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ACROSS THE SOUTH & WEST

Safeguarding Policy (Protection of Adults at Risk)

Owner:	Sam Best – Chief Operating Officer				
Date:	25/09/2025	Version:	1	CEO/Trustee approved:	22/09/2025
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Type of policy:	Employment law				
Company contract type:	☒ Employed staff ☒ Freelancer ☒ Volunteer ☒ Trustee			Notes: This policy was previously part of the Safeguarding Policy (Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults) v6a	

Policy Statement

At SWEDA, we are committed to delivering a service that promotes good practice and protects our clients from harm. We will seek to protect the safety of any adults at risk we work with and provide a safe environment for them. This policy applies to all SWEDA employees, trustees, agency staff, casual employees, and volunteers and should be read in conjunction with the SWEDA Safeguarding and Self Harm Handbook.

Policy Objectives

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

- Take appropriate action to respond to issues of adult protection, which affect an adult at risk who uses SWEDA services whether the incident has taken place at SWEDA or in another context.
- Ensure all adults at risk are treated with care, respect, and dignity.
- Ensure communication with adults at risk is open and clear.
- Work in line with current legislation and ensure that the welfare and safety of the individual 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

SWEDA has 4 Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL). Concerns can be raised to any one of them, and they will discuss and agree on the most appropriate course of action for a client with the client's key worker, where

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relevant. The Clinical Lead (also DSL) will have the overall say on how an incident is dealt with if an agreed course of action cannot be agreed upon between the key worker and the DSL.

For an up to date list of DSLs please see annex a.

The 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.
- Reporting concerns and trends to SWEDA's SLT and board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and will ensure that the arrangements for protecting our clients are effective, robust and reviewed on a regular basis.

The Designated Safeguarding Trustee is responsible for overseeing the liaison between the Police and Adult Social Care in connection with allegations against the CEO or any of the Designated Safeguarding Leads. This process will not involve undertaking any form of investigation but will ensure good communication between the parties and provision of recorded information to assist enquiries.

Definitions

Definition of an Adult at risk

An adult at risk 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 themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Adults at Risk

An **adult at risk** is an individual aged 18 years and over who:

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

An adult at risk may therefore be a person who:

- is elderly and physically disabled due to ill health or cognitive impairment
- has a learning disability
- has a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment
- has mental health needs, including dementia or a personality disorder
- has a long-term illness / condition
- misuses substances or alcohol
- is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support

Please note that the above list is not exhaustive

Types of Abuse

There are ten types of abuse listed in the Care Act 2014:

- Physical Abuse
- Domestic Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Psychological/Emotional Abuse
- Financial or material Abuse
- Modern Slavery
- Discriminatory Abuse
- Organisational Abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Self-neglect

The Somerset Adult Safeguarding Board have produced a document that lists the [possible signs, symptoms and indicators of abuse](#), to help identify causes for concern.

Associated Children and Young Persons at Risk

SWEDA delivers therapeutic services to both adults and to children and young people. In some cases, while working with an adult client, staff or volunteers may become aware of children who are not clients of SWEDA but are nonetheless connected to the adult client — such as children living in the same household or regularly present during sessions. It is essential to consider the safeguarding and welfare needs of these children, particularly if there are signs that they may be at risk of harm. Any concerns—whether arising through observation, disclosure, or conversation—must be reported immediately to the Line Manager and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The safety of children is paramount, and concerns should be shared with the DSL, who will liaise with appropriate external agencies as needed. Please see Children & Young Person's Safeguarding policy for further guidance.

Dealing with Safeguarding Concerns

If a member of staff or a volunteer has concerns about an adult, they should discuss this with either their Line Manager or one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads. 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 an adult at risk 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 or closed questions – use the TED Model – Tell, Explain, Describe.
6. Reassure the individual by telling them they have done the right thing.
7. Inform the individual 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 using SWEDA's Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form (found in the Safeguarding and Self Harm Handbook. Write only facts and remember that the report may be required in the future for any legal action.
9. Staff/Volunteers should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves but contact their line manager or a DSL as soon as possible, who will be responsible for any onward referral.

Outcomes

The DSL will refer information or seek advice from other relevant organisations as appropriate e.g. Police, 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 Key Worker and the Clinical Lead. Staff and Volunteers will receive support as required.

Working from Home

Any member of staff who is working from home (providing online support) 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 workers line manager and a DSL.

Allegations made against Staff, Volunteers or Trustees

If an allegation is made against a member of SWEDA staff or a volunteer it should be reported immediately to the Clinical Lead*. After initial investigation, the Clinical Lead will inform the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), if it is found that the allegation requires escalation. If the LADO decides the matter is an adult 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 received relevant safeguarding 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 and the Lead Safeguarding Trustee.

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 adults.

Supporting Adults at Risk

We recognize that 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 adult through our activities to encourage self-esteem and motivation.

Training of Staff and Volunteers

At least 2 of SWEDA DSL's will also receive training directly relating to the safeguarding of adults to a minimum of level 3, which will be renewed every 2 years.

All other staff and volunteers including trustees will receive introduction to safeguarding training to support their understanding and awareness of safeguarding issues. This will be regularly updated.

The Designated Safeguarding Trustee will attend the NCVO Safeguarding Training Essentials for Trustees. As part of their induction all Trustees will receive a Safeguarding overview of the organisation based on the Charity Commissions 10 principles. All Trustees will receive an annual update based on the Charity Commissions 10 principles

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

Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Adults at Risk

SWEDA has a duty to ensure that people working with adults at risk are suitable to fulfil the requirements for their role. SWEDA will ensure that one member of the SLT will have completed safer recruitment training to inform our policies and will ensure all staff and volunteers who are working in a one-to-one situation with adults will have an appropriate DBS check, references undertaken, and qualifications verified. Staff and volunteers are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands, and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with adults at risk.

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

Accidents and injuries

All accidents involving adults at risk must be recorded and the Chief Operating Officer must be notified. If the adult is a client of another agency the accident must also be reported to their line manager/carer. The First Aid Box can be located:

Harvest Court – Kitchen
Highfield House – Main office
Penny Brohn Main – Office

If using a room at another organisation, please ask a member of their team

Record Keeping

Workers will use the SWEDA Safeguarding Reporting Form (found in the appendix section of the Safeguarding and Self Harm handbook) as a guide to collate the relevant information needed and copy and paste the information into the client's notes on the database.

Workers will record the conversation in a **factual** way as soon as practically possible, using the **client's** own words, and will avoid conjecture, assumptions or personal opinions.

Safeguarding records will be kept for as long as deemed necessary, in line with Data Protection principles and BACP guidelines.

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Implementation and Monitoring of this Policy

SWEDA will ensure that all workers have access to a copy of this policy and the Safeguarding and Self Harm Handbook, together with appropriate training as part of their induction and ongoing responsibilities. All workers, including trustees, must record on Breathe to say they have read and understood this policy.

The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and will ensure that the arrangements for protecting our clients are effective, robust and reviewed on a regular basis.

The Designated Safeguarding Trustee is responsible for overseeing the liaison between the Police and Children's Social Care in connection with allegations against the CEO or any of the Designated Safeguarding Leads. This process will not involve undertaking any form of investigation but will ensure good communication between the parties and provision of recorded information to assist enquiries.

We will ensure all SWEDA trustees are made aware of how safeguarding is being managed in the organisation. An annual safeguarding report will be presented to the board of trustees, which will include:

- number of concerns raised
- number of referrals made to statutory services
- percentage of referrals to statutory services
- nature of concerns raised (categories of abuse)
- number of allegations against staff and volunteers
- number and progress of investigations of staff and volunteers
- names of designated safeguarding lead and deputies
- training record of staff and volunteers at all levels
- safer recruitment updates relating to staff and volunteers.
- identifying any emerging trends or patterns

We will ensure our [SWEDA Safeguarding Policy](#) is available to view on our website.

Anyone not adhering to this policy may face disciplinary action.

Annex A – Current Designated Safeguarding Leads

Nerissa Shaw	Clinical Lead	nerissashaw@swedauk.org	07545 951620
Sam Best	Chief Operating Officer	sambest@swedauk.org	07885 540309
Hannah McKie	CYP Lead	hannahmckie@swedauk.org	07775 734547
Claire Rylatt	Therapeutic Services Manager	clairerylatt@swedauk.org	07540 374351
Hannah Lewis	Safeguarding Trustee	h.k.lewis@qmul.ac.uk	07516 252799