

Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Highlight the responsibilities of all staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of all vulnerable adults who engage with Suffolk Rape Crisis (SRC) and, in particular, to protect them from harm.
- Provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

SRC is committed to practices that protect vulnerable adults from harm. Staff, volunteers and management committee members recognise and accept responsibilities to develop awareness of issues surrounding working with vulnerable adults.

The term 'staff' is used to describe anyone engaged by SRC whether on a paid or voluntary basis.

SRC will endeavour to safeguard vulnerable adults by:

- Adopting a vulnerable adult's policy.
- Working to raise awareness of sexual abuse, to prevent the mistreatment of vulnerable women.
- Ensuring that the Disclosure and Barring Service, in accordance with their guidelines, checks staff, volunteers and management committee members before they join the organisation.
- Making all members of SRC aware of our vulnerable adults policy.
- Accessing training/resources where and when this is needed in order to enhance and increase our awareness and recognition of the issues involved in working with vulnerable adults.
- Being aware of where to go for help, advice and support.

The named overall lead for safeguarding is the Director

In the event that an individual has a safeguarding concern involving the Director, then this should be reported directly to the named safeguarding trustee.

In addition to the role played by the designated safeguarding lead, support for staff in dealing with child protection issues, as well as other areas of their work, is available through their line manager, peer supervision and external clinical supervision.

Six Principles underpinning Adult Safeguarding Work

- Empowerment – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- Prevention – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- Proportionality – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

- Protection – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- Partnership – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- Accountability – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, adults at risk refers to someone over 18 years old who, according to paragraph 42.1 of the Care Act 2014:

- Has care and support needs
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- As a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Abuse is harm caused to a vulnerable person by an act, or failure to act on the part of another person (AIMS 1998). It is a violation of a person's human and civil rights.

The main categories of abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Institutional abuse

Context

Safeguarding is underpinned by a range of legislation and government guidance:

Local Safeguarding Board
Care Act 2014
Mental capacity Act 2005

Additional guidance and resources can be found here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health/protecting-adults-at-risk-of-abuse/report-a-concern-about-an-adult/>

Capacity, Consent and Decision-Making

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides a statutory framework to empower and protect adults at risk who may not be able to make their own decisions. The whole Act is underpinned by a set of five key principles:

- A presumption of capacity - every adult has the right to make his or her own decisions and must be assumed to have capacity to do so unless it is proved otherwise;

- The right for individuals to be supported to make their own decisions - people must be given all appropriate help before anyone concludes that they cannot make their own decisions;
- That individuals must retain the right to make what might be seen as eccentric or unwise decisions;
- Best interests - anything done for or on behalf of people without capacity must be in their best interests; and
- Least restrictive intervention - anything done for or on behalf of people without capacity should be the least restrictive of their basic rights and freedoms.

Expectations

All successful (following interview) applicants will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced check whether or not they are directly delivering services. Staff and volunteers are selected on their suitability to meet the job/role-related requirements and responsibilities and their ability to demonstrate that they can work safely with vulnerable adults.

We expect all staff to safeguard vulnerable adults by:

- Valuing them, listening to them and respecting them
- Taking disclosures made by vulnerable adults seriously, discussing them with the Director and recording them appropriately
- Reporting all concerns as soon as possible to the Director
- Making clear to all service users when we must break confidentiality and share information
- Supporting and empowering all women accessing SRC to make their own decisions

We do not expect staff to:

- **Make the final decision about whether a situation should be referred on – this decision will be made by the safeguarding lead.**

The director and trustees will

- Ensure that all staff are introduced to, and confident in the implementation of, this policy as part of their induction process
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training and this is updated every 3 years
- Provide follow through support and guidance following any safeguarding issues
- Recruit staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks will be made
- Provide effective management for staff and volunteers through high quality supervision
- be proactive in informing employees about the importance of good safeguarding practice
- be committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Confidentiality and the Helpline

Our helpline and email support services maintain a policy of strict organisational confidentiality. We do not know names, addresses or other personal information about our service users. This means we do not have a legal obligation to report cases of abuse of vulnerable adults as we do not have the personal identifying information needed to do this. As with all our service users, when we receive a helpline call or email from a vulnerable adult who discloses that she is currently experiencing abuse, the helpline or email worker should provide safety and confidentiality, giving the caller space to talk through her options and empowering her to make her own choices. Where appropriate, this policy can be explained to callers. If you have any doubts or concerns, raise this with the safeguarding lead.

Should a caller disclose her full name and address, is aged under 18 and who is currently experiencing abuse, then the helpline volunteer should contact the Safeguarding Lead, as described in the Child Safeguarding Policy.

Confidentiality and the Counselling Service

The legal duty of SRC to disclose ongoing abuse is not absolute and therefore, working within the remit of the Data Protection, Confidentiality and Sharing Information Policy, clients who remain in abusive environments will not face disclosure to external agencies without their consent unless it is felt there is significant risk to the client or to the welfare of a child or another vulnerable adult. In these circumstances, any sharing of information will be discussed and explored with the service user prior to the disclosure of such information to external agencies. The matter will, however, be dealt with as swiftly as possible for the safety of those concerned.

Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, so be clear with vulnerable adults about where boundaries lie.

Vulnerable adults can be reassured that no information can be disclosed without their consent, **unless related to a significant risk to their life, the lives of others or the welfare of a child (see child protection policy).**

If confidentiality cannot be maintained, the information will only be shared with relevant people and, outside of these people, will remain subject to the Data Protection, Confidentiality and Sharing Information Policy. The vulnerable adult will be informed and supported appropriately.

Any circumstances where confidentiality may be breached must be taken to the Safeguarding Lead in the first instance before any disclosure is made.

Dealing with a disclosure or concern from a vulnerable adult service user

In the event that a vulnerable adult service user makes an allegation, disclosure or gives you concern about their safety, it is important that you:

- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour;

- Let them know that you take what they are saying seriously;
- Do not attempt to question or interview them yourself;
- Let them know that you have to pass on this information and ask for their permission to do so;
- Inform the designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible;
- Take notes and make a written record of the incident or events. Notes should be accurate and use the service user's exact words if they disclosed the information to you, not your own.

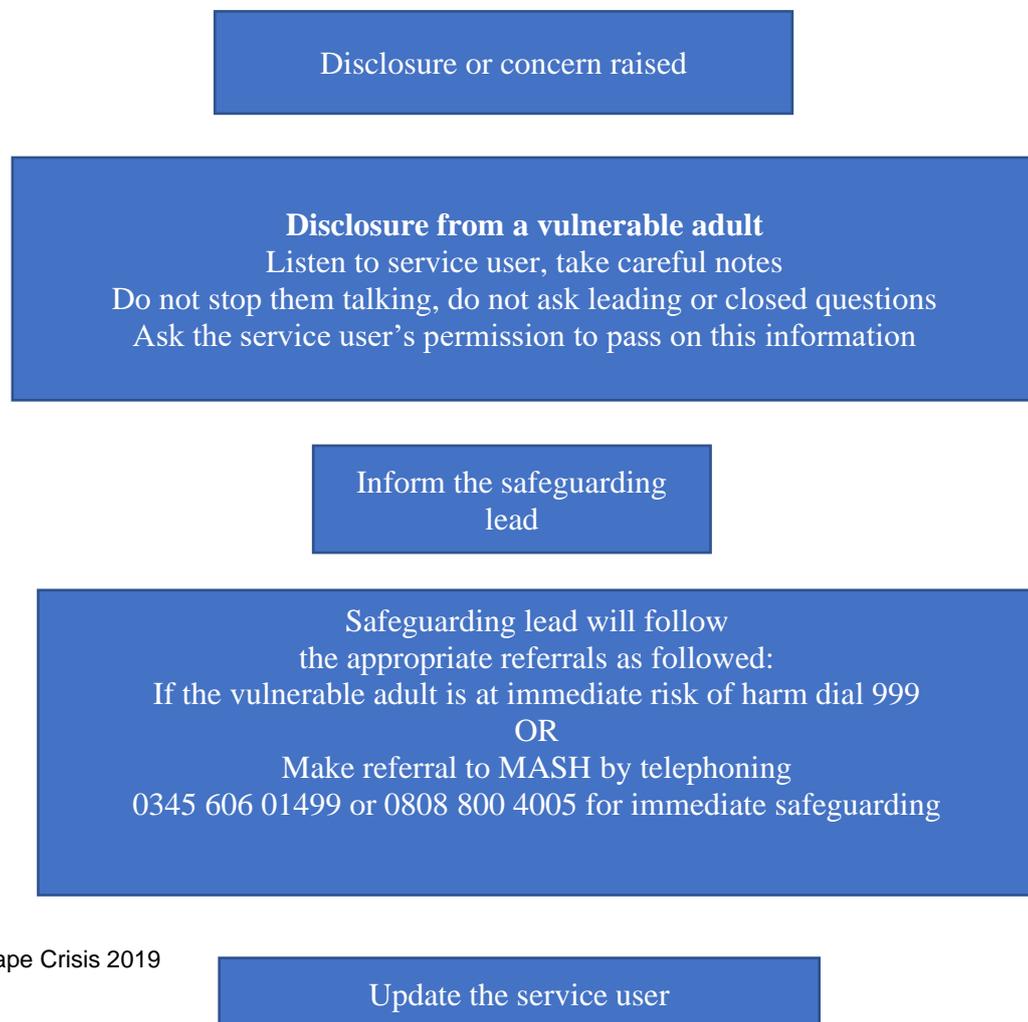
Sometimes you may just feel concerned about a vulnerable adult but do not know whether to share your concerns or not. In this situation you should always raise your concerns with your designated safeguarding lead, who will help you to decide what to do and will make the final decision about whether or not to pass this information on.

Adult Safeguarding Referral form:

[https://secure.suffolkcc.gov.uk/customerservice/csd/SCC/product.aspx?ProductID=SCC Adult Safeguard RF](https://secure.suffolkcc.gov.uk/customerservice/csd/SCC/product.aspx?ProductID=SCC%20Adult%20Safeguard%20RF)

Adult referral form: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health/find-local-social-care-support-or-contact-customer-first/contact-customer-first-and-social-care/adult-referral-form/>

Appendix 1: Safeguarding procedure following a disclosure



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