



## Safeguarding Policy (Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults)

Owner	Sam Best – Chief Operating Officer				
Date:	22/03/2018	Version	3	CEO/Trustee Approved	07/06/2018
	20/01/2020		4		20/02/2020 MC
	01/04/2020		5		15/07/2020 MC
	04/01/2022		6		24/01/2022

At SWEDA, we are committed to delivering a service that promotes good practice and protects our service users from harm. We will seek to protect the safety of children and vulnerable adults we work with and provide a safe environment for them by only engaging people who have been vetted prior to their being appointed (in either a paid or voluntary capacity), to work one to one with children and/or vulnerable adults.

This policy applies to all SWEDA employees, trustees, agency staff, casual employees and volunteers.

### Policy Statement

SWEDA is committed to making sure that children and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm while they are receiving services from SWEDA. It will:

- Take appropriate action to respond to issues of child and vulnerable adult protection, which occur on SWEDA's premises, or involve its employees or volunteers. Where an allegation against a member of staff who works with children or vulnerable adult is received, SWEDA will invoke its complaints procedure and will report to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Ensure all children and vulnerable adults are treated with care, respect and dignity.
- Ensure communication with children and vulnerable adults is open and clear.
- Work in line with current legislation and ensure that the welfare and safety of the individual child or vulnerable adult is paramount.
- Ensure that if a complaint is made, or criminal proceedings are brought against a SWEDA worker and involve a third party, the situation is treated with the utmost seriousness and urgency.

### Responsibility and Authority

The designated member of staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding is:

- Nerissa Shaw - Clinical Lead - 07545 951620
- Sam Best - Chief Operating Officer - 07885 540309

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for:

- Overseeing the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations to social services or police.
- Providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to safeguarding.
- Maintaining a proper record of any safeguarding referrals, complaints or concerns (even where that concern does not lead to a referral).
- Ensuring that users of the service are aware of SWEDA's Safeguarding Policy.
- Liaising with the Local Authority, Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) and other appropriate agencies.

## Definitions

### Definition of a Child

Child Protection Procedures apply to children and young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday. (Procedures also apply to young people with additional support needs, which may place them at increased risk, up to 25 years).

### Definition of a Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, disability, 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.

### Definitions of Abuse

There are several different categories of abuse officially defined in government guidance and these are central to the child protection system. Employees and volunteers should be aware that abuse to children and vulnerable adults usually occurs when adults (often people they trust) in a position of greater power than them, cause them harm.

Seven categories of abuse are defined below:

1. **Neglect** – the actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child or vulnerable adult. The failure to protect a child or vulnerable adult from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation.
2. **Physical** – actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child or vulnerable adult, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child or vulnerable adult.
3. **Sexual** – actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or a vulnerable adult. The involvement of children/adolescents in sexual activities.
4. **Emotional or Psychological** – actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child or vulnerable adult.
5. **Bullying** – a deliberate act that can take the form of verbal abuse (e.g. taunting, racist or homophobic remarks, shouting and screaming, name calling), physical abuse (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), or emotional abuse (e.g. ignoring or isolating an individual).
6. **Financial or Material** – such as theft, fraud or exploitation, pressure in connection with property or inheritance, misuse of property, possessions or benefits,
7. **Institutional** – can occur in formal settings such as residential or nursing homes or hospitals, and is the mistreatment of people brought about by poor or inadequate care and poor practice that affects the whole setting.

## Causes for Concern

May include:

- Signs of physical abuse e.g. bruising
- Signs of sexual abuse or concerns with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Signs of Emotional abuse or concerns
- Suspicions of abuse or radicalisation due to changes in behaviour
- Disclosure by a child or vulnerable adult where a member of staff believes the child/VA to be at risk of radicalisation
- Use of inappropriate language
- Signs/suspicions of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Signs/suspicions of Fabricated Illness (FI)
- Inappropriate behaviours displayed by other members of staff or volunteers.

## Dealing with safeguarding concerns

If a member of staff or a volunteer has concerns about a child or vulnerable adult, they should discuss this with either the Clinical Lead or the Chief Operations Officer. It is not the responsibility of the employee/volunteer to deal with suspected abuse (unless there is immediate danger to the individual), but it is their responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate person.

If a child or vulnerable adult wishes to disclose abuse, the member of staff or volunteer should:

1. Listen carefully and remain calm.
2. Take all allegations seriously.
3. Try not to show shock or disbelief.
4. Demonstrate empathy and non-judgement.
5. Ask just enough without asking leading questions – use the TED Model – Tell, Explain, Describe.
6. Reassure the child/vulnerable adult by telling them they have done the right thing.
7. Inform the child/vulnerable adult that you must pass the information on, but only those that need to know about it will be told. Inform them who you will be reporting the matter to.
8. Record the information accurately and as soon as possible; detailing times, dates, what the client said, your questions. Write only facts and remember that the report may be required for any legal action.
9. Staff/Volunteers should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves but contact either the Clinical Lead or the Chief Operating Officer as soon as possible, who will be responsible for any onward referral.

## Outcomes

The DSL (Clinical Lead or the Chief Operating Officer) will refer information to or seek advice from other relevant organisations as appropriate e.g. Police, Children's and Adult Social Care, Local Safeguarding partnerships. In the event of the concerns not being appropriate for referral at that stage then the client will be monitored through the Clinical Lead.

Staff and Volunteers will receive support as required.

## Working from Home

Any member of staff who is working from home should raise any concerns in the same way as if they were working at SWEDA premises; all concerns should in the first instance be raised with the Clinical Lead and if she is not available then with the Chief Operating Officer.

## **Allegations made against Staff, Volunteers or Trustees**

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or a volunteer it should be reported immediately to the Clinical Lead\*. After initial investigation, the Clinical Lead will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 0300 123 2224, if it is found that the allegation requires escalation. If the LADO decides the matter is a child protection case, SWEDA will act upon advice given to ensure the investigation is not jeopardised. Any internal investigation should be carried out by a member of staff who has undertaken at least the "Working Together" Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership advanced interagency training.

\*The only exception to this is if an allegation is made against the Clinical Lead, in which case it should be reported to the Chief Operating Officer or the CEO, who will inform the LADO.

## **Allegations made against another client**

If an allegation is made by a client against another client, this must be reported immediately to either the Clinical Lead or the Chief Operating Officer. They will then refer information to or seek advice from another relevant organisation as appropriate. There is an expectation that concerns should be shared with parents/carers unless by doing so the client might be placed at greater risk of harm.

## **Contextual safeguarding**

As well as threats to the welfare of children/vulnerable adults from within their families, children/vulnerable adults may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These threats may arise from within the wider community including; exploitation by criminal gangs such as county lines, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors including on-line abuse are present in a child's life and are a threat to their safety and or welfare. Where we believe that a child or vulnerable adult may be affected by any of these factors, we will follow the same reporting procedures as other forms of abuse.

## **Online safeguarding**

The online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however, it can also present risks and challenges. We believe children should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are kept safe at all times.

As part of our activities when working with children and young people, we may use resources obtained via the internet, social media sites and downloadable apps. However, these will only be used in conjunction with our Children's Therapeutic Worker or appropriately qualified counsellor/psychotherapist and all SWEDA devices will have strict parental controls, together with password settings. No child will be left on their own to use SWEDA devices.

It is paramount that all staff and volunteers working with these mediums ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at all times. If any child or young person reports they have been subject to any on-line abuse, then we will follow the same reporting procedures as other forms of abuse.

## **Training of Staff and Volunteers**

The Clinical Lead, Chief Operating Officer and the Children's Therapeutic Worker will be trained to a Designated Lead level, which will be renewed every 2 years in line with the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership requirements.

All other members of the SWEDA staff and volunteers' team, will receive access to the NHS online training portal, as part of their induction which will be renewed every 2 years.

At least one member of the SMT will undertake the Governments online PREVENT training course and cascade necessary information to the team.

### **Preventing unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults**

SWEDA has a duty to ensure that people working with children and vulnerable adults are suitable to fulfil the requirements for their role. SWEDA will ensure all staff and volunteers who are working in a one to one situation will ensure an appropriate DBS check and references are undertaken and qualifications are verified. Staff and volunteers are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults.

Staff and volunteers who disclose or are found to have been convicted of any offence relating to children or vulnerable adults, or any related disciplinary sanction will not be permitted to work in any service, event or project which involves contact with children or vulnerable adults at SWEDA.

### **Confidentiality and information sharing**

All staff and volunteers are aware through our data protection and GDPR policies that they have a professional responsibility to share relevant and proportionate information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

If a child or vulnerable adult discloses information that may indicate that they are at risk of abuse or neglect, the staff member will be clear that they cannot promise to keep the information a secret. The staff member will be honest with the child/vulnerable adult and explain that it will be necessary to tell someone in order to help them and keep them safe.

SWEDA will undertake appropriate discussion with parents/carers prior to involvement of another agency, unless the circumstances may put the child at further risk of harm. Any discussions which take place between SWEDA and the parent/carer will be recorded on our Information System.

If appropriate inform the child/vulnerable adult and/or parent/carer of what information will be shared and with whom.

### **Supporting children and vulnerable adults**

We recognise that children and vulnerable adults who are abused or witness abuse may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and trust those around them. Where appropriate we will endeavour to continue to support the child/vulnerable adult through our activities to encourage self-esteem and motivation.

### **Accidents and injuries**

All accidents involving children/vulnerable adults must be recorded and forward information to the Chief Operating Officer, if the child/vulnerable adult is a client of another agency the accident must also be reported to their line manager/carer or parent. The First Aid Box can be found on top of the filing cabinet in the office Level 1.

### **Record Keeping**

There should be a written record of any accidents or concerns. This confidential information will either be kept in a locked cabinet or will be entered on SWEDA's database that is password protected and will be kept for as long as deemed necessary, in line with Data Protection principles. The Accident book can be found with the First Aid Box on top of the filing cabinet in the office on Level 1.

### **Implementation**

SWEDA will ensure that all workers have access to a copy of this policy as part of their induction process.

SWEDA expects and requires Trustees and managers to support their staff in carrying out this policy.

Anyone not adhering to this policy may face disciplinary action.

### **For additional information please refer or call:**

Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board number 0300 123 2224

Somerset Safeguarding leads consultation line 0300 123 3087