

Policy Name: Safeguarding adults and child protection Policy

Issue No: 9

Policy Statement

South Somerset Mind is committed to delivering a service that promotes good practice and protects children and vulnerable adults from harm. It will seek to protect the safety of children and vulnerable adults 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 South Somerset Mind employees, including both full and part time workers, as well as to volunteers.

Definitions

Definition of a Child

Child Protection Procedures apply to children and young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday.

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. All employees and volunteers should be aware that child and vulnerable adult abuse usually occurs when adults are in a position of greater power than them and often people whom they trust, cause harm.

Seven categories of abuse are defined below:

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- (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, ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services.
- (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** – is a deliberate act that can arise in 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 wills, 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. It is most likely to occur where employees are:
 - Inadequately trained
 - Poorly supervised and have little support from management
 - using rigid, routine practices
 - In an environment where there is a closed culture

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South Somerset Mind confirms its commitment to making sure that children and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm while they are receiving services from South Somerset Mind. It will:

- Share information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents, carers and children appropriately;
- Take appropriate action to respond to issues of child and vulnerable adult protection, which occur on the South Somerset Mind's premises, or involve its employees or volunteers. Where an allegation against a member of staff who works with children or vulnerable adults is received, South Somerset Mind will invoke its complaints procedures. Allegations of abuse need to be reported to Somerset Direct.
- 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 proceeding is brought against a South Somerset Mind worker and involve a third party, we will treat the situation with the utmost seriousness and urgency.

Code of practice for South Somerset Mind workers

- Uphold the spirit and specific provisions of the policy and related procedure.
- Do your best to behave in an open and friendly manner, but avoid being over familiar in word or action.
- If so far as possible, avoid situations in which you are alone with children or vulnerable adults. If necessary, move to a place where you can both be seen by colleagues or other adults.
- Try to avoid any physical contact or behaviour that could be unwelcome or misconstrued. Physical touch should only be in response to a child or vulnerable

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adult's needs and should respect their age and individual stage of development. It may be appropriate to hold a child or vulnerable adult's hand or put a reassuring arm around their shoulder to comfort them. However, you should first explain what you have in mind and ask directly if that is what they want. Otherwise, it may be unwelcome or misinterpreted.

- Where you have to rely on your own judgement, always treat the child or vulnerable adult's welfare as paramount, but ensure that this will not compromise your own safety.
- Be mindful of confidentiality but do not be afraid to seek support for yourself.
- Any member of staff or volunteer that has been convicted of any offence relating to children, young people or vulnerable adults, or any related disciplinary sanction will not be permitted to work on any event/project which involves contact with the same.
- Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, ex-offenders do not have to disclose spent convictions on their application form. However certain types of posts, particularly those that involve working with children or vulnerable adults or in other positions of trust or sensitive areas, are exempt from these provisions, and in these cases all convictions must be declared.
- It will be compulsory for all staff and volunteers to be CRB checked or registered on the Vetting and Barring Register with the Independent Safeguarding Authority before they begin work at South Somerset Mind
- If an employee or volunteer suspects that another staff member or volunteer is behaving inappropriately in any way towards a child, young person or vulnerable adult on the premises, that person should inform his or her line manager or the Operations Manager straight away or as soon as possible, depending on the severity of the issue. Further information can be found in SSM's Whistle Blowing Policy document.

Risk assessment

Any contact with children and vulnerable adults requires a risk assessment at the time of occurrence. The risk assessment allows you to assess any action required to ensure the child or vulnerable adult's protection. Where appropriate a risk assessment should be agreed with the client's social worker, parent or guardian.

Responding to Signs of Abuse

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It is not the responsibility of the employee/volunteer to deal with suspected abuse but it is their responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate person. It is important that all employees/volunteers should be aware of their responsibilities if child/vulnerable adult abuse is suspected.

If you suspect abuse has taken place, either by observation or by what has been said to that individual, the individual should:

1. Listen to the child or vulnerable adult, offer necessary support and reassurance. Record what is said and what is observed, recording accurately and in detail the nature of allegations as well as your own actions/response, who was present at the time and the times and dates. Please be aware that these records may be requested as evidence in support of cases in future.
2. Issues of confidentiality must be clarified early on. For example, where staff or volunteers working for an organisation are dealing with an initial concern/allegation it must be made clear that they will at least have to discuss the information/concerns with their supervisor/manager.
3. Where a vulnerable adult expresses a wish for concerns not to be pursued then this should be respected wherever possible. However, decisions about whether to respect the service user's wishes must have regard to the level of risk to the individual and/or others and their capacity to understand the decision in question and to make decisions relating to it. In some circumstances the child or vulnerable adult's wishes may be overridden in favour of considerations of safety.
4. Inform the safeguarding officer immediately: if not available then please contact by telephone.
5. In situations of immediate danger take urgent action by calling the relevant emergency services (e.g. Police, ambulance, GP).

Emergency contact list

Child protection issues - Somerset Direct – **0300 123 2224**

Safeguarding adults - Somerset Direct – **0300 123 2224**

GP – *Find number on clients referral form for their own practice*

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Avon and Somerset Police – *ask for correct department eg adults or young people/children* - **0845 456 7000**

Social services - **0300 123 2224**

Out of hours medical service **0845 408 8000** - *For urgent treatment when GP surgery is closed*

NHS Direct **0845 4647**

Yeovil Crisis and home treatment services – **01935 411605**

This is a service provided to people living in the community who require intensive, daily support who without this support would be admitted to an inpatient unit. Services run from 8.30am to 9.00pm but a duty doctor service is available 24/7.

Emergency duty team **0300 123 2327**

Local authority out of hours service available 5.30pm to 8.30am deal with emergency or urgently distressing situations, remit is mental health, child care and welfare legislation it is an out of hours service available including weekends and bank holidays.

999 – Emergency services police, fire, and ambulance.

Accidents, incidents and injuries

All accidents involving children/vulnerable adults must be recorded and reported to the safeguarding officers' first aid appointed person. Where the child/vulnerable adult is a client of another agency the accident must also be reported to their line manager/carer or parent.

Record Keeping

There should be a written record of any accidents or concerns. This confidential information will be kept in accordance with the data protection policy. Records should be full and accurate.

Implementation

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South Somerset Mind will ensure that all workers have access to a copy of this policy and related procedures, as part of their induction process.

South Somerset Mind expects and requires trustees and all managers to support their staff in carrying out this policy.

Monitoring and review

This policy is the responsibility of all workers who have contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It will be reviewed annually by the Business Development Manager. Any substantive changes that are required will be submitted to the Board for discussion and approval.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all South Somerset Mind's policies and procedures, in particular:

Safeguarding Adults and Child Protection Procedure, Health & Safety Policy, Lone Working Policy, Confidentiality, Data Protection, Whistleblowing Policy.

Safeguarding Officer 1: Doreen Smith
Safeguarding Officer 2: Caroline Chapman
First Aid Appointed Person: Doreen Smith

Do we need to make reference to Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board/ Somerset Safeguarding Children Board?

“The adoption of the term ‘adult at risk’ to replace ‘vulnerable adult’ but without a change in the definition of the type of person to whom these procedures apply. This change is in line with proposed changes to the legislation covering social care services.” – taken from Somerset Gov website about new terminology – consider adopting the new terminology – Croydon mind has adopted ‘adult at risk’ for example rather than ‘vulnerable adult’

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