Athena Mentors CIC

Safeguarding Adults At Risk Policy

Organisation Name:	Athena Mentors CIC
Date Created:	01.05.2025
Review Date:	01.05.2027
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):	Genene Wilson
Deputy DSL(s):	most senior person onsite

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1. Introduction

It is expected that the existence of this policy, and in particular the limits of confidentiality, will be made clear to all staff of Athena Mentors CIC.
All Athena Mentors CIC staff must be given a copy of this policy and will be asked to sign the statement that they have received it, read and understood it, within one week of their service with Athena Mentors CIC, beginning.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- promote the welfare and dignity of all adults, ensuring they are safe and protected from harm, whilst engaging in any Athena Mentors CIC services
- have a clear policy of zero-tolerance of abuse within Athena Mentors CIC services
- outline the responsibility of Athena Mentors CIC staff to safeguard and protect all adults, engaging with Athena Mentors CIC services
- provide a framework of key arrangements and systems within Athena Mentors CIC, to ensure that any concerns regarding adult safety, or well-being is reported and addressed appropriately
- ensure Athena Mentors CIC services, comply with local policies and procedures and statutory requirements

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3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all adults aged 18 or over who:
    - engages with Athena Mentors CIC services
    - have needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
    - are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect
    - as a result of those needs, are unable to protect themselves from the risk or experience of abuse or neglect

The policy will also apply to:

- all Athena Mentors CIC staff (full-time, part-time, temporary, and volunteers)
- any third parties or contractors involved in the care of adults, attending Athena Mentors CIC services

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4. Policy Statement

Athena Mentors CIC is committed to promoting the welfare and dignity of all adults, especially those at risk of harm or abuse, regardless of; age, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, belief, sex, sexual orientation or disability, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave.

Athena Mentors CIC services can include:

- group counselling and psychotherapy
- creative therapeutic workshops (e.g., art and crafts projects)
- outdoor therapeutic activities (e.g., walk and talk)
- therapeutic residentials (e.g., holistic psychotherapeutic retreats)
- training workshops

Athena Mentors CIC and it's staff, are expected to uphold the rights, safety, and empowerment of adults at risk and will work in partnership with adults, families, Local Authority; Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB), West Midlands Police and any other statutory agencies in accordance with local and national safeguarding legislations and procedures.

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5. Legislative and Policy Context

This policy is underpinned by the following legislations:

- Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

This policy is underpinned by the following guidance:

- Safeguarding Adults Concern guide for staff and volunteers working with adults with care and support needs - (BASB)
- Safeguarding Adults Staff Competencies and Good Practice Learning Standards Guidance Toolkit (2021) - (BASB)
- Person In A Position Of Trust - PiPoT Framework - (BASB)

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6. Safeguarding Principles

Safeguarding principles include:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- the welfare of adults is paramount

Athena Mentors CIC adopts the six key principles of adult safeguarding from the Care Act 2014:

- **Empowerment** - Supporting individuals to make their own decisions and give informed consent
- **Prevention** - Taking action before harm occurs
- **Proportionality** - Responding appropriately to the level of risk
- **Protection** - Supporting those in greatest need
- **Partnership** - Working with local authorities, police, and health services
- **Accountability** - Transparency in safeguarding practices

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7. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for:

- taking responsibility for safeguarding adults at risk
- making referrals to BSAB, as needed
- maintaining secure safeguarding records

- ensuring all Athena Mentors CIC staff are trained, understand procedures and are equipped to handle safeguarding issues appropriately
- liaising with external relevant authorities, including BSAB, when necessary

All Athena Mentors CIC staff are responsible for:

- understanding safeguarding responsibilities
- attending reflective supervision and debriefs
- attending regular safeguarding training, to refresh their knowledge and stay updated on any changes in the safeguarding legislations or procedures
- maintaining appropriate professional boundaries, including; confidentiality and a duty of care
- acting in the best interests of adults, at all times
- reporting any concerns, allegations or disclosures about any adults' safety or well-being promptly, to the DSL
- notifying management if there are any concerns about the conduct of a colleague or another adult (Person In A Position Of Trust)
- notifying the BSAB regarding a concern, allegation or disclosure, when they cannot approach the DSL in situations (**12.3 Reporting and Recording Concerns**)

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8. Safer Recruitment

Athena Mentors CIC and it's staff, will follow safer recruitment practices, including:

- Disclosure & Barring (DBS) checks for all Athena Mentors CIC staff
- identity verification
- reference checks from previous employers or relevant authorities to ensure all Athena Mentors CIC staff are suitable to work with adults
- induction and training on safeguarding policies
- signed code of conduct agreements

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9. Types of Abuse

We are aware of the main categories of adult abuse, as outlined in the Care Act 2014:

- Physical
- Domestic violence
- Sexual
- Psychological and emotional
- Financial (or material abuse)
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory
- Organisational abuse
- Neglect and failure to act
- Self-neglect

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10. Safe Practice in Counselling & Psychotherapy Services

Safe Practice, within Athena Mentors CIC, counselling & psychotherapy services include:

- our therapeutic commitment to Athena Mentors CIC clients
- consent is obtained for all adults who engage in Athena Mentors CIC services, following the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and assuming capacity unless proven otherwise
- ensure that all adults, including those with specific needs, can communicate concerns or experiences of abuse in a way that is accessible to them
- thorough pre visit planning and risk assessments are completed for all Athena Mentors CIC activities, highlighting any adults at risk, with specific individual safeguarding concerns
- emergency contact details collected (register of names, addresses, next of kin and contact addresses and telephone numbers) for emergencies
- emergency protocols and consent is obtained for any necessary medical treatment and first aid, required in an emergency
- confidentiality is maintained but not when safety concerns arise
- safe use of any materials and equipment used for Athena Mentors CIC activities
- safe space, adapted for accessibility, for Athena Mentors CIC activities and workshops
- supervision at all times, during any Athena Mentors CIC activities, by a DBS checked Athena Mentors CIC staff member
- emotional support provided by the relevant therapeutic Athena Mentors CIC staff member, in case sessions evoke distress
- safeguarding sleeping arrangements for all Athena Mentors CIC staff, adults and families
- group size appropriate for safe facilitation
- clear boundaries established e.g. behavioural expectations, respect and confidentiality, are highlighted for all Athena Mentors CIC staff, adults and families
- emergency evacuation plans

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11. Staff Training

Athena Mentors CIC is committed to safeguarding the welfare of adults engaging with Athena Mentors CIC services. Therefore, all Athena Mentors CIC staff members will be provided with an induction and ongoing training (according to **15. Policy Review**), regarding safeguarding adults.

This will include:

- Legislations and legal frameworks when referring to terminologies; Safeguarding, Consent, Duty of Care, Position of Trust
- varying forms of abuse, signs and vulnerabilities, in adults
- further support, guidance and advice, they can seek for themselves as professionals and those they support
- how to deal appropriately with an adult who discloses their own, or another's' abuse
- how to report and record concerns, allegations and disclosures, factually and securely using the **Incident Form** and **Body Map** (please see **Forms Pack** handed with this policy)
- the protocols and procedures of reporting and recording concerns, allegations and disclosures, to the DSL immediately
- notifying the BSAB regarding a concern, allegation or disclosure, when they cannot approach the DSL in situations (**12.3 Recording and Reporting Concerns**)

- how and when the boundaries of confidentiality should be observed and when they should be broken in any adult's, own interests
- sharing information with statutory agencies confidentially, where appropriate

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12. Reporting and Recording Concerns

1. Athena Mentors CIC staff will always follow Athena Mentor CIC protocol, without delay if they believe that an adult has suffered, is suffering, or is at risk of suffering harm, by:
    a. documenting any concerns, including any disclosures or allegations made by the adult
    b. reporting to DSL, as soon as possible
2. Where there is a risk to the life of an adult, significant harm, or the possibility of serious immediate harm, contact emergency services (police) by dialling **999**
3. Athena Mentors CIC Staff will notify BSAB, when they cannot approach the DSL in situations, where:
    a. the DSL or next person/s to report to, or Athena Mentors CIC as a company, is the abuser
    b. Athena Mentors CIC does not have clear safeguarding procedures to follow
    c. concerns are not dealt with properly or may be covered up
    d. a concern that was raised has not been acted upon
    e. you are worried that repercussions are likely to arise if you raise a concern

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13. Allegations Against Staff

Any allegations, disclosures or concerns regarding the behaviour of Athena Mentors CIC staff members (Person In A Position Of Trust), will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. The following steps will be followed:

1. Report the Concern: Any allegation must be reported immediately to the DSL
2. Immediate Suspension (if necessary): If the allegation, disclosure or concern is of a serious nature, the Athena Mentors CIC staff member may be suspended from their duties immediately, pending investigation
3. Investigation: The matter will be referred to BSAB, who will lead the investigation

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14. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Athena Mentors CIC and its staff, will share information in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. We will only share relevant and proportionate, confidential information, with consent or when legally required for safeguarding purposes.

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15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or after:

- significant safeguarding incident
- updates in legislation or best practice guidance
- changes to services provided

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16. Get Help

- **Athena Mentors CIC**
  - Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): [Director: Genene Wilson
    Email: safeguarding@athenamentors.co.uk]
  - Athena Mentors Deputy DSL(s): [most senior person onsite]

- **In an emergency, phone 999**

- **Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB)**
  - To make an online referral - Click link → **Report adult abuse online: Begin this form now**
  - Adult Social Care Contact Centre staff will look at referrals made online from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
  - Out of Hours team:- phone: 0121 464 9001 / email: AMHPoutofhours@birmingham.gov.uk
    - You can also report a concern by:
    - email: CSAdultSocialCare@birmingham.gov.uk
    - phone: 0121 303 1234
    - Text Relay: Dial 18001, followed by the full national phone number

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Signed:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Genene Wilson

Date Adult Safeguarding Policy and **Forms Pack**, allocated:

Date Adult Safeguarding training delivered:

Date signed Adult Safeguarding Policy received back:

Athena Mentors CIC Staff Member name:

Athena Mentors CIC Staff Member position:

Date signed Adult Safeguarding Policy and **Forms Pack** received:

Date Adult Safeguarding Policy and **Forms Pack** read:

Date Adult Safeguarding Policy and **Forms Pack** understood: