



Key Contact: Senior Management Team (SMT)

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Safeguarding Children Policy

At Survivors' Network, we are brave, we are compassionate, we are empowering, and we are collaborative. These values guide how we interact with each other and serve our community.

Our vision is: Uniting to confront sexual violence, abuse and harassment so that no one has to face the impacts alone.

Our missions are:

- Delivering accessible, survivor-centred services across Sussex
- Empowering our communities to stand up against sexual violence, abuse and harassment through education, training and campaigning
- Demonstrating and advocating for intersectional feminist leadership.

All children have the right to be kept safe free from harm, abuse and neglect. This includes the children we work directly with and the children who are cared for by an adult who we work directly with.

We will work in partnership with the people we serve, their families, carers and partnership agencies to support this in happening.

All staff, volunteers and therapists have a responsibility to act if they have concerns that someone may be at risk of, or experiencing harm, neglect or abuse.

We will do this by:

- Following contextual safeguarding principle, listening to what children tell us and, where possible including their voice in plans about their lives
- Empowering the people who work for us to make decisions within legal and ethical frameworks when working with adults with care and support needs
- Raising awareness of how to safeguard and protect children by embedding and promoting our policies and procedures with all staff, volunteers and therapists
- Incorporating learning that consistently develop practice and contribute to our safeguarding policies and procedures.

Scope and Purpose

Survivors' Network is part of the Rape Crisis Network of services supporting survivors of any age, gender or ethnicity of sexual violence and abuse in Sussex. Our ethos is that we all unite to confront sexual violence, abuse and harassment and to work alongside people so that no one has to face the impacts alone.

Survivors' Network is committed to creating a culture of zero-tolerance of harm to children which necessitates: the recognition of children who may be at risk and the circumstances which may increase risk; knowing how people abuse, exploitation or neglect manifests itself; and being willing to report safeguarding concerns.

Survivors' Network is committed to best safeguarding practice and to uphold the rights of all children to live a life free from harm from abuse, exploitation and neglect.

This policy and associated procedures apply to all staff, sessional and contracted, trustees, supervisors, consultants and volunteers in Survivors' Network. The policy serves to enhance rather than supersede local safeguarding partnerships policies and procedures.

This policy and accompanying procedures will provide Trustees, staff, volunteers, and therapists with the knowledge of their responsibilities. The policy provides the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding children and the tools to know how to respond wherever there is a risk of a child is at risk of or experiencing harm.

How we Work with Children

At Survivors' Network actions taken by our staff, volunteers and therapists will be consistent with the principles of safeguarding children ensuring that any action taken is prompt, proportionate and that it includes and respects the voice of the children concerned.

We will act on all suspicions and allegations of harm and abuse appropriately and in an agreed timeframe. We will do this by:

- Involving people appropriately in decisions that affect their lives
- Appointing a designated safeguarding lead in each team. Usually the team manager.
- An organisational safeguarding lead and a lead board member with responsibility for safeguarding
- Being clear that all staff, volunteers and therapists have a responsibility to report all concerns to the designated safeguarding lead or appropriate manager.
- Having clear safeguarding procedures in place
- Recruiting and inducting staff, volunteers and therapists in line with our safer recruitment arrangements
- Providing effective safeguarding leadership through supervision, reflective practice, training, quality improvement and governance arrangements
- Providing a safe physical environment for the people who use our services, their families, staff, volunteers and therapists in line with current legislation and our own Health and Safety Policy.
- All staff, volunteers and therapists have a duty to speak out about any suspicion or knowledge of a child who is at risk of, or experiencing, harm, neglect or abuse.

Recognising Harm

Recognising harm, neglect or abuse may not always be straightforward. Knowing what some of the signs of harm, neglect or abuse are vital in being able to recognise and respond appropriately. Signs of harm, neglect or abuse might be:

- Physical
- Sexual violence and abuse
- Psychological or emotional
- Online
- Financial or material
- Discriminatory
- Organisational or institutional
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect.

Children can also be at risk from:

- Child criminal and sexual exploitation
- Sextortion
- Trafficking
- Domestic abuse in any close personal relationship, including abuse from a child or young person towards a parent
- Grooming or coercive behaviours such as modern slavery and county lines
- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Someone in a Position of Trust who works with or cares for a child, either in a paid or voluntary capacity

Incidents of abuse may occur as a one off or take place multiple times and can affect more than one person.

We will look beyond the single incident to identify patterns of harm, abuse or neglect by considering the wider context and family environment the child lives in.

Children at increased risk

Some children are at an increased risk of harm, neglect or abuse. This is often because they have multiple and/or complex needs. These may include:

- Unborn/in utero babies
- A chronic illness
- Disabilities or special educational needs
- Poor mental health
- Missing from home or education
- Inject substances or being injected by someone else
- Having caring responsibilities
- Other additional needs for people with protected characteristics.

If you suspect a child may be at risk of or is experiencing harm, neglect, or abuse you should:

- ✓ Talk to your designated safeguarding lead or an appropriate manager
- ✓ Speak to the person about their situation and what they would like to happen
- ✓ Agree next steps and develop a plan

- ✓ Consult with other care professionals where appropriate
- ✓ Refer to our safeguarding adults' procedures for additional ideas.

If you are concerned that a child is living in an environment where domestic abuse may be present a statutory referral to children's social care must be considered. You can read more in our Safeguarding Children Procedure.

The Right to Make Decisions

The thoughts and wishes of children should always be listened to and their views should be included in plans that affect them. Children do not have the automatic right to make decisions that impact their life until they are 16 years old.

There are situations where we will need to take steps to safeguard a child without them being involved in the decision.

- Immediate risk/life threatening scenarios – e.g. call 999 for emergency services
- Children are at risk of 'significant harm', which is the statutory threshold for a child protection referral
- Children under 13 years of age, a parent/carer needs to be involved in safeguarding decisions about a child's life
- 13-15 year who is not assessed as being '[Gillick Competent](#)'
- 16 and 17 year olds who are assessed as not having the mental capacity to make certain decisions
- There is an allegation that a person in a position of trust is causing a child harm.

We will always seek to share the steps we are taking to keep the child safer with the child and their parents/carers unless it is the explicit wish of the child and there is no significant risk of immediate harm or it is unsafe to do so.

For more information, use our Confidentiality Policy and Data Protection Handbook to learn more about the legal positions when sharing information without consent.

Who is Responsible for Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and therapists. Anyone who works directly with people who use our services has a responsibility to take all reports of suspected abuse seriously. Staff, volunteers and therapists should:

- ✓ Ensure the child is involved in decisions and plans made, unless it is the person who cares for the child they work with
- ✓ Establish if the child is a young carer
- ✓ Prioritise the safety of any person at risk or alleged to be at risk as soon as a report of harm, neglect or abuse is made
- ✓ Record information accurately and securely
- ✓ Prioritise ongoing safeguarding training/learning and make use of reflective practice
- ✓ Report serious crimes relating to radicalisation, money laundering and terrorism to the police immediately.

Designated safeguarding leads and all managers have a responsibility to:

- ✓ Follow governance arrangements to support staff, volunteers and therapists in safeguarding procedures, practice and guidance
- ✓ Offer safeguarding consultation and guidance to staff, volunteers and therapists
- ✓ Develop and maintain relationships with children social care services and other relevant agencies or providers
- ✓ Understand safeguarding notification and escalation procedures. This includes any referrals made to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Head safeguarding lead has a responsibility to:

- ✓ Have effective governance arrangements in place to support in the overall assurance of safeguarding procedures, practice and guidance
- ✓ Ensure monitoring and review systems are in place to incorporate new guidance and legislation
- ✓ Inform board members of any incidents of organisational and/or individual harm, neglect or abuse
- ✓ Offer support to managers and designated safeguarding leads relating to the safeguarding management process
- ✓ Ensure procedures are in place to manage safeguarding allegations against staff, volunteers and therapists
- ✓ Have safer recruitment practices in place.

Sharing information with other agencies

We will always share information in line with legislation and ethical principles to keep adults safe from harm, neglect or abuse, even if a prior confidentiality agreement has been made. The Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR 2018) should not be barriers to sharing information. Fears about sharing information should not stand in the way of safeguarding.

We will work with local safeguarding partnerships to follow the agreed legal protocols and local agreements for information sharing with other organisations, including the police.

Designated safeguarding leads and managers should develop relationships and work together with:

- ✓ Local safeguarding partnerships
- ✓ Local statutory frameworks and Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs)
- ✓ The Police
- ✓ Person in Position of Trust Manager in Local Authority
- ✓ Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC).

Services will work collaboratively with partner agencies by:

- ✓ Attending appropriate 'professionals meetings' to support or coordinate a plan
- ✓ Having representation at MARAC
- ✓ Attending relevant multi agency panel review groups (Sexual Violence, Violence against Women and Girls Networks, Police, exploitation etc.)
- ✓ Being a signatory on relevant Information Sharing Agreements (ISA) and other protocols.

Sharing information with the right people is central to good safeguarding practice. However, information should only be shared with people 'who need to know' and the information shared should be necessary, proportionate and relevant.

All staff, volunteers and therapists should understand the legal basis of when to share information and with whom. There is useful information in the Data Protection Handbook that can assist with making these decisions.

Continuous learning

All staff, volunteers and therapists must complete safeguarding children e-learning within twelve weeks of commencing employment with the Survivors Network.

It is recommended that all staff, volunteers and therapists complete:

- Safeguarding training provided by Survivors' Network or local safeguarding partnership within twelve months of commencing employment
- Complete half day refresher training every two years or equivalent four hours local safeguarding children's board or alternative internal safeguarding training available locally
- Designated safeguarding leads and team managers are encouraged to complete introduction to safeguarding leadership training provided by the Survivors Network or a local provider within six months of commencing post.

Learning within the Survivors' Network is not limited to e-learning and classroom-based environments. The continuous learning cycles for staff is the healthiest way for professional development of staff and supports in continuous safeguarding practice and learning. This can be done in a variety of ways, such as:

- Staff utilise ways for sharing learning from training or conferences attended via team meetings, reflective practice sessions, via email
- Opportunity for reflective practice is created within supervision
- Learning from quarterly reports is used to inform changes to practice and organisational development
- There are forums to discuss safeguarding or complex needs to contribute to shared learning and accountability
- Make use of available toolkits, briefings and other resources available internally, locally and nationally.

Details of continued professional development should be formally recorded on Breathe HR:

Staff can record learning outcomes and attach certificates, via their training record.

Email a register and course content for group facilitated learning e.g. bite-size learning or external training to your manager.

Survivors Network promotes a culture of openness and transparency in the management of safeguarding concerns.

Staff should follow the whistleblowing policy and incident reporting guidance, where concerns arise around a beneficiaries' safety or poor practice.

Where issues of staff competency arise in relation to the identification and management of safeguarding children, managers should support the staff member to identify appropriate learning opportunities to assist in improving safeguarding practice. Individual learning plans and improvement should be reviewed and recorded in supervision notes.

Supervision and Support

Survivors' Network is committed to providing effective management and support for staff, volunteers and therapists through supervision to identify any gaps in practice or knowledge in relation to safeguarding.

Staff, therapists and volunteers receive clinical supervision. Safeguarding is covered in case management meetings and within supervision.

Recording

All safeguarding concerns, actions and correspondence will be stored professionally and securely in line with data protection legislation including the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations and guidance. See the Confidentiality Policy, Data Protection Policy and Data Protection guidance for staff.

All records are accurate, relevant and recorded on DPMS by the staff member who had the contact within a reasonable timeframe.

Equality Impact Assessment

We are committed to the equal access of services for all clients and explicitly considers the needs of children that have a protected characteristic and as such Survivors' Network is committed to planning, promoting, providing and delivering services in a non-stigmatising, respectful and anti-discriminatory way. This policy will be also delivered in-line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Survivors' Network will act on all suspicions and allegations of harm, neglect or abuse appropriately, proportionately, and in an agreed timeframe. We will always talk to the person who we think might be at risk, so their views are included in any response we make to keep them safe, unless we assess that it is not safe to do so. Such as placing the person, or someone else at immediate risk of serious harm or death.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect vulnerable adults in England including:

Health and Safety at Work 1974
Access to Personal Files Act 1987
Children's Act 1989
Human Rights Act 1998
Data Protection Act 1998
Adoption and Children Act 2002
Sexual Offences Act 2003
Children Act 2004
Mental Capacity Act 2005
The Care Act 2014
Children and Families Act 2014

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
General Data Protection Regulation 2018
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
Local Safeguarding Partnership policies and guidelines.

Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed and updated every three years, and when required for compliance and appropriate and relevant legislation. Any modifications to the policy will be communicated to all staff using a variety of methods.

Related Policies and Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents.

Safeguarding Adults Procedure
Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedure
Guidance for supporting suicidal clients
Professional Code of conduct
Data Protection Policy and Guidance for staff on data protection
Confidentiality Policy
Staff recruitment policy
Health and Safety Handbook
Lone-working policy
Complaints policy
Volunteer Policy
Whistleblowing Policy
Grievance Procedure
Disciplinary Procedure

Key Safeguarding contacts

Named Person: Head of Operations, Named person with responsibility for Safeguarding on the Board of Trustees

Further action

If a staff member, volunteer or trustee is in any doubt about any aspect of this policy they should consult with their supervisor, line-manager, Head of Operations, Head of Finance or Chairs of the Trustees for confidential guidance.