

SOUTH SOMERSET COMMUNITY **ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT**

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy **Adults at Risk Policy**

1. Statement of intent /policy statement

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures, available electronically on <https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk> and information available on the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership website, <https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk>

2. Aim/purpose

To ensure any children travelling with South Somerset Community Accessible Transport [SSCAT] do so safely, and that all necessary safeguards are taken.

3. Scope

- This policy applies to everyone in the scheme including staff and volunteers.
- The Safeguarding/Child Protection Lead Person is SSCAT Operations Manager, Ian P Broad, on sscatbus@gmail.com and 01963 33864.

4. Legal context

This policy is covered by:

- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Children Acts 1989 & 2004, Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Early Years Foundation Stage Principles 2007: **A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, Learning and Development**
- Statutory Guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006
- Information Sharing: A Guide for People Working with Children, Young People and Families 2005
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Sure Start Children's Centre Practice Guidance 2005, 2006 and 2010
- Governance Guidance for Sure Start Children's Centres and extended schools 2007
- Every Child Matters: change for children 2004. Outcomes: **Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Make a Positive Contribution, Enjoy and Achieve**
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998

This policy also takes account of:

- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998

Recruitment and Staffing Procedures

- Applications for staff and volunteer positions are exempt from the 1974 Rehabilitation Act (above), and therefore have to declare previous convictions. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. If an applicant is rejected because of information which has been disclosed in the checks, s/he has a right to know and to challenge incorrect information
- All applicants have checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- References are checked and gaps in employment history are explored
- Volunteers do not work with children unsupervised
- No unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children
- We respect all requirements in the 1999 Protection of Children Act regarding any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal, for reasons of child protection concern

Good practice during travel with SSCAT

- Parents will be responsible for their own children

Dealing with Allegations or Concerns – Procedures

Disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, s/he will

- Offer reassurance to the child
- Listen to the child
- Give reassurance that action will be taken

Responding to Suspicions of Abuse

- In line with the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership staff will: **Notice, Listen, Record and Refer** all suspicions
- It is acknowledged that abuse of children can take many different forms; physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Even if a child shows

signs and symptoms of 'failure to thrive' or neglect, staff will make the appropriate referrals

- Staff will deal with children in these circumstances with particular sensitivity. Moreover, staff will take great care not to influence the outcome of any suspicion or concern either in the way that they speak to children, or in the questions that they might ask
- If staff members are unsure of how to proceed, or indeed whether they should proceed, they must speak to the Operations Manager. There should be no delay with this, since this might threaten the welfare of a child in an emergency situation
- The first point of contact with the Local Authority is through Somerset Direct (Children and Young People's Team) who are contacted on **0300 123 2224**. It is important to recognise that staff from the Social Care Team are also available for advice and guidance, as well receiving referrals for Safeguarding/Child Protection issues

Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures

Examples of possible indicators of abuse that staff should be aware of include:

- Any changes in the child/ren's behaviour or appearance;
- Remarks made by the child or his/her parents or friends;
- Indications that the family is under extreme stress

In all cases staff must consider whether a record may need to be made. If this is the case, then the following should be recorded as soon as possible after the incident or conversation:

- The child's name
- The child's address
- The age of the child
- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure
- The exact words spoken by the child
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time
- The names of any other person present at the time

If the conversation is undertaken on the telephone the same procedure will apply, and if necessary will become a referral with immediate action.

Concerns will be logged on incident sheets. All staff should have access to blank incident forms. These will be kept in SSCAT registered Office. Once completed this form will be signed and dated by the staff member and then shared with the relevant line manager on the same day. The respective line manager will then decide if a referral is needed to the Local Authority's Children's Social Care team. If this is the case, then s/he will be responsible for making the referral, again on the same day.

Allegations against staff

- The same guidance from the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (<https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk>) is followed when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child. This would involve using similar disclosure and recording procedures just as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.

All allegations against staff need to be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Allegations Management on **0300 123 2224**.

Informing Parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact **unless doing so may place the child at further risk**
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed directly after the report is made

Complaints

- We will ensure that all parents/carers know how to complain about staff or volunteer activity, which may include an allegation of abuse
- This will be done by use of appropriate signage and written guidelines made available for all families using the service.

5. Implementation, methods

Liaison with other Bodies

- There is a clearly defined procedure for contacting the Local Authority through Somerset Direct (**0300 123 2224**) through which access can be gained to the local Children's Social Care team. This will ensure that in an emergency the SSCAT and Social Care staff can work effectively together
- If a report on a family is made to the Social Care staff, SSCAT staff will act within the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures in deciding whether to inform the child's parents at the same time
- For staff working with families during out of hours contact [1700 – 0830] the Emergency Duty Team is available in emergency situations, on **0300 123 2224**. Involving the Police is appropriate if immediate support is needed. The Police Child Abuse Investigation Team number is **01823 363003** but they may not always be available. The Police can also be contacted routinely on **0845 4567000** or, in an emergency, on **999**
- Should a member of staff be involved in an out of hours emergency contact, then the SSCAT Operations Manager must be informed as soon as possible on the following day with a full account of the incident which then needs to be completed in writing
- Approaches to SSCAT staff from the Police, CAFCASS [Children and Families Court Advisory Support Service] or solicitors regarding families, must be passed to the Operations Manager for an initial response

- Staff should not give interviews to anyone alone either by telephone, mail, or in person, and if needed, will be supported by the Children's Centre Manager

Confidentiality

- Confidentiality is a priority. All documented concerns and allegations are kept confidential and shared only with key members of staff who may need to know; such staff will ensure that their own record-keeping is appropriate to their level of professional responsibility
- Any information which needs to be shared falls strictly under the guidance of the county council Information Sharing documentation. In cases of child protection then everything must be shared with the Social Care team.

Safeguarding Adults at Risk

Safeguarding is aimed at people with care and support needs who may be in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of abuse or neglect. In these cases, local services must work together to spot those at risk and take steps to protect them. (*The Care Act 2014*)

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

The following six key principles underpin all adult safeguarding work:

- 1 **Empowerment:** people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent
- 2 **Prevention:** it is better to take action before harm occurs
- 3 **Proportionality:** the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- 4 **Protection:** support and representation for those in greatest need
- 5 **Partnership:** local solutions through services working with their communities – communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
- 6 **Accountability:** accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice.

Definition of Adults at Risk

An adult who:

- *has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)*
- *is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect*

- *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.*

(The Care Act 2014)

The definition of an Adult covers all people over 18 years of age.

This means that not all adults are vulnerable but some may be vulnerable at times and others will be vulnerable all the time. It is important to talk to the appropriate people (in Somerset this is the Adult Customer Service Desk in the Children, Adult and Health Department of the Council).

The Care Act also recognises the key role of carers in relation to safeguarding. For example a carer may witness or report abuse or neglect; experience intentional or unintentional harm from the adult they are trying to support or a carer may (unintentionally or intentionally) harm or neglect the adult they support. It is important to view the situation holistically and look at the safety and well-being of both. The Act makes it clear throughout the need for preventing abuse and neglect wherever possible. Observant professionals and other staff making early, positive interventions with individuals and families can make a huge difference to their lives, preventing the deterioration of a situation or breakdown of a support network

Abuse includes:

Abuse is something that is done to another person, without their full understanding or consent, which harms them in some way. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly.

Abuse or neglect, can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual case should always be considered. The following is a list of the types of abuse and neglect that can occur;

- Physical abuse; *hitting, slapping, punching, burning*
- Domestic violence and abuse; *including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence*
- Sexual abuse; *rape, indecent assault, inappropriate touching*
- Psychological abuse and 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*
- Financial or material abuse; *stealing, selling assets*
- 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*

- Discriminatory abuse; *including racist, sexist, based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment*)
- 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 or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation*
- Neglect and acts of omission; *leaving in soiled clothes, failing to feed properly*
- Self-neglect; *neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding*

People may make the choice to remain in abusive situations and if they have the mental capacity to make that decision that may be appropriate, however the decision about mental capacity is a complex one and it is important that the correct assessment of capacity is undertaken within the safeguarding process.

Advice and information

For adults:

SSCAT Safeguarding Lead Person is Ian P Broad on scatbus@gmail.com and 01963 33864

Somerset County Council Social Adult Care Team can be accessed for advice or information contact 0300 123 2224

Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board Website:
<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care-information-sheets/>

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with Somerset Safeguarding Adults board website:

<https://ssab.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk>

If an adult is in immediate danger dial 999 and ask for police assistance.

Reporting concerns

If a crime may have been or is being committed contact Police on 101 or 999

Volunteers and Management Committee members should report any concern that they have about a child or an adult at risk to the Chair of the Management Committee unless the concern is about the Chair where it should be reported to the Vice Chair who will contact the SGC Team below.

Members of the public can follow the instructions below:

Adults at risk

To raise a concern contact Somerset Council's Customer Adult Care Team service desk on 0300 123 2224. You can also do this online at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/report-an-adult-at-risk/>

Where possible, agreement should be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties.

Record keeping

If a concern is raised this should be documented and sent through to the Named Officer or Representative (Ian P Broad) of SSCAT.

Managing allegations against staff or volunteers

Any allegation will be fully investigated and SSCAT will support staff/volunteers during this process. It is important that allegations are thoroughly investigated through the safeguarding process so that allegations can be either proved or disproved for the protection of the child(ren), adult(s) at risk and staff.

All allegations should be reported within one working day to the operations manager of SSCAT.

Any allegation related to staff and/or volunteers working with Children and Young People and Adults must be reported to the Somerset County Council on 0300 123 2224.

It is important to remember that abuse is defined by the impact on the individual not the intention of the abuser, in other words if someone does not have their needs cared for this can be just as damaging whether it is done deliberately or because a carer can no longer manage. Obviously the way of then supporting the situation would be likely to be different.

People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be doctors, nurses, social workers, advocates, staff members, volunteers or others in a position of trust. They may also be relatives, friends, neighbours or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse.

Confidentiality

- Confidentiality is a priority. All documented concerns and allegations are kept confidential and shared only with key members of staff who may need to know; such staff will ensure that their own record-keeping is appropriate to their level of professional responsibility
- Any information which needs to be shared falls strictly under the guidance of the county council Information Sharing documentation. In

cases of child protection then everything must be shared with the Social Care team.

Safeguarding Training

All new employees will receive Safeguarding Training, being two on-line courses:

Introduction to Safeguarding Children (Level 1)
Introduction to Safeguarding Adults (Level 1)

These courses have been made available to all existing staff.

All drivers meet every six months and within that meeting safeguarding is a designated subject, with updates given on current policy and identifying any issues or concerns staff may have.

The next meeting is on or before 4 August 2023, by which time we expect all staff to have reviewed the two introduction Safeguarding Training Courses.

SSCAT will then make available further training with the course, Advanced Safeguarding Adults Level 2, being available to all staff to view prior to the following Drivers meeting.

SSCAT policy for Safeguarding will be one of continual training.

Review of this policy

SSCAT is committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on 27 March 2023

The next review date will be 22 March 2024

6. Policy endorsement

Signed by:

Name:


Ian P. Broad

Designation:

Position:

Operations Manager

Date: 27 March 2023