

## **Sustainable South West Herts CIC** **Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy**

### **1. Our Commitment**

At SSWHCIC, we believe everyone has the right to live free from abuse. We are committed to safeguarding children, adults at risk, and all those we work with, ensuring they are protected across all our activities.

Safeguarding is a core part of our values and applies to **all** Directors, staff, volunteers, contractors, and anyone working with or for SSWHCIC.

### **2. Principles**

- The **welfare of children and adults** is our top priority.
- A **child** is defined as anyone under 18.
- Everyone has the right to protection—regardless of age, gender, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or identity.
- Some individuals are more vulnerable and require additional protection.
- Safeguarding is a **shared responsibility**—we work with individuals, families, and other agencies.
- All concerns and allegations will be **taken seriously and acted upon appropriately**.
- We are committed to **safe recruitment**, including DBS checks for those in contact with children or vulnerable adults.
- We maintain a clear and accessible **complaints procedure**.
- This policy should be read alongside other relevant SSWHCIC policies.

### **3. Code of Conduct**

We will keep people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to, and respecting everyone.
- Placing individuals at the heart of everything we do.
- Following clear safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Ensuring partners and collaborators have proper safeguarding in place.
- Providing supervision, training, and support to staff and volunteers.
- Promoting good safeguarding practices within and beyond our organisation.

### **4. Policy Purpose**

This policy is designed to:

- Protect all children and adults who interact with SSWHCIC.
- Inform partners, groups, and the public of our safeguarding principles.
- Guide all staff, volunteers, and Directors on their responsibilities.

### **5. Scope & Legal Context**

This policy is aligned with UK safeguarding legislation and charity sector best practices. SSWHCIC meets the higher safeguarding standards expected of charities.

Anyone breaching this policy may face disciplinary action, including dismissal or removal from role.

### **6. Safeguarding Roles**

**Everyone** at SSWHCIC is responsible for safeguarding.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): **Anna Addison** – *Interim*

 [anna@aphsherts.co.uk](mailto:anna@aphsherts.co.uk)

### **7. Understanding Abuse**

Abuse is any action that causes harm to a child or adult at risk.

You must act if:

- You suspect someone is being harmed.
- You witness abusive behaviour.
- A disclosure is made to you.

Do **not** investigate yourself—follow the reporting process.

## 8. What You Must Do

- Be alert to risks.
- Plan and conduct activities to minimise risk.
- Never be alone with a child or adult at risk.
- Follow this safeguarding policy—it's a condition of your role.

## 9. Reporting Concerns

If someone discloses abuse or you have a concern:

1. Explain that you **cannot keep the information confidential**.
2. Report it **immediately** using the internal reporting flowchart.
3. **Maintain confidentiality**—only speak to the Safeguarding Lead or Director.
4. Do **not** investigate or ask leading questions.

## 10. Escalation

If you feel your concern hasn't been handled properly, escalate it to the full Board of Directors.

## 11. Prevention at Events

- All events must have a **risk assessment**, including safeguarding considerations.
- Be especially vigilant when working with vulnerable individuals.

## 12. Prevention Online

We will:

- Promote safe, respectful digital behaviour.
- Limit access to official accounts to authorised staff (minimum two per account).
- Use only SSWHCIC equipment and accounts for communications.
- Prohibit one-to-one online contact with children unless necessary and by DBS-checked staff.
- Obtain **written consent** from parents/carers before photographing children. Group shots must not include identifiable children unless permission is granted.

## 13. Legal Considerations

- **Do not promise confidentiality** if someone discloses abuse.
- Share information if you believe someone is at risk.
- Ensure any information shared is **necessary, accurate, and timely**.
- The law protects those who share concerns in good faith.

## 14. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed every **two years**, or sooner if legislation changes, and approved by the SSWHCIC Board.

## SSWHCIC Safeguarding Concern Reporting Flowchart

### **STEP 1: Recognise**

You:

- Witness or suspect abuse  
**OR**
- Receive a disclosure from a child or adult

 **Stay calm**

 **Listen carefully**

 **Do not investigate**

 **Do not promise confidentiality**

### **STEP 2: Respond**

Tell the individual:

“I need to share this with someone who can help keep you safe.”

Take brief, factual notes:

- What was said or seen
- Date, time, location
- Name(s) of those involved
- Any actions you took

### **STEP 3: Report**

Immediately contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

**Anna Addison (Interim)**  [anna@aphsherts.co.uk](mailto:anna@aphsherts.co.uk)

If unavailable, contact another SSWHCIC Director.

### **Urgent or out-of-hours emergency?**

Contact **Police (999)** or **Social Services** directly.

### **STEP 4: Record**

Submit a written report (use the SSWHCIC Safeguarding Report Form if available).


Store all records securely and confidentially.

Do not discuss the incident with others.

### **STEP 5: Follow-Up & Escalate (if needed)**

If you're **not satisfied** with how the concern was handled:

 Escalate to the **full Board of Directors**.

 Keep following up until you are assured it is resolved appropriately.

### **Key Reminders:**

- **Always act** on concerns – no matter how small.
- **Don't delay** – report immediately.
- **Your duty** is to raise the concern, not prove it.
- **Keep information private** – only share with the Safeguarding Lead.

## **Appendix 1 - Categories of Abuse**

### **Child Abuse**

The categories of abuse of children are set out in the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and are as follows:

#### **Physical Abuse**

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

#### **Emotional Abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

#### **Sexual Abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 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.

#### **Neglect**

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 abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- 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 care- givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

### **Adult Abuse**

There are ten categories of abuse for adults:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect

For details of types of each kind of abuse and possible indicators, see the following link:  
<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse>

## **Appendix 2 - Safeguarding Reporting Guidelines**

### **Recording the Information – Keep it Clear and Simple**

The Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form MUST be completed in as much detail as possible at each stage of discussion, reporting and action taken.

Do not delay in reporting your concern if you cannot complete all sections of the Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form.

**DO NOT SEEK TO INVESTIGATE YOUR CONCERN FURTHER.**

Your report should include:

- The nature of your concern. The **Who, What, Where** and **When**.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
- If it is another individual who has come to you with a concern, rather than you seeing something yourself use the exact words they have used and where possible complete the form with them
- Any times, dates or other relevant information.
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion, or hearsay.

**Appendix 3 - Safeguarding Concern Form**

This form MUST be completed for all safeguarding concerns and should be recorded as close as possible to the time of the incident. Please provide as much detail as possible, stick to the facts and details of the incident and refrain from including your opinion. Any disclosures of abuse being made by children should state exactly what was said. Do not try and interpret any of the information, or use more general terms, please record exactly what was said and/or witnessed. If you wish to use direct quotes, please write these within quotation marks.

If there is more than one individual that you have a concern about, for recording and reporting purposes please complete a separate form per individual. No form should have more than one individual in the “name, age...” box

<b>Name of individual completing this form</b>	<b>Date of safeguarding form completion</b>
<b>Name, age, contact details (if known) of individual this form is about</b>	<b>Event name, date, and time of incident</b>
<b>Does the individual have any confirmed or suspected disabilities or diagnoses? Please list below. <i>If suspected, please provide evidence as to why you suspect there is a disability</i></b>	
<b>Any witnesses or other individuals involved? Provide names and contact details</b>	
<b>Type of concern e.g. homelessness, wellbeing, mental health...</b>	
<b>Details of concern – <i>please include dates and times as much as possible and leave out assumptions and personal opinions</i></b>	

<b>Actions taken to date</b> <i>as the individual reporting this concern what actions have you taken, include dates</i>	
<b>Name of parents, guardians, carers, and telephone number if relevant</b>	
<b>Do you believe anyone else is at risk?</b>	
<b>THE BELOW SECTIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR COMPLETION BY THE DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR SAFEGUARDING (DSL) HANDLING THIS CONCERN</b>	
<b>Actions taken – please include any relevant dates</b>	
<b>Date safeguarding concern closed</b>	<b>Reason safeguarding concern closed</b> <i>(e.g. young person is getting support from college safeguarding team)</i>
<b>Name of DSL completing this form</b>	
<b>Does the DSL follow up form need to be completed?</b>	

Once completed, this form MUST be sent to the DSL

This form MUST be kept in a secure and safe place, in compliance with SSWHCIC Data Protection Policy.