



SP-UK

SUICIDE PREVENTION UK

Suicide Prevention UK

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

2024

Contents

- Introduction and Purpose 3
- Scope..... 3
- Responsibilities 4
- Legal Framework..... 5
- Overarching Policy 6
 - Principles..... 6
 - Equality and Diversity 6
 - Staff Training..... 6
 - Safe Staffing 7
 - Trustee and Senior Management Recruitment 7
 - Terrorism and the Prevent Duty 7
 - Confidentiality..... 7
 - Our Safeguarding Staff Code of Conduct..... 8
- Safeguarding Children..... 9
 - Safeguarding Children Definitions 9
 - Types of Abuse: Children 9
- Procedure: Children** 13
 - What to do if you have concerns about a child or young person 13
 - Accepting a disclosure 13
 - Do I need consent to report abuse or a concern? 14
 - What is mental capacity?..... 14
 - Should I tell the parents/guardians? 14
 - Where to report concerns 15
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults 16
 - Principles..... 16
 - Types of Abuse: Adults..... 16
- Procedure: Adults 18
 - What to do if you have concerns about a vulnerable adult 18
 - Accepting a disclosure 18
 - Do I need consent to report abuse or a concern? 19

Where to report your concerns	19
Record Keeping	20
Support For Those Who Report Abuse	20
Complaints	20
Managing Allegations Against Staff	21
Investigation.....	21
Taking Action.....	21
Monitoring and Reviewing.....	22

Introduction and Purpose

Children and vulnerable/at-risk adults are particularly vulnerable groups in society due to:

- Their possessing personal characteristics that may include, but are not limited to; age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty, impairment of or disturbance in the functioning of the mind or brain; and/or
- Their life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors, and environmental living conditions; and/or
- Their inability to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights, or other interests; and/or
- Where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing or is likely to cause them to be harmed.

As a registered Charity, Suicide Prevention UK (SPUK) has due regard for the following codes as a means of both promoting safeguarding and ensuring compliance with the Charity Commission:

- The [Charity Governance Code](#) for best practice advice, including on safeguarding.
- [Bond's 'Good governance for safeguarding'](#) supports developing good practices in governance.
- The Charity Commission's guidance on [working with children or adults at risk](#).
- UK Government: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and despite our not working directly with children and vulnerable adults, we acknowledge our duty of care to safeguard those groups and recognise that being proactive is the best way to stamp out abuse and neglect.

Scope

This policy applies to all Suicide Prevention UK staff, including paid employees, volunteers, Trustees, and subcontractors, who will be collectively referred to as staff throughout this policy.

Responsibilities

The **Trustees** must ensure that the Charity:

- Has appropriate policies and procedures in place, which are followed by all SPUK staff.
- Checks that people are suitable to act in their roles.
- Knows how to spot and handle concerns in a full and open manner.
- Has a clear system of referring or reporting to relevant agencies as soon as concerns are suspected or identified.
- Sets out risks and how they will be managed in a risk register which is regularly reviewed.
- Follows statutory guidance, good practice guidance and legislation relevant to the Charity.
- Is quick to respond to concerns and carry out appropriate investigations.
- Does not ignore harm or downplay failures.
- Has a balanced Trustee board that does not let one Trustee dominate its work – Trustees should work together.
- Makes sure protecting people from harm is central to its culture.
- Has enough resources, including trained staff, to ensure that the Charity can uphold its responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and protecting people.
- Conducts periodic reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures and practice.

The **Designated Safeguarding Leads** will:

- Provide advice to the Charity Trustees and staff about all elements of safeguarding.
- Know how to spot and handle concerns in a full and open manner.
- Work with the Trustees and authorities to manage safeguarding issues, investigate concerns and determine how to minimise the risk of harm.
- Identify safeguarding risks and maintain a risk register.
- Assist with staff and Trustee vetting.
- Ensure that SPUK staff receive the necessary safeguarding training.

- Ensure that the Trustees allocate ample resources for safeguarding and protecting people.
- Discipline staff for failing to abide by this policy and/or failure to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

We expect and will support all **SPUK staff** to:

- Read our safeguarding policy and procedures and abide by them.
- Attend safeguarding training as required.
- Know how to spot concerns.
- Understand the system of seeking help as concerns are suspected or identified in a confident and open manner.

Legal Framework

- The Children Act 1989 & 2004
- European Convention on Human Rights 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Care Act 2014
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Tackling Sexual Exploitation 2015
- Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015
- Prevent Duty Guidance 2023
- Every Child Matters 2009

Overarching Policy

Principles

SPUK will:

- Create and embed a culture of openness, trust, and transparency where:
 - the principles of safeguarding are applied and embedded across the organisation;
 - our values and expectations around behaviour are monitored and reinforced constantly;
 - our stakeholders feel confident enough to raise any concerns they have regarding safeguarding or child/vulnerable adult welfare;
 - our stakeholders know where to seek support and assistance;
 - as appropriate, we work in partnership with the local authority and other support services to understand how to best support the child or vulnerable adult;
 - we make safeguarding personal and at all times consider the views, wishes, and beliefs of the child or vulnerable adult to ensure that we act in their best interests whilst also ensuring that we act appropriately given their age and capacity;
 - we are clear about what we do and why we take the action we take;
 - we work to review our ways of working to continuously improve and incorporate good practice at all times.

Equality and Diversity

SPUK will ensure all individuals interacting with our service, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status, have the right to be protected from abuse and that their rights, dignity and worth are always respected.

Staff Training

All SPUK staff will undertake mandatory in-house training, which includes but is not limited to the reading and understanding of this policy.

Our Safeguarding Leads will complete the appropriate level of approved safeguarding training.

Trustees will be aware of and will comply with the Charity Commission guidance on [safeguarding and protecting people](#) and also the [10 actions trustee boards need to take](#) to ensure good safeguarding governance.

Safe Staffing

SPUK ensures that its staff are suitable and legally able to act in their positions.

Procedures to ensure this include:

- Checking identity documents; and
- Obtaining and verifying references; and
- Completing DBS and/or overseas Police checks; and
- Checking right to work.

Trustee and Senior Management Recruitment

SPUK will not appoint anyone who is disqualified as a Trustee or barred from holding a senior management position (at the chief executive or finance director level) following the [Charity Commission Guidance](#).

All Trustees will be recruited in line with the following Charity Commission guidance:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1055600/CC30_170222.pdf.

Terrorism and the Prevent Duty

All charities must prevent abuse for extremist purposes, and SPUK will have due regard to and will follow guidance on the [Prevent duty](#).

Staff members with concerns relating to radicalisation or extremism should immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Staff are reminded that radicalisation and extremism must not be confused with religious beliefs that differ from their own and that SPUK will not tolerate any hate speech or discrimination.

Confidentiality

All documentation relating to safeguarding incidents or allegations will be kept and treated confidentially and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and UK GDPR 2018.

The Data Protection Act and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. Similarly, there are legitimate reasons why personal and sensitive data may be shared with third parties where there are safeguarding concerns relating to vulnerable adults, whether the adult consents or not.

If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should refer to the related sections below, speak to our Safeguarding Lead, or refer to the following UK guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>.

Our Safeguarding Staff Code of Conduct

It is the policy that all staff must:

- Work safely and responsibly and take responsibility for their own actions, omissions, and behaviour.
- Ensure that they understand their role, duties, and limitations under this policy.
- Keep up to date with training.
- Respect confidentiality and understand when they can and cannot share information.
- Avoid any conduct towards children and vulnerable adults which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions. This includes being over-familiar, giving or asking for personal favours, gifting items or money.
- Avoid one-to-one situations where they are left alone with children and vulnerable adults.
- Not make physical contact with any children or vulnerable adults unless:
 - It is necessary, for example, to hold onto them to prevent them from jumping from a bridge or in front of a car.
 - It is appropriate and they have provided consent. For example, a staff member may put their arm around someone in distress to provide comfort or physically touch them to provide first aid; however, the staff member must ask for consent first, and in such circumstances, a trusted adult must act as a chaperone.
- Not use profane or inappropriate language or make comments or jokes which may cause offence.
- Not record images of service users or other stakeholders on personal devices.
- Respect the privacy of others – respect their space, respect their views, respect their right to make their own decisions, etc.
- Be professional and act respectfully when dealing with safeguarding concerns.
- Dress appropriately in a way that is unlikely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative and does not distract, cause embarrassment, or give rise to misunderstanding.

Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding Children Definitions

Working Together to Safeguard Children defines **Safeguarding** as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Children: In this document, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Young People: A young person may be referred to as an adolescent or young person who they are between 16 and 18 years of age. This group has certain rights, including but not limited to being asked to consent to a report being made on their behalf in relation to certain safeguarding concerns. However, they are classed as children under the law.

Harm is defined as the ill-treatment or impairment of health and development. This definition was clarified by section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (implemented on 31 January 2005) to include "impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another" (for example, in the case of a child who witnesses domestic abuse).

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of 'Significant Harm' as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children; the Act places a duty on local authorities to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm.

Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse and Neglect are all categories of Significant Harm.

Types of Abuse: Children

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child on purpose. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is also a form of physical abuse and is illegal in the UK.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only as far as they meet the needs of another person.
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or ridiculing what they say or how they communicate.
- Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction.
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying).
- Causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger.
- Exploiting and corrupting children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent failing to fulfil any of the following:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child and includes inducing a child to act in sexually inappropriate ways.

The sexual abuse of children is more than just physical contact and includes:

- sexual touching, masturbation, kissing, rubbing - clothed or unclothed

- all penetrative sex
- intentionally engaging in sexual activity in front of a child
- making, showing, or distributing indecent images of children.
- grooming children for future abuse - in person or online

Child-on-child abuse (peer abuse) is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse').
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
- Sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- Consensual image sharing, especially between older children of the same age, may require a different response. It might not be abusive, but children still need to know it is illegal. Non-consensual image sharing and sharing images of younger children, however, is illegal and abusive.
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery).
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm.
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Human Trafficking

Child trafficking is a very serious crime which can have a devastating and lasting impact on its victims. Children can be trafficked into, within and out of the UK.

Children are trafficked for many reasons, including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, labour, benefit fraud and involvement in criminal activity such as pick-pocketing, theft and working in cannabis farms. There are a number of cases of minors being exploited in the sex industry.

Extremism and Radicalisation

Radicalisation is targeting the vulnerable by seeking to promote division between communities based on race, faith, or denomination, justify discrimination towards women and girls, persuade others that minorities are inferior, or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. This may lead to extremism and criminal acts.

Children may also be radicalised through grooming or coercion.

Child Criminal Exploitation

Child criminal exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) for the financial or another advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence.

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them.

Domestic Abuse

Young people aged 16 and 17 may be victims of domestic abuse, and children under the age of 16 may be victims if they are exposed to the abuse.

Procedure: Children

What to do if you have concerns about a child or young person

You may have concerns about a child because of something you have seen or heard, or a child may choose to disclose something to you.

The following process is further detailed below; however, in short, all staff must:

1. Accept the disclosure and/or record any concerns noted without a disclosure (for example, observing bruises or overhearing/seeing something concerning).
2. **In an emergency (if children are in immediate danger), call the Police on 999** and continue with the process as appropriate.
3. If a child or young person has a physical injury or requires medical assistance, this should be sought immediately by phoning 999 and requesting an ambulance.
4. Ask for consent to share the concern with the Local Safeguarding Board if appropriate (see below).
5. Speak to the Safeguarding Lead and report your concerns.
6. The Safeguarding Lead will:
 - a. Make a referral to the Local Safeguarding Team (See Where to report concerns section) as appropriate; and/or
 - b. Involve any other relevant organisations as appropriate, for example, the LADO; and
 - c. Provide first-line support as appropriate.
7. The Local Safeguarding Team and/or Police will manage the matter but may ask for more information from the staff member, who should cooperate with any formal investigation.

Accepting a disclosure

If a child or young person discloses information to you, you should:

- ✓ If you are with the individual - make the area safe and call the Police if necessary.
- ✓ Not promise confidentiality. We may have a duty to share this information and refer it to the Local Safeguarding Team and/or the Police.
- ✓ Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- ✓ Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing by telling someone.
- ✓ Not interrogate them or take photographs of them.

- ✓ Not ask leading questions (e.g., "Did he touch your private parts?").
- ✓ Not ask them to repeat the information for another member of staff.
- ✓ Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- ✓ Take notes if possible, or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards so that nothing is forgotten. Record the words used by the child or young person (do not paraphrase) and any non-verbal behaviour witnessed which causes concern.
- ✓ Record the date, time, and place.
- ✓ Ask the young person (16/17 years of age) if they consent to a report being made (the section below outlines the need for consent in certain circumstances).

Do I need consent to report abuse or a concern?

- You DO NOT need the permission of a child under the age of sixteen or over the age of sixteen who lacks the mental capacity to consent to report genuine suspicions or allegations of abuse or neglect to our Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the Local Authority/Police.
- You DO NOT need anyone's permission to report a crime or any situation where there is a concern that a child and/or children is/are in immediate danger to the Police.
- You DO need to try to obtain the consent of a person aged sixteen or seventeen to share the information outside of the organisation if you believe that they have the mental capacity to consent. However, if consent is not given, you may still share the information with the Local Authority/Police if it is in the public interest, if there is a legal basis for sharing the information, or if a child or children are at risk of significant harm.

What is mental capacity?

A person lacks mental capacity where they have a reduced ability to make informed decisions "in the moment". This may be transient (e.g., due to fear, shock, injury, or illness) or long-term (e.g., due to learning differences, disability, or mental health issues). Staff should always try to use plain language and aid the young person wherever possible to understand the concern and make an informed decision as to whether they would like it to be reported.

Whilst capacity to consent is a complex issue. It should not get in the way of genuine concerns going unreported.

Should I tell the parents/guardians?

Best practice shows that parents/guardians should be notified of the intended referral if the staff member has contact with them, although only if doing so would not put the child or young person at further risk of harm.

However, the following are circumstances where disclosure to the parent, guardian or responsible adult is **not** appropriate:

- Where sexual abuse or sexual exploitation is suspected.
- Where organised or multiple cases of abuse are suspected.
- Where Fabricated or Induced Illness (previously known as Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy) is suspected.
- Where Female Genital Mutilation is the concern.
- In cases of suspected Forced Marriage.
- Where it would place a child or young person, yourself, or others at immediate risk.

Where to report concerns

The local authority the report is made to should be the local authority where the victim lives or, if this is unknown, where the abuse took place.

The contact details for the Bristol Local Authority Safeguarding Team are:

- The Bristol First Response Team: **0117 903 6444**
- The Bristol Emergency Duty Team (out of hours): **01454 615 165**

If outside of Bristol, simply type in "report concerns about a child in #CITY/TOWN NAME".

However, staff must be aware that the Police should be contacted on 999 immediately and that they DO NOT need consent to make this call:

- If a crime is being committed.
- If life is at risk.
- If a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Principles

Making Safeguarding Personal

Legislation recognises that adults make choices that may mean that one part of their well-being suffers at the expense of another. Similarly, adults can also make a decision to risk their personal safety.

'Making Safeguarding Personal' means engaging an adult at risk in a conversation about how best to respond to their situation in a way that enhances their involvement, choice and control, as well as improving their quality of life, well-being and safety. Their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs will be taken into account when decisions are made about how to support them to be safe and find the solution that is right for them. Treating people with respect, enhancing their dignity and supporting their ability to make decisions also helps promote people's sense of self-worth and support recovery from abuse.

If an adult at risk has difficulty making their views and wishes known, they can be supported or represented by an advocate. This might be a safe family member or friend of their choice or a professional advocate (usually from a third-sector organisation).

Being able to live free from abuse and neglect is a key element of well-being. Any actions taken to safeguard an adult must take their whole well-being into account and be proportionate to the risk of harm.

Types of Abuse: Adults

- Physical abuse – including hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- Sexual abuse – including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.
- Psychological abuse – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- Exploitation – either opportunistically or premeditated, unfairly manipulating someone for profit or personal gain.
- Financial or material abuse – including theft, fraud, exploitation, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

- Neglect and acts of omission include ignoring medical or physical care needs, failing to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, and withholding the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating.
- Discriminatory abuse – including discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics.
- Organisational or Institutional Abuse – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting like a hospital or care home, for example. This may range from isolated incidents to continuing ill-treatment.
- Domestic abuse – including physical, emotional, and financial abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and controlling or coercive behaviour
- Self-Neglect - lack of self-care to the extent that it threatens personal health and safety, neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings, inability to avoid self-harm, failure to seek help or access services to meet health and social care needs.
- Radicalisation.
- Modern Slavery.
- Female Genital Mutilation.

Procedure: Adults

What to do if you have concerns about a vulnerable adult

The following process is further detailed below; however, in short, all staff must:

1. Accept the disclosure and/or record any concerns noted without a disclosure (for example, observing bruises or overhearing/seeing something concerning).
2. **In an emergency, call the Police on 999** and continue with the process as appropriate.
3. If an adult has a physical injury or requires medical assistance, this should be sought immediately by phoning 999 and requesting an ambulance.
4. Try to get the adult's consent.
5. Speak to the Safeguarding Lead and report your concerns.
6. The Safeguarding Lead will:
 - a. Make a referral to the Local Safeguarding Team as appropriate; and/or
 - b. Involve any other relevant organisations as appropriate, for example, the LADO; and
 - c. Provide first-line support as appropriate.
7. The Local Safeguarding Team and/or Police will manage the matter but may ask for more information from the staff member, who should cooperate with any formal investigation.

Accepting a disclosure

If an adult has reported to you that they have been abused, are being abused, or are at risk of abuse, you should:

- ✓ If you are with the individual, make the area safe.
- ✓ Encourage the individual to talk to you.
- ✓ Ask open questions to gather as much information as you can.
- ✓ Act in a calm manner, speak slowly and clearly and obtain an interpreter or another communication aid if necessary.
- ✓ Try to assess capacity: is the adult able to understand information about the decision, remember that information, use that information to make a decision, and communicate their decision by talking, using sign language or any other means?
- ✓ Explain your concern and explain that you would like to share information with the Police and/or Local Authority and ask for their consent.
- ✓ Never promise that you will keep a secret, as consent may be overridden.

Do I need consent to report abuse or a concern?

Unlike children, adults have a general right to independence, choice and self-determination, including control over information about themselves.

Therefore, the law DOES prevent the sharing of sensitive, personal information between organisations where the adult has capacity, and there is no legal and legitimate reason for the information to be shared.

However, the law DOES NOT prevent the sharing of sensitive, personal information between organisations where the public interest served outweighs the public interest served by protecting confidentiality – for example, where a serious crime may be prevented and/or in an emergency or life-threatening situations involving adults or children.

Therefore, every staff member MUST try to gain consent from an adult before sharing information outside of the organisation. However, if the adult is believed to lack capacity, it may be shared externally.

All staff must also remember that just because a decision is unwise in their eyes, this does not override the law, and however difficult it is, an adult with capacity has the right to make informed decisions no matter how this negatively impacts their own life. For example, self-neglect may not be a safeguarding issue if the adult has capacity to make the decision not to provide themselves with adequate care.

Where to report your concerns

The local authority the report is made to should be the local authority where the victim lives or, if this is unknown, where the abuse took place.

The contact details for the Bristol Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Team are:

- **0117 922 2700** (Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 6 pm).
- **0145 615 765** (out of hours)
- Online Referral Forms for Bristol are available at: <https://digital.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/form-contact-adult-care-services>

If outside of Bristol, simply type in "report concerns about a vulnerable adult in #CITY/TOWN NAME".

However, staff must be aware that the Police should be contacted on 999 immediately and that they DO NOT need consent to make this call:

- If a crime is being committed.
- If life is at risk.
- If a child or young person is in immediate danger or is at risk of significant harm.

Record Keeping

Records must be legible, factual, timely and accurate records of what you did and why to demonstrate transparent, defensible decision-making.

Records should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant (if known) and, where different, the name of the individual who has allegedly been abused (if known), the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation, and the name of the person at the agency to whom the concern was passed onto (if relevant).

Records must reflect if consent was or was not obtained and, if relevant, why the concern was reported if consent was withheld.

When sharing safeguarding information, we keep a dated record of:

- what has been shared
- with whom
- for what purpose

All safeguarding-related information is kept securely for no longer than necessary in accordance with The Data Protection Act and GDPR.

Support For Those Who Report Abuse

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they are staff members, users of our service, or members of the general public, should be reassured that they will be taken seriously and that we will take action as necessary.

Complaints

Any complaint about the way SPUK has managed a particular safeguarding issue will be logged through our Complaints Policy.

If the complaint concerns sensitive or confidential information or information which is the subject of an ongoing investigation, it may be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s), who will discuss it with the relevant people on a need-to-know basis and respond to the complaint as appropriate, having established the facts and bearing in mind the competing interests that may be at stake.

Managing Allegations Against Staff

All allegations of abuse by staff, both present and historical, must and will be taken seriously.

Any reports received must be submitted to the Designated Safeguarding Leads within one working day.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a staff member has:

- Behaved in a way which has or may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult; or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or vulnerable adult; or
- Behaved towards children or vulnerable adults in a way which indicates that they are unsuitable to work with these groups.

The allegations may relate to the person's behaviour at work, at home or in another setting.

Investigation

All allegations will be investigated and, as a minimum, will involve an initial process to establish the facts and decide whether a formal investigation is warranted.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads and/or Trustees will then proceed to:

- Inform the local LADO within one working day of the allegation being received; and
- Carry out any informal or formal investigation with assistance and guidance from the LADO.

Taking Action

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

1. The Police being informed of a possible criminal offence; and/or
2. A referral being made to the Local Authority Safeguarding Team; and/or
3. Consideration of suspension or temporary adjustments to the role.

Making an adjustment to a role does not in any way imply guilt. It is purely an action designed to allow an investigation to be carried out as quickly as possible while minimising risk.

All colleagues who are subject to such action will be offered appropriate support until any investigation is concluded.

Monitoring and Reviewing

This policy should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains compliant with current legislation, meets best practices, and is not discriminatory.

The Trustees are responsible for this process and will review the policies at least once a year or more frequently if needed due to changes in laws, industry or regulatory guidance or best practice.

Policy Date: December 2020

Review Date: April 2024

Next Review: April 2025

Dated and Signed by the Chair and Founder of Suicide Prevention UK:
