SOUTHWARK DAY CENTRE
FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

# SDCAS Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children's Policy

**Policy Statement**

SDCAS is committed to ensuring that service users are welcomed into a safe and caring environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere. SDCAS recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its staff, paid and unpaid, to prevent the neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse of vulnerable adults and children and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

This policy outlines the steps SDCAS will make to safeguard those with care and support needs if they are deemed to be at risk or at risk and not be in a position to protect themselves against harm or exploitation due to many reasons, including: their mental or physical incapacity, sensory loss, age in the case of children, physical or learning disabilities. This could be those who are usually able to protect themselves from harm but maybe unable to do so because of an accident, disability, frailty, addiction, illness etc.

SDCAS adheres to following the six key principles that underpin safeguarding work (See Care Act guidance).

- Empowerment

- Prevention

- Proportionality

- Protection

- Partnership

- Accountability

Staff and volunteers should ensure that their work reflects the principles above and ensure adults with care and support needs are involved in their decisions and informed consent is obtained.

**Roles and responsibilities**

All staff, management, trustees and volunteers are expected to:

- Recognise indicators of abuse or harm; report effectively and in line with procedures; respect and uphold the rights and dignity of adults at risk, families, children and young people;
- Know the categories of abuse; be aware of the six safeguarding principles and be able to use them to inform their response to safeguarding;
- Be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to vulnerable adults and children;
- Follow the safeguarding procedures as set out in this policy;
- Access and take an active part in safeguarding training and ongoing learning opportunities.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for safeguarding adults and children and should be the initial point of contact for safeguarding queries or concerns. In their absence contact the second designated lead for safeguarding.

The Director is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy and ensuring that the recruitment of staff both paid and unpaid is done in accordance with safer recruitment.

The Volunteer Coordinator has delegated responsibility for safer recruitment of volunteers and ensuring that all volunteers receive regular training on SDCAS safeguarding policy and procedures.

The SDCAS trustees are responsible for ensuring that SDCAS has policies and procedures in place for protecting adults at risk and children; that there are named people designated to lead this work and for overseeing the operation of this policy.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for SDCAS is Alice Kidney.**

• All staff and volunteers should contact the DSL with any concerns/queries they have in regards to safeguarding adults and/or children.

• Key staff members/trustees will be responsible to make decisions about notifying adult or child social services if required and consider alternative actions, where necessary.

**This policy is based on the following relevant law and guidance:**

- The Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support statutory guidance
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009
- Care Act 2014
- Children & Families Act 2014
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- GDPR Regulations 2018
- Safeguarding Children Who May Have Been Trafficked, Home Office, 2011
- Care of Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children, HM Government 2014
- Modern Slavery Strategy, Home Office 2014
- HM Government's 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018
- Prevent Duty Guidance 2021 under s29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Pan London Adult Safeguarding policy and procedures
- London Safeguarding Children Procedures and Practice Guidance
- The Human Rights Act 1998 under which everyone has the right to live free from abuse and
- neglect. https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights/human-rights-act

SDCAS should ensure that the safeguarding action agreed is the least intrusive response to the risk. Partners from the community should be involved in any safeguarding work in

preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. SDCAS should be transparent and accountable in delivering safeguarding actions.

If the allegation is against one of SDCAS members, volunteers, trustees or directors, seek advice from the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). If the allegation is against the DSL, seek advice from SDCAS Chair of Trustees.

- The designated safeguarding lead should be responsible for providing acknowledgement of the referral and brief feedback to the person raising the original concern.

- Feedback should be given in a way that will not make the situation worse or breach the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

- If the police are involved, they should be consulted prior to giving feedback to the referrer to ensure any criminal investigation is not affected.

- The local authority will decide on who will lead on a safeguarding enquiry should it progress to that stage.

- SDCAS should not conduct its own safeguarding enquiry unless instructed to do so by the local authority.

- Staff and volunteers should ensure that the adult with care and support needs is involved at all stages of their safeguarding enquiry ensuring a person-centred approach is adopted.

**Prevent**

- Radicalisation and extremism of adults or children with care and support needs is a form of emotional/psychological exploitation. Radicalisation can take place through direct personal contact, or indirectly through social media.

- If staff are concerned that an adult or child with care and support needs is at risk of being radicalised and drawn into terrorism, they should treat it in the same way as any other safeguarding concern.

- For more information about Prevent see: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventduty-guidance

**Adult Safeguarding Procedures**

**Staff and volunteers who have any adult safeguarding concerns should:**

**Respond**

- Take emergency action if someone is at immediate risk of harm/in need of urgent medical attention. Dial 999 for emergency services.

- Get brief details about what has happened; what the adult would like done about it, but do not probe or conduct a mini-investigation.

- Seek consent from the adult to take action and to report the concern. Consider whether the adult may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other people's safety and wellbeing. If you decide to act against their wishes or without their consent, you must record your decision and the reasons for this.

**Record**

- Preserve evidence and ask the adult what they would like to happen.

- Complete a safeguarding form via the MyConcern platform with all the relevant details and submit this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- As far as possible, records should be written contemporaneously, dated and signed.

- Keep records about safeguarding concerns confidential and in a location where the alleged abuser will not have access to the record. Access should not be given to any unauthorised personnel for accessing confidential information.

**Report**

- Any potential safeguarding concerns should be reported to the SDCAS Designated Safeguarding Lead. This can be done by completing and submitting the safeguarding report form via MyConcern Safeguarding Platform.

**Refer**

In making a decision whether to refer or not, the designated safeguarding lead will take the following into account:

• In the case of an adult - the adult's wishes and preferred outcome

• whether the adult has mental capacity to make an informed decision about their own and

others' safety

• the safety or wellbeing of children or other adults with care and support needs

• whether there is a person in a position of trust involved

• whether a crime has been committed

This should inform the decision whether to notify the concern to:

• the police if a crime has been committed, and/or

• GP and/or Southwark or other borough Adult Social Care

• relevant Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for possible safeguarding enquiry if children are involved

• relevant regulatory bodies such as Care Quality Commission, Ofsted, Charities commission

• service commissioning teams

• family/relatives as appropriate (seek advice from relevant adult social services)

The DSL should keep a record of the reasons for referring the concern or reasons for not referring. The local authority will decide on who will lead on a safeguarding enquiry should it progress to that stage. The named organisation should not conduct its own safeguarding enquiry unless instructed to do so by the local authority.

## Procedure for protecting children and young people (under 18 years)

### What to do in an emergency

If you think a child is in immediate danger or a criminal act has taken place you should telephone the police on 999. You should then contact the DSL, second DSL or Child Protection Officer on the SDCAS Trustee Board as appropriate.

In a medical emergency your first action may need to be one of the following:

- Telephone for an ambulance, or,
- Ask the parent/carer to take the child to hospital at once, or,
- Only as a last resort and only if another adult is able to accompany you, take the child to hospital yourself.

The child or young person is the legal responsibility of the parent/carer, and they must be involved as soon as practical unless to do so would put the child at immediate risk of harm.

Where emergency action has been taken you should complete the SDCAS safeguarding report and submit to the DSL via the MyConcern Platform.

In all other circumstances you need to follow the procedures below.

### Recognising abuse

Recognising abuse is one of the first steps in protecting children and young people. There could be signs or behaviour that make you feel concerned. All staff paid and unpaid, should be alert to the following types of behaviour in children and young people:

- Becoming excessively aggressive, withdrawn or clingy;
- Seeming to be keeping a secret;
- Significant changes in their behaviour;

- Deterioration in their well being;
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect;
- Any bruising or marks on a non mobile baby;
- Unreasonable fear of certain people or places;
- Acting out in an inappropriate way perhaps with adults, other children or young people, toys or objects;
- Children and young people's comments which give cause for concern eg. Inconsistent explanations of bruising, injuries or burns;
- Sexually explicit language or actions;
- Self-harm;
- Are upset, withdrawn or angry after using the internet or texting;
- Demonstrating that their mental health is suffering;
- Children or young people who go missing, particularly on repeat occasions when they have been expected or have an appointment at SDCAS

Staff should be equally vigilant regarding signs relating to disabled children and young people and not automatically assume that any of the above relates to their impairment.

**Respond**

SDCAS is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of child protection by treating any allegation seriously and sensitively.

If you suspect a child or young person is being harmed or they disclose that they are being harmed you should:

- Stay calm;
- Listen to what the child/young person is actually saying;
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you;
- As soon as possible, inform the DSL and if appropriate they will take over from this point.

• As open questions e.g. can you tell me why you are upset? Can you tell me why you don't want

to go home today? Can you tell me what is frightening you?

• Do not ask leading or closed questions. For example a leading question is: Are you afraid to go

home because your mum will hit you?

• Do not ask the child/young person to repeat what they have told you. If the matter is to be investigated further it will be done by trained professionals.

• Do not promise the child that this can be kept a secret as subsequent disclosure could then lead to the child feeling betrayed. If appropriate, explain to the child/young person who you are going to tell and why. If the child asks what might happen next it's ok to say you don't know but you can be there to support them if they want.

• Reassure the child/young person that the people who will be informed will be sensitive to their needs and will be looking to help protect them.

**Record**

• Make a note of any conversations with the child or young person, trying to make these as detailed as possible, including when and where the conversations took place.

• Record as soon as possible and use the actual words used by the child or young person.

• Keep all records factual.

• Submit your record to MyConcern Platform.

**Concerns about the practice of colleagues within SDCAS**

If you have serious concerns about the practice of any staff member, paid or unpaid, you should consult the whistleblowing policy which states: If an employee has a concern about the conduct of a fellow employee in the working environment (e.g. that they are not treating colleagues with respect) they should raise these with their line manager, or if that is not possible, with the Director, Chair of Trustees or through the Charity Commission's whistle blowing policy whistleblowing@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk. If you have exhausted the

whistleblowing process you should escalate outside the organisation www.gov.uk/whistleblowing.

Whilst it can be very difficult to raise issues about the professional practice of a colleague this should not be ignored where to do so might leave a child or an adult with care and support needs at risk of abuse or neglect.

**Check**

If there is immediate risk to the child relating to a threshold decision then discuss with the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) manager.

- Stage 1: Involve the worker from other agency and inform your line manager of your actions
- Stage 2: Escalate line manager to line manager
- Stage 3: Escalate to operational directors/assistant directors
- Stage 4: Escalate to Quality Assurance Unit
- Stage 5: Escalate to SSCP independent chair

**Escalation**

Escalation is the process by which professional disputes about safeguarding issues should be dealt with. Learning from Serious Case Reviews and Safeguarding Adult reviews highlights the importance of resolving professional differences of opinion to ensure that children, young people and adults are not left at risk of harm. If sufficiently serious and when disagreements are not able to be resolved, it is important that they are escalated formally and recorded.

**Southwark Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) multi-agency escalation procedure for professionals or volunteers with child protection or child welfare concern**

If a professional or volunteer is unhappy with a decision or response from any agency following a referral within the partnership then refer to the following process.

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**Complaints procedure**

SDCAS promotes transparency and honesty when things go wrong.

- SDCAS should apologise and be honest with service users and other relevant people when things go wrong.
- If a staff or volunteer or any other member of the organisation is unhappy with SDCAS's decision about the safeguarding concern, refer them to the organisations complaints policy and procedure.
- Consider incidents of abuse which may be one-off or multiple and may affect one person or more.
- Staff and volunteers should look beyond single incidents to identify patterns of harm. Accurate recording of information will also assist in recognising any patterns.
- SDCAS is registered with the Charity Commission and therefore all staff and volunteers have a legal Duty of Care to give a full and honest explanation to people when things go wrong.
- SDCAS is committed to ensuring that staff and volunteers who in good faith whistle -blow in the public interest, will be protected from reprisals and victimisation.

**Recruitment and selection**

SDCAS is committed to safe recruitment practices, such as Disclosure and Barring checks and the taking of references, to reduce the risk of exposing adults and children with care and support needs to people unsuitable to work with them.

**Training, awareness raising and supervision**

- All staff and volunteers should be clear about the core values of SDCAS and commitment to safeguarding.
- SDCAS ensures that all staff and volunteers receive basic awareness training on this policy and safeguarding of adults and children. This is offered on an annual basis.
- Those adults may report things of concern to staff or volunteers who should be equipped with the basic knowledge around safeguarding and be confident to identify that abuse is taking place and action is required.

- It is also useful to discuss training with staff who have attended training sessions to ensure they are embedding this in practice.

Voluntary organisations (including volunteers) who support adults and children with care and support needs can access the basic awareness safeguarding training provided by Southwark Council contact: My learning source (Appx A)

**Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Alice Kidney (safeguarding@sdcas.org.uk)

**Deputy Safeguarding Lead**

Sally Inman

**Trustee Responsible for Safeguarding**

Sally Inman

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