. Those in senior management, and specialist roles where they are well known in their field of expertise, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing Alive's view.
4. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with Alive and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the *general public, colleagues, partners and funders*.
5. Please don't approach high profile people from your personal social media accounts to ask them to support the charity, as this could hinder any potential relationships that are being managed by the CEO. This includes asking for retweets about the charity.
If you have any information about high profile people that have a connection to our cause, or if there is someone who you would like to support the charity, please speak to the CEO to share the details.
7. If a staff member is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to Alive they should talk to the CEO immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.
8. Alive is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing Alive staff are expected to hold Alive's position of neutrality. Staff who are politically active in their spare time need to be clear in separating their personal political identity from Alive and understand and avoid potential conflicts of interest.
9. Never use Alive logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos should be requested from the CEO.
10. Always protect yourself and the charity. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully. When you are using social media sites at work, it is important that you do so safely.
11. Think about your reputation as well as the charity's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.
12. We encourage staff to share tweets and posts that we have issued. When online in a personal capacity, you might also see opportunities to comment on or support Alive and the work we do. Where appropriate and using the guidelines within this policy, we encourage staff to do this as it provides a human voice and raises our profile. However, if the content is controversial or misrepresented, please highlight this to the CEO who will respond as appropriate.
13. Facilitators or staff should not be posting images from activity sessions they have run on their own personal social media. They can provide content to members of the team who are able to post online but must not be put on their own accounts.

Further guidelines

Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether staff are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not allow themselves to be brought into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

Copyright law

It is critical that all staff abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

Confidentiality

Any communications that staff make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only or information that Alive is not ready to disclose yet. For example, a news story that is embargoed for a particular date.

Discrimination and harassment

Staff should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official Alive's social media channel or a personal account. For example:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- using social media to bully another individual, either publicly or privately.
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content

Lobbying Act

Charities are legally allowed to campaign to bring about a change in policy or law to further their organisational purpose. In most cases, spending on charity campaigns that are in accordance with charity law will not be regulated under electoral law. However, the Lobbying Act, which was passed in January 2014, states that during national elections (known as regulated periods) spending on campaigning activities may be regulated.

Charities which spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, during the regulated period, need to register with the Electoral Commission. To abide by the Lobbying Act, campaigning activities on social media must not be seen as intending to influence people's voting choice. During these periods, all campaigning activity will be reviewed by the CEO.

Use of social media in the recruitment process

Recruitment should be carried out in accordance with the Recruitment Policy and associated procedures and guidelines. Any advertising of vacancies should be done by the CEO and the recruiting Line Manager.

There should be no systematic or routine checking of candidate's online social media activities during the recruitment process, as conducting these searches might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics, such as religious beliefs or sexual orientation, played a part in a recruitment decision. This is in line with Alive's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. For example, Facebook. However, if a staff member considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to their line manager immediately.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, staff should ensure the online relationship with Alive follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Staff should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online, and given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. Staff should also ensure that the site itself is suitable for the young person and Alive's content and other content is appropriate for them. Please refer to Safeguarding Policy.

Responsibilities and beach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of Alive is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. For staff, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to our HR Policy] for further information on disciplinary procedures. Staff who are unsure about whether something they propose to do on social media might breach this policy, should seek advice from the CEO.

Public Interest Disclosure

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, if a staff member releases information through Alive's social media channels that is considered to be in the interest of the public, Alive's Whistleblowing Policy must be initiated before any further action is taken.