



## Safeguarding Adults: Policy and Procedure

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## 1. Purpose and Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is:

- To provide protection for every person – adult or child – who accesses the Recovery Tree Charity’s services
- To provide all staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt if they suspect someone may be experiencing, or is at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Recovery Tree Charity, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of the Charity.

The Recovery Tree Charity is committed to:

- Supporting the right of everyone to be protected from abuse;
- Ensuring the safety of adults and young people in all the work we do and the decisions we take;
- Creating a culture of zero tolerance of harm and ensuring an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution
- Making sure all staff and volunteers work together and with other agencies, in line with Swindon’s multi-agency Safeguarding Policy and procedures;
- Acting promptly and proportionately when dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse;
- Including and respecting the voice of the adult or young person concerned.

We follow the Swindon Safeguarding Partnership's policies and procedures, which can be found at:

[https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/info/14/policies\\_and\\_publications](https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/info/14/policies_and_publications)

These procedures should be read in conjunction with this policy.

We firmly believe that

- Everyone has the right to live free from abuse or neglect regardless of age, ability or disability, sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status
- Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. We will work together to prevent and minimise abuse. If we have concerns that someone is being abused our loyalty to the person at risk comes before anything else – our organisation, other service users, our colleagues and the person's friends and family.
- Doing nothing is not an option. If we know or suspect that a person at risk or a child is being abused, we will do something about it and ensure our work is properly recorded. We will follow Swindon's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership's procedures.

## 2. Safeguarding thresholds

Anyone may experience abuse and as a result need our care and support. People at risk and children may need our especial care.

An **adult at risk** is someone who is aged 18 years or over, and who:

- (a) has needs for care and support (whether or not any of those needs are being met) AND;
- (b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, AND;
- (c) as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

An adult at risk may be a person who:

- Is elderly or frail
- Has learning disabilities
- Suffers from mental illness (e.g. dementia, personality disorder)
- Has physical disability
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless
- Is in an abusive relationship

Disability or age alone does not signify that an adult is at risk.

A **child** (anyone under the age of 18) may also be at risk of abuse. From time to time, we provide services to children and we welcome children to our events. The legal duties and principles outlined in this document also apply to children even if they are not our clients: for example, the child of a client, or anyone who is under the age of 18 with whom we come into contact. We have a separate policy which describes how we protect children.

No one should ignore allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

### 3. What is abuse?

Abuse may come in many forms. The Care Act (2014) defines:

1. Physical abuse – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
2. Domestic violence – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse and so called 'honour' based violence.
3. Sexual abuse – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendos, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, and acts where the victim has been pressured or enticed into consenting.
4. Psychological abuse – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
5. Financial or material abuse – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to someone's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
6. Modern slavery – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
7. Discriminatory abuse – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
8. Organisational abuse – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill- treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
9. Neglect and acts of omission – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
10. Self-neglect – this can include neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Other abusive issues for safeguarding include:

11. Radicalisation- Vulnerabilities can make some people more susceptible to supporting or promoting extreme ideologies. Radicalisation can take place via the internet, social networks, print media, meetings etc.
12. Coercive and Controlling Behaviour- Coercive and controlling behaviour was criminalised by the Serious Crime Act 2015. Behaviour like this includes threats being made or manipulation of a person to do something they do not wish to do

or would not normally do. It can often be seen in close relationships and can include (but is not limited to sexual abuse, physical abuse, psychological abuse and/or domestic violence).

13. Forced Marriage- is when someone is coerced into marrying another person. This might be as a result of threats or other emotional, physical and psychological pressure that they are subjected to. This can include being made to feel that they are bringing shame on their family by not entering into the marriage. It is not the same as an arranged marriage.
14. Abuse online or through Social Media - Social media include blogs, media sharing (photo and video sharing), online gaming, discussion forums, instant messaging and social networks such as Twitter or Facebook. Though social media is very positive for a lot of people it can also be a method where some people are abused. This can include, but not be limited to:
  - Cyber bullying
  - Grooming for sexual abuse (when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.)
  - Sharing indecent images, or manipulating people to share explicit images of themselves
  - Radicalising people's beliefs.
15. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) - a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but where there's no medical reason for this to be done.
16. Breast Ironing - When girls start showing signs of puberty, mothers begin "ironing" their breasts, using heated tools like stones, spatulas, and pestles to pound or massage their chests, in an attempt to prevent them from developing.
17. (Child) Criminal Exploitation: Where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive an adult at risk or a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

More detail is provided in Swindon Safeguarding Partnership's [policy and procedures](#).

## 4. How We Might Notice Abuse

Someone who has experienced abuse may confide or disclose to a member of staff, volunteer or another service user that they are experiencing abuse. Similarly others such as a parent/carer, family member, staff member may suspect this to be the case. There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. There may be other examples, but they should not be ignored.

### Signs of abuse

Signs to be aware of include, but are not limited to:

- Unexplained injuries and/or unwilling to seek medical treatment
- Person has belongings or money going missing
- Person is not attending / no longer engaging with sessions

- Significant weight loss or gain / an unkempt appearance
- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person
- Self-harm
- A fear of a particular group of people or individual
- Someone regularly speaking for the person and not allowing them to make their own choices

#### Disclosure

They may tell you they are being abused i.e. a disclosure. “*Disclosure*” is the process by which people start to share their experiences of abuse with others. This can take place over a long period of time and may be through a variety of ways, either directly or indirectly – making ambiguous verbal statements which suggest something is wrong, behaviourally or non-verbally.

We recognise that some people experience barriers to disclosure. For example, they may find it difficult to communicate concerns or ask for help. These factors can vary at different points in people’s lives. Health, wellbeing, ability, disability and need for care and support can affect a person’s resilience.

## 5. Prevention

We will seek to keep people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them;
- Appointing a nominated safeguarding lead for each of our projects, a deputy and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding;
- Ensuring that all designated staff understand their role and responsibilities;
- Ensuring everyone involved with the Recovery Tree Charity understands safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct and knows what to do and who to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare of anyone;
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently;
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers in line with safer recruitment best practice, ensuring all necessary checks are made;
- Recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance;
- Using our safeguarding procedures to work with and share information concerning a risk to an adult or young person with the appropriate agencies. For example: Disclosure and Barring Service, Police, Local Authority/Social Services, other appropriate services;
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately;
- Our priority will be the wellbeing of those at risk of harm and we will actively support the adult or child/young person to communicate their views and the outcomes they want to achieve. Those views and wishes will be respected and supported unless there are overriding reasons not to;
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place;

- Building a safeguarding culture where staff, volunteers and service users treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

In addition, please refer to the following Recovery Tree Charity policies: recruitment, recruitment of ex-offenders, data protection, complaints and whistleblowing.

## 6. What to do if we notice something that may be abuse

We follow the procedures described in Swindon Safeguarding Partnership's [policy and procedures](#). In summary:

If you think abuse has or may have occurred, **act immediately**.

- Take urgent action as appropriate to protect the individual from any immediate danger. In an emergency – for example, if the individual is in danger or needs medical attention – the appropriate emergency services must be called.
- Pass on information about the situation to the named safeguarding lead – the Manager at TWIGS. If the service Manager is unavailable (or is implicated in the allegation), you may report to a trustee, or to the
  - Adult Safeguarding Team, Swindon Borough Council (Tel: 01793 463555 in office hours);
  - For children, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (Tel: 01793 464646 in office hours or the Emergency Duty Service (EDS) outside office hours on 01793 436699.
- Act within the wishes of the person at risk where possible.
- Record what you have seen, heard and done. Preserve any evidence.

We aim to Make Safeguarding Personal by engaging the person 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. We aim to support adults and, where possible, children and young people to achieve the outcomes they want for themselves.

The person's views, wishes, feelings and beliefs must be taken into account when decisions are made about how to support them to be safe. If someone has difficulty making their views and wishes known, then 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.

It is important to consider your response when someone discloses abuse to you:

- Show you care and help them open up
- Take your time and slow down – let the person go at their own pace
- When recording information, you should be as factual as possible. If you need to give your own or somebody else's opinion, make sure it is clearly differentiated from fact. You should identify whose opinion is being given and record their exact words
- Don't ask any leading questions, ask open questions: who/where/when/what
- Show you understand, reflect back using their phrasing

- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Ask the person what they want to happen next and seek their consent for sharing of information
- Explain your duty of care and what you now need to do

It is the responsibility of the designated person (Manager or trustee) to decide without delay on the most appropriate course of action once the allegation or suspicion of abuse has been raised. This may include conducting an investigation into the concerns raised, reporting to the Adult Safeguarding Team (or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub in the case of someone under the age of 18), or the Police (where a crime may have been committed).

### **6.1 Allegations and concerns about staff**

- Adults or children can be subjected to abuse by those who work with them in any and every setting. All allegations of abuse or maltreatment by an employee, contractor or volunteer will be taken seriously.
- If there are allegations or suspicions of abuse about someone who works with service users, this should be reported to the Twigs manager as Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- If there is a concern about a designated person, it should be reported to their deputy, or the Trustee Board Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The designated people will be fully trained in managing allegations against or concerns about abuse by a member of staff or volunteer. They will contact the relevant Swindon Safeguarding Adults Team/Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Police if needed.
- The Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure should be followed in instances such as this. If the staff member feels unable to report an incident within the organisation, they can contact the Board Safeguarding Lead or the Chair of Trustees.
- The Recovery Tree Charity will also follow internal disciplinary procedures which may include possible suspension without prejudice.

Where an allegation of abuse is made against an employee of The Recovery Tree Charity, it may be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy & Procedures. Abuse as defined above is likely to be considered gross misconduct.

### **6.2 Confidentiality**

#### **6.2.1 Recording and information sharing**

- Information about concerns of abuse includes personal data. It is therefore important to be clear as to the grounds for processing and sharing information about concerns of abuse, in accordance with data protection requirements.
- Processing information includes record keeping. Records relating to safeguarding concerns must be accurate and relevant. They must be stored confidentially with access only to those with a need to know.
- Sharing information, with the right people, is central to good practice in safeguarding. However, information sharing must only ever be with those with a 'need to know'.
- There are also many situations in which it is perfectly legal to share information about adult or child safeguarding concerns outside the organisation. Importantly personal information can be shared *with the*

*consent of the adult* concerned. Their wishes should be respected unless there are overriding reasons for sharing information, such as:

- It's not safe to contact the person to gain their consent – i.e. it might put them or the person making contact at further risk.
  - You believe they or someone else is at risk, including children.
  - You believe the person is being coerced or is under duress.
  - It is necessary to contact the police to prevent a crime, or to report that a serious crime has been committed.
  - The adult does not have mental capacity to consent to information being shared about them.
  - The person causing harm has care and support needs.
- If the person you are concerned about still does not wish to raise the concern, discuss this with your line manager and consider asking the local authority for advice without divulging the victim's details to see if the concern should be raised.
  - When information is shared without the consent of the adult this must be explained to them, when it is safe to do so, and any further actions should still fully include them.
  - Any decision to share or not to share information with an external person or organisation must be recorded together with the reasons to share or not share information.

#### 6.2.2 Photography

Whilst taking photographs of service users taking part in the Recovery Tree Charity's activities shows the positive impact of our services, we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all service users and to take, share and use images safely. Therefore, we follow these guidelines:

- Ask for written consent from a service user before taking and using a photo
- Explain what images will be used for, how they will be stored and for how long
- Make it clear that if the service user withdraws consent for an image to be shared, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published
- Change the names of service users whose images are being used in our published material whenever possible (and only using first names if we do need to identify them)
- Never publish personal information about service users
- Store photographs and videos of service users securely. We will never store images of children on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks and mobile phones

### 6.3 Mental capacity and Advocacy

UK Law assumes that all people over the age of 16 have the ability to make their own decisions, unless it has been proved that they can't. It also gives us the right to make any decision that we need to make and gives us the right to make our own decisions even if others consider them to be unwise. Mental capacity refers to the ability to make a decision at the time that decision is needed. A person's mental capacity can change.

Under the Care Act 2014, a person is eligible for advocacy to support with a safeguarding concern if:

- The person concerned about has substantial difficulty (unable to understand, retain, weigh up or communicate with regards to safeguarding). This will cover those who lack capacity in relation to the safeguarding.
- There are no appropriate friends or family to facilitate their full involvement.

If the person you are concerned about meets the above requirements, the Local Authority will instruct an advocate.

You should keep the service user involved and ensure they are aware of any communication the Local Authority makes with you. You must not attend any meetings with or without the service user unless the service user gives consent. If the service user lacks capacity you should enquire as to whether they have an independent advocate under the Care Act or an IMCA (independent mental capacity advocate).

## 7. Governance and policy review

All safeguarding concerns raised should be reported by the designated lead with whom they are raised to trustee board to support a review of this policy.

The Recovery Tree Charity's safeguarding policy will be reviewed each year by the board of trustees.

## 8. Named leads and contacts

TWIGS Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Alan Holland, 07 789 128 206

Email: [alan.holland@twigscommunitygardens.org.uk](mailto:alan.holland@twigscommunitygardens.org.uk)

TWIGS Safeguarding Deputy:

Eleanor Wroath: 07367 120 122

Email: [eleanor.wroath@twigscommunitygardens.org.uk](mailto:eleanor.wroath@twigscommunitygardens.org.uk)

Trustee Board Safeguarding Lead:

Chair of Trustees: Dick Millard, 07850 728 522

Email: [dick.millard@therecoverytreecharity.org.uk](mailto:dick.millard@therecoverytreecharity.org.uk)

Trustee Board Safeguarding Deputy: Cara Hiscock, 07475 180 088

Email: [cara.hiscock@therecoverytreecharity.org.uk](mailto:cara.hiscock@therecoverytreecharity.org.uk)

External contacts:

Adult Safeguarding Team, Swindon Borough Council:

Tel: 01793 463555

Email: [adultsafeguarding@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:adultsafeguarding@swindon.gov.uk)

(During office hours - Monday to Friday inclusive, 8:30am to 5:00pm)

Children, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

E-mail: [swindonmash@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:swindonmash@swindon.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01793 466903, option 2 (during office hours Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 4.40pm, and Friday 8.30am to 4.00pm)  
The Emergency Duty Service (EDS) is available outside office hours on 01793 436699

Policy Ratified on:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan McLeod', is positioned above the 'Signed:' label.

Signed:

Date: 19 May 2026

Chair

## Appendix 1: Designated Safeguarding Lead role profile

1. Take a lead role in developing and reviewing The Recovery Tree's safeguarding adults and children policies and procedures.
2. Take a lead role in implementing The Recovery Tree's safeguarding policies and procedures: ensuring all safeguarding concerns are responded to appropriately.
3. Ensure everyone working or volunteering for The Recovery Tree, including Managers and the Board of Trustees understands the safeguarding policies and knows what to do if they have a safeguarding concern.
4. Ensure people who use our services are signposted or provided with the relevant information and advice regarding safeguarding and are supported to report any safeguarding concerns
5. Take the lead on responding to information that may constitute safeguarding concern, including a concern that an adult involved with The Recovery Tree may present a risk to children or young people or an adult at risk. This includes:
  - Assessing and clarifying the information
  - Making referrals to statutory organisations as appropriate
  - Consulting with and informing the relevant members of the organisation's management
  - Following the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures.
6. Liaise with, pass on information to and receive information from other agencies such as:
  - Local authority child protection services
  - Police
  - Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)This includes making formal referrals to agencies when necessary.
7. Store and retain safeguarding records according to legal requirements and the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures.
8. Work closely with Managers and the Board of Trustees to ensure they are kept up to date with safeguarding issues and are fully informed of any concerns about organisational safeguarding and child protection practice.
9. Report regularly to the Board of Trustees on issues relating to safeguarding, to ensure that safeguarding is seen as an ongoing priority issue and that safeguarding requirements are being followed at all levels of the organisation.
10. Be familiar with issues relating to safeguarding and keep up to date with new developments in this area.
11. Attend Level 3 DSL training and refresher training every 2 years and ensure all staff are completing mandatory safeguarding training as detailed in the Safeguarding policy and procedure.