



Real Life Options Group

Corporate Safeguarding,
Adult Support and Protection Group
Annual Report 2020

Real Life Options

a real choice | a real voice | a real difference

Corporate Safeguarding, Adult Support and Protection Group Annual Report

For the Period: 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020

1. Background

The vision for the Real Life Options Group's Corporate Safeguarding, Adult Support and Protection Group is that:

All people supported by the Real Life Options Group live a life free from abuse or neglect.

Our aim is to achieve this by working in partnership alongside the people we support, and statutory and non-statutory agencies, to protect those at risk of abuse and neglect, across the organisation.

The Real Life Options Group is committed to delivering the highest standards of care and support. As a person-centred organisation it is vitally important for the the Real Life Options Group to safeguard the people we support. Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. It is fundamental to high-quality health and social care.



The Real Life Options Group established a Corporate Safeguarding, Adult Support and Protection Group (CSASP) which, on behalf of the Real Life Options Group Board, works in partnership to safeguard and promote the welfare of the people we support.

The CSASP interprets information gathered when concerns are raised about abuse, harm or neglect to look at the risks to people who use the Real Life Options Group services. The CSASP receives reports following internal and external inspections, which help to identify safeguarding concerns. The CSASP also proposes action and changes in policy to help keep people safe.

The CSASP ensures that the Real Life Options Group takes part in multi-agency safeguarding, working to build a picture of the experiences of people we support and how well they are being safeguarded. The CSASP works with partners such as the police, local councils, multi-disciplinary teams, integrated bodies, health agencies, other regulators and government departments.

2. The Role of the CSASP Group

- ✓ To ensure the safeguarding of people at risk across the organisation, to prevent abuse and neglect from happening.
- ✓ To receive reports on governance and audit of safeguarding practices and to promote the safeguarding interests of vulnerable people to protect their wellbeing and safety.
- ✓ To promote, inform and support the work to safeguard people across the organisation.
- ✓ To develop the organisation's strategic safeguarding policies and ensure the inclusion of these in strategy documents and plans.

3. Membership

The CSASP Group works on behalf of the Real Life Options Group, which covers Real Life Options, 1st Homecare and Montana Home Care. The CSASP Group is represented by the following colleagues:

- David Sargent - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chair for these meetings
- Jenette Parker - Group Operations Coordinator (minute taker/administrator for these meetings)
- Jillian Hicks - Head of Talent Development
- Sue Gwilt - Group Risk Officer
- Sheilah Harvey - Head of 1st Homecare (resigned 2019)
- Rosie Coutts - Risk and Compliance Partner - 1st Homecare
- Rob Hendry - Trustee
- Jean Trench - Director for Operations Scotland and Northern Ireland
- Vivien Simon - Director of Operations England and Wales

4. Frequency of Meetings and Attendance

The CSASP Group held five meetings over the year from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020. The average attendance for the year was 70%.

5. How the CSASP Group Operates

The CSASP informs the Real Life Options Group's strategic leadership concerning safeguarding for the people we support. The approach to safeguarding is based on promoting dignity and respect, helping all people to feel safe and making sure safeguarding is everyone's business. The CSASP Group reports to Real Life Options Group Leadership Team and Board. The CSASP Group's objectives are:

- i. To facilitate the completion of critical case reviews on relevant Safeguarding/Adult Support and Protection referrals making a formal record of learning, sharing and disseminating information across the organisation and with commissioning bodies if required to do so.
- ii. To use the information collated to inform practice and policy development.
- iii. To lead on the development and review of preventative strategies.
- iv. To lead on the development of the Real Life Options Groups' Annual Safeguarding/Adult Support and Protection report.
- v. To support functional teams in their role of informing and training Real Life Options Group and subsidiary company employees to carry out their responsibilities under the Real Life Options Group Safeguarding/Adult Support and Protection policy, procedures and practice guidance.
- vi. To identify corporate priorities and areas for development for inclusion in the Real Life Options Group strategic planning and annual work programmes.

6. Whistleblowing

The Real Life Options Group has a Whistleblowing hotline available to all staff. All calls to the hotline are directed to the relevant Director in accordance with Real Life Options Group's policy. All whistleblowing notifications for the year were addressed through the Real Life Options Group Whistleblowing procedure.

The value of the whistleblowing hotline has been enhanced throughout the year with clearer communication describing how the procedures for whistleblowing, grievance and complaints all fit together.

7. England Operational Sub-Group Feedback

Over the year, the subgroup has been focussing on current trends and lessons learnt, and a significant time has been invested in reviewing our systems and processes, in order to improve our reporting. This in the main has centred on simplifying forms to encourage more accurate recording and categorisation of incidents.

Medication errors remain the highest number of Safeguard or Statutory notifications across England which equates to 36%, a reduction on the previous year's figure of 46%. As part of the organisation's response, this year we worked with the Ann Craft Trust to undertake an independent Medication Review of Real Life Options' Group policies and practices. This was supported by service teams, participating in medication observations, surveys, and focus groups. We now regularly attend the Ann Craft Trust Network Meeting in order to share and understand best practice across the Real Life Options Group.

The subgroup has also been involved in discussing and reviewing the feedback from our subject experts as part of our Skills Academy programme to develop new online training modules covering safeguarding and medication.

8. Scotland Operational Sub-Group Feedback

The Scotland Operational Subgroup meets monthly as part of the wider Scotland Team Operations Meeting. In addition, the Director of Operations Scotland participates in weekly Safeguarding meetings attended by the Leadership Team. Throughout 2019/20 we have continued to report any areas of concern and highlight areas for development such as the further enhancement of our internal reporting system CPOMS.

In 2020, due to the unprecedented Covid19 outbreak, the Senior Operational Team in Scotland have been a key element of the Real Life Options Group Risk Committee meetings set up to mitigate risks, identify issues, make key decisions and provide guidance to support reduction of contamination across the Real Life Options and wider community. Medication errors remain the highest number of Adult Safeguarding and Protection notifications across Scotland, which equates to 50%, a reduction on the previous year's figure of 64%.



8.1 Home Care Services Update

1st Homecare is a wholly owned subsidiary within the Real Life Options Group. 1st Homecare is now recording all incidents on CPOMS and providing weekly ASP incident updates. This will continue to provide a robust system to identify trends. As with the rest of the Group robust reporting, recording, investigation, action and learning remains a priority for ASP in home care services. Improved use of CPOMS resulted in an increased rate of reporting for the year in comparison with previous years. Medication errors indicated a significant proportion of ASP reports.

9. Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

For the purposes of this report, the Real Life Options Group defines DoLS in terms of applications and approvals as applied in England. Where DoLS applications were necessary, these were addressed in accordance with the Real Life Options Group policy. In the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill, some progress has been made to clarify deprivation of liberty definition; and to remove conflict of interest for Service Managers. However, further changes are required to protect the human rights of vulnerable people. To achieve this, it must clarify the definition of 'Deprivation of Liberty' and avoid potential conflicts of interest for Service Managers.

10. Safeguarding, Adult Support and Protection Incidents

The organisation was compliant through the year with Real Life Options Group policy and with Local Authority requirements for the reporting of Safeguarding, Adult Support and Protection incidents. The Real Life Options Group developed a dynamic and 'whole organisation' risk programme which includes clear reporting lines and criteria to trigger reports to the Charity Commission and OSCR.

11. Participation in Serious Case Reviews (England) and Cause for Concern Reviews (Scotland)

The focus on serious case reviews, in line with both multi-agency policy and national guidance, is to learn from past experience and the specific event examined; improve future practice and outcomes by acting on learning identified by the review; improve multi-agency working and compliance with any other multi-agency or single agency procedures; including, regulated care services. For the Real Life Options Group, a Serious Case Review is defined as follows:

There is a clear process for commissioning and carrying out of a serious case review through partnership and usually led by a Local Authority and or Commissioners.

A Serious Care Review is commissioned when an adult experiencing abuse or neglect dies, or when there has been a serious incident, or in circumstances involving the abuse or neglect of one or more adults. This means that:

- Abuse or neglect is known, or suspected, to have been involved.
- The death is by suicide or accidental death or by alleged murder, culpable homicide, reckless conduct, or act of violence.
- The purpose of having a case review is not to reinvestigate nor to apportion blame.

Process:

- i. To establish whether there are lessons to be learnt from the circumstances of the case about the way in which local professionals and agencies work together to safeguard vulnerable adults.
- ii. To review the effectiveness of procedures (Both multi-agency and those of individual organisations).
- iii. To inform and improve local inter-agency practice.
- iv. To improve practice by acting on learning (developing best practice).
- v. To prepare or commission an overview report which brings together and analyses the findings of the various reports from agencies in order to make recommendations for future action.

Under this definition the Real Life Options Group can report that three incidents were considered:

- July 2019 – neglect. This was reported to the relevant regulatory bodies, including Charity Commission and Duty of Candour applied.
- November 2019 – neglect. This was reported to the relevant regulatory bodies, including Charity Commission and OSCR and Duty of Candour applied.
- March 2020 – restrictive practice. This was not reported to Charity Commission and OSCR as practice was carried out in line with current protocols. A full review of support plan and positive behaviour plan and staff training needs is being undertaken with support from the Head of Specialist Support and Development.

12. Learning and Development

In the period ending 31st March 2020, 81% of staff participated in Safeguarding or Adult Support and Protection Training. During the year, the approach to upskilling staff has changed and we now offer online learning through our own bespoke Skills Academy portal. There is a high degree of satisfaction from staff completing the learning modules and it complements the way the organisation is developing a learning culture.

13. Policies

The Safeguarding/Adult Support and Protection and Child Protection policies were reviewed and amended in September 2019 in response to a recommendation from a Care Inspectorate inspection. In March 2020, a further policy review was undertaken in response to the Jonty Bravery incident and existing instructions strengthened to clarify the process staff must follow if a person we support discloses an intention to harm.

14. Progress Report on 2019-20 Priorities

The CSASP Group's priorities for 2019 to 2020 were:

- i. To assist colleagues in Business Support to implement a new electronic CSASP reporting system which will integrate with the new Real Life Options Group online care system.
- ii. To increase awareness and understanding of safeguarding and adult support and protection within the Real Life Options Group.

- iii. To work in partnership to address concerns around the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill and to meet the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 & Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (England). Scotland's equivalent is Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000.
- iv. Elevate the voices of people we support – to ensure the work of the CSASP Group is influenced by people and their support staff.
- v. Continue to work to progress the 'Making Safeguarding Personal' agenda.
- vi. To enable Training & Workforce Development to support the delivery of CSASP priorities.



How Did We Do?

- i. ***To assist colleagues in Business Support to implement a new electronic CSASP reporting system which will integrate with the new Real Life Options Group online care system.***

The integration of CSASP reporting into the GoDigital system was planned, but further review work enabled the Real Life Options Group to reappraise existing resources. The GoDigital system is being piloted in nine services to date and ultimately a CSASP reporting system will be integrated. However, further analysis of the CPOMS system highlighted potential gains in system efficiency and accuracy through targeted masterclass training. In other words, the Real Life Options Group will continue to use CPOMS for a limited period, whilst improving staff competency. The COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the rollout as preventing the spread of the virus, through remote working and safe distancing has been the main priority.

- ii. ***To increase awareness and an understanding of safeguarding and adult support and protection within the Real Life Options Group.***

The Real Life Options Group now has a schedule of weekly CSASP meetings and these have raised awareness at Leadership Team and Board level. Briefings are shared to the wider organisation via Real Talk (the Real Life Options Group's digital app), the website and email.

- iii. ***To work in partnership to address concerns around the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill and to meet the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 & Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000.***

The Real Life Options Group continues to participate in the national conversation to improve accuracy by engaging in various networks and partnership initiatives to maintain the profile of this work.

- iv. ***Elevate the voices of the people we support – to ensure that the work of the CSASP Group is influenced by people and their support staff.***

Initial planning was started for enhancing and elevating the voices of people we support. It was agreed that the existing annual survey system is not fit for purpose. Rather than create a like for like replacement the Board agreed with a more strategic approach sponsored at executive level to create a multi-channel voices programme. Work is underway to identify a real time survey system which is very accessible.

v. ***Continue work to progress the 'Making Safeguarding Personal' agenda.***

The Real Life Option Group's CSASP Group is making excellent progress in developing and embedding an approach to its work that is person led and outcome focused. Specific team resources have been given to this workstream.

vi. ***To enable Training and Workforce Development to support the delivery of CSASP priorities.***

Staff and Trustees attended various conferences which addressed:

- a) raising the standards of Safeguarding across the Charity and Voluntary sector, and
- b) concentrating on developing robust Safeguarding policies and procedures which are compliant with Charity Commission and OSCR standards.

15. The CSASP Group Priorities 2020-21

The CSASP Group's priorities for next year are consistent with making safeguarding personal:

Empowerment

'I am asked what I want as outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens'

Achievable through digital platforms that enable people we support and staff to speak about their experiences and to know that they are influencing the Real Life Options Groups' direction.

Prevention

'I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help'

Achievable through effective, clear communication and training where briefings are easy to access and read.

Proportionality

'I am sure that the staff will work for my best interests and they will get involved as much as is needed'

Achievable through responsive digital support planning.

Protection

'I get help and support to report abuse. I get help to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want and to which I am able'

Achievable through effective communication channels that enable people we support and staff to speak out openly and clearly without fear.

Partnership

'I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that staff will work together to get the best results for me'

Achievable through effective risk management and GDPR processes.

Accountability

'I understand the role of everyone in my life'

Achievable through effective support planning and communication. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of creating mechanisms that assure services and promote accountability when staff are unable to attend services to assess in person due to unprecedented circumstances. Such assurance will be achievable through the systems and processes that have; and are being designed in response to the pandemic.



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Real Life Options

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1st Homecare

