

**SAFFRON WALDEN MENCAP SOCIETY**

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY - ADULTS**

**Saffron Walden Mencap Society is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for vulnerable adults and promoting a climate where all of our members, staff and volunteers will feel confident about sharing any concerns which they may have about their own safety or the well-being of others.**

This policy has been adopted by Saffron Walden Mencap Society through its Trustees Committee which remains responsible for its review.

Original signed version is kept at the SWMS Registered office.

Signed: Date: 8th July 2024

Chair of Trustees

**Next Review: July 2026**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Safeguarding is at the heart of all our work with children, young people and Adults at Risk. Our members’ welfare is our paramount concern. The trustees will ensure that we have adequate arrangements in place in order to identify, assess and support those children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer harm. Saffron Walden Mencap Society is a community, and all those directly connected – staff members, trustees, volunteers, families and members – have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure for all.

**2. SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

The policy is to be used by any member of staff or volunteer working directly with adults at risk, and to any other support staff or Trustee of Saffron Walden Mencap Society.

The policy applies to anyone with whom we are in contact in the course of our work, who is an adult at risk. An ’Adult at Risk’, is anyone aged 18 years or older and who is vulnerable according to the definition in the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board guidelines.

This policy is reviewed, endorsed and approved by the board of trustees annually, or when legislation changes.

**3. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

This policy and procedure sets out how SW MENCAP implements safeguarding for Adults at Risk with whom they come into contact in the course of their work.

SW MENCAP is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone within the organisation accepts their responsibilities for safeguarding Adults at Risk from abuse and neglect. This means following procedures to protect them and reporting any concerns about their welfare to the appropriate authorities. This policy and procedure helps us to achieve this by:

∙ Defining abuse and informing us what to do

∙ Ensuring we all work to the same policy and procedures

∙ Making sure we are accountable for what we do

∙ Being clear what roles and responsibilities we all have in safeguarding

∙ Letting staff and volunteers know what support/guidance they can expect.

**4. WHO IS AN ADULT AT RISK?**

Any person aged eighteen or over who –

∙ Is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness or circumstance; and

∙ Is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

**5. OBJECTIVES OF POLICY**

To ensure that we provide -

∙ Safe organisational ethos

∙ Safe environment

∙ Safe processes for working with service users

∙ Safe collection and use of information, and ways of communicating

∙ Safe staff and volunteers

**Principles**

In support of these objectives,we will

* Reach out to, and seek to protect adults at risk who are at risk of or are being sexually exploited
* Promote the safety of adults at risk in all our work, both directly and indirectly through our partnership and campaigning work
* Support the spirit and practice of Saffron Walden MENCAP’s safeguarding ethos in all that we personally do
* Have in place quality assurance processes that help us to ensure we are all safeguarding in practice
* Treat all Adults at Risk fairly in being able to access services which meet their needs, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs

To achieve a safe environment, we will:

* Always ensure that the welfare and safety of Adults at Risk is paramount in all our activities
* Listen to service users and take account of what they tell us in making decisions about them
* Take all reasonable steps to protect service users from harm, discrimination, and degrading treatment
* Practice with respect for the rights, wishes and feelings of Adults at Risk
* Regularly assess and review safety risks which arise from premises, activities, equipment and travel arrangements, as outlined in ourHealth and Safety & Transport Policies.

To achieve safe processes, we will:

* Implement safeguarding procedures that are compliant with the expectations of Essex CC Safeguarding Adults Board.
* Take all suspicions and allegations of abuse, from inside or outside the organisation, seriously, and respond to them promptly and appropriately
* Be clear about everyone’s roles and responsibilities
* Have in place clear arrangements for how we would implement safeguarding in practice.

To achieve safe information, we will:

* Be clear with service users how the things they tell us will be used
* Communicate promptly and clearly within SW MENCAP and with external agencies, and follow the requirements of information sharing protocols of the Essex CC Safeguarding Adults Board
* Keep good records of our work with service users and also of our management of staff’s work
* Hold service users information with care, use it for agreed purposes only as set out in our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Statement.

To achieve safe staff and volunteers, we will:

* Recruit trustees, staff and volunteers with regard to their suitability for work with Adults at Risk, including use of enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks
* Provide trustees, staff and volunteers with guidance and training in their safeguarding role, and ensure they have access to our policies and procedures
* Ensure everyone has access to advice on safeguarding at all times in the course of their work
* Be clear with everyone what their individual role and responsibility is in safeguarding ∙ Support staff and volunteers to carry out their job with appropriate supervision.

**7. WHAT IS ABUSE OF AN ADULT AT RISK?**

Abuse is a violation of a person’s human and civil rights or dignity by any other person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. Anyone can carry out abuse or neglect, including relatives and family members, professional staff, paid care workers, volunteers, other users of services, neighbours, friends and associates or strangers. Abuse can happen anywhere and it is vital that we are vigilant on behalf of those people who are unable, or less able, to protect themselves. There are many kinds of abuse including:

**Physical**

This includes assault, hitting, slapping, kicking, spitting, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

**Sexual**

This doesn’t necessarily involve physical contact and can take place online. It includes any contact or non-contact sexual to which the adult at risk has not consented /could not consent/was pressured into consenting

This includes:

∙ sexual violence such as rape or physical sexual assault

∙ indecent exposure

∙ sexual harassment

∙ inappropriate looking or touching

∙ sexual teasing or innuendo

∙ sexual photography

∙ subjection to photography or sexual acts

**Psychological**

This could be:

∙ emotional abuse

∙ threats of harm or abandonment

∙ depriving the person of contact

∙ humiliating

∙ blaming

∙ controlling

∙ intimidating

∙ coercing

∙ harassing

∙ verbally abusing

∙ cyber bullying

∙ isolating

∙ withdrawing a person from services or support networks

**Forced Marriage**

A forced marriage is one that is conducted without the full consent of both parties and where duress, threats or abuse is a factor. Forced marriage can amount to sexual and emotional abuse and put vulnerable adults at risk of physical abuse. In circumstances where there are concerns that someone is at imminent risk of a forced marriage urgent referrals should be made to Children’s Adults’ Social Care.

**Emotional & Psychological.**

This includes any activity which makes someone feel worthless, unloved or not good enough, ignoring their privacy and dignity, and teasing, shouting or threatening.

**Self harm/self-neglect**

This covers a wide range of behaviours including neglecting care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviours such as hoarding, physical self harm and drug/alcohol abuse.

**Organisational/Institutional.**

This includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or care setting or to care provided at home and could be a one-off incident or ongoing ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes & practices within an organisation.

**Exploitation.**

Either opportunistically or pre-meditated manipulation of someone for personal profit or gain.

**Financial or material**

This includes:

∙ theft

∙ fraud

∙ exploitation

∙ internet scamming

∙ coercion/pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions

∙ misusing or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

**Neglect or acts of omission**

This includes:

* ignoring medical or physical care needs
* failing to provide access to appropriate health care, social care or education services
* withholding medication
* withholding adequate nutrition or heating

**Discriminatory**

This includes:

* racist or sexist behaviour or harassment based on a person’s ethnicity, race, culture, sexual orientation, or gender.
* harassment based on a person’s ethnicity, race, culture, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity, religion, age or disability
* other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment

**Online abuse/cyber bullying.**

This includes use of the internet, social networking websites or mobile phones to harass, intimidate, or cause harm to another. It can happen on its own or with other forms of bullying. It can include:

* sending threatening or disturbing text messages
* making silent, hoax or abusive calls
* trolling: the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online groups.
* Setting up hate sites.

**Radicalisation**

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support extremism and/or terrorism and in some cases to participate in terrorist groups. The process of radicalisation may involve:

* being groomed online or in person
* exploitation, including sexual exploitation, psychological manipulation
* exposure to violent or inappropriate material

**Domestic Violence**

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background and it can take place inside or outside of the home.

Domestic violence refers to any incident or pattern of incidents by a partner, ex partner family or household member and includes:

* Controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour.
* Sexual violence
* Economic abuse – behaviour which affects a person’s ability to acquire, use and maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services.

**County Lines & Cuckooing**

**Cuckooing** is a form of crime where drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for criminal activity. Organised criminal groups are increasingly targeting adults with care and support needs in this way.

**County lines** is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in the distribution of controlled drugs within the UK. Vulnerable adults can be exploited to move and store drugs/money often obtaining compliance by coercion, intimidation, weapons & violence or threat of violence.

**Honour based abuse**

Honour based abuse is committed by family, or extended family/community against a person whom they believe has shamed or embarrassed them in order to protect or defend the ‘honour’ of a family or community. It includes threats and abuse for:

* Having a relationship outside their community or with someone whom they don’t
* approve of.
* Separation or divorce
* Having sex before marriage
* Pregnancy/Birth outside of marriage
* Wearing clothing family/community don’t approve of
* Using drugs or alcohol
* Accessing higher education
* Challenging family/community expectations or religion

**Modern Slavery**

This type of abuse occurs when individuals are exploited, controlled or held captive and/or threatened or punished to stop them from escaping or reporting the circumstances. Anyone can be a target for modern slavery, but some people can be more at risk because of money, social or health issues, or because of their age, vulnerability or immigration status and may become victim to:

∙ Slavery

∙ Human trafficking

∙ Forced labour and domestic servitude

**Upskirting:**

This is a criminal offence and typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and/or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Anyone of any sex can be a victim.

**8. Indicators of abuse.**

Saffron Walden Mencap will be vigilant regarding notification of or witnessing any change in a person's behaviour, as specific behaviour patterns may indicate abuse. Whilst we should

not automatically assume abuse in such circumstances, as there may be other reasons, changes in a person's behaviour should always be taken seriously.

Indicators and signs of abuse may include:

* Unwillingness to be in the same room or place with a person/people ∙ Unwillingness to attend routine venues such as day centres/clubs/work placements ∙ Withdrawn or isolated behaviour
* Disclosure of missing possessions
* Being at risk of, or becoming, homeless
* Being easily distressed
* Damaged or damaging property
* Abnormally disruptive behaviour
* Change in attitude or behaviour
* Unexplained injury or illness
* Damaged/torn clothing
* Unexplained changes in material circumstances

It is important to be able to recognise the distinct multiple signs of **radicalisation,** which include when an individual:

* Develops views which are extreme regarding another section of society or government policy
* Becomes increasingly intolerant of moderate views and/or expresses a desire/intent to support extremist activity
* Is observed viewing, downloading or sharing extremist propaganda ∙ Becomes withdrawn and focused on one ideology
* Changes their appearance and/or becomes isolated from family/peers/social groups
* Suffers a deterioration in health or mental health

**9. Safer Recruitment**

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safer Recruitment policy.

Our organisation is committed to safe recruitment in line with the relevant legislation and guidance from government and Regulatory Authorities for recruiting all staff, paid or unpaid. We do this by:

* advertising vacancies with a clear commitment required to safeguarding
* assigning all posts detailed job descriptions
* obtaining full personal details including fitness to work with children, young people and adults at risk by application form (not CVs) with particular relevance to previous work with children, young people and adults at risk
* when a candidate is selected for interview the relevant criminal declaration form will be sent for completion as set out by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, as amended
* always taking up two written references, one from the most recent employer or education establishment
* undertaking all interviews face to face, based on the job description ∙ ensuring at least one person on each interview panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment training.
* having sound procedures and recording for interviewing to ensure we are satisfied, and can evidence that the applicant is appropriate and suitable

Any appointment will only be confirmed subject to:

* a satisfactory criminal records check at the appropriate level
* a follow up of written references by telephone if necessary & relevant to the vacant post
* a check of essential qualifications
* confirmation of the Right to Work in the UK where relevant

**10. PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A DISCLOSURE**

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a child or young person has been abused. **Please refer to the final page of this document for guidance if a person chooses to speak to you directly.**

The designated Safeguarding lead is **Steve Lee 07596023307**. He will be responsible for reporting the matter to the appropriate authority. A written record of the date and time of the report will be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority department within 24 hours. **Dianne King** is designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead **07969026295**

**Essex County Council Social Care**

**Concerned about an adult at risk? Call 0345 603 7630**

**Duty team out of hours emergency for adults and children 0345 6061212**

**If an at risk person chooses to speak to you directly**

| **Do** |
| --- |
| ∙ React calmly so as not to frighten the young person.  ∙ Take what the person says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is being said by a person who has for example a speech impairment and/or differences in language.  ∙ Avoid asking leading or direct questions other than those seeking to clarify your understanding of what the person has said. They may be subsequently formally interviewed by the Police and/or Social Care Services and they should not have to repeat their account on several occasions. The first person told may become a witness at court if they have asked/gained direct relevant information.  ∙ Try to reduce any questions you may choose to ask to an **absolute minimum** and concentrate on listening to the person. Questions should never be leading and should only consist of  Who ..? Where ..? When ..? What ..?  ∙ Reassure the young person that they are right to tell and are not to blame.  ∙ Explain to them that concerns will have to be shared with someone who is in a position to act. Do not make promises of confidentiality.  ∙ Make a written record of what has been disclosed at the earliest opportunity.  Make a full written record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible (preferably on the day that the concern/disclosure was first identified/made) using the incident report template. **This MUST BE dated and signed.**  ∙ Discuss the incident report with the DS Safeguarding lead officer or if not available, the Deputy |
| **Don’t** |
| ∙ Dismiss the concern  ∙ Panic or try to resolve the issue yourself.  ∙ Allow your shock or distaste to show.  ∙ Probe for more information than is freely offered to open questions.  ∙ Speculate or make assumptions about what may have happened.  ∙ Make any comments about the alleged abuser.  ∙ Make promises or agree to keep secrets.  ∙ Ask the young person or any witnesses to sign your written information as this may be significantly detrimental to any subsequent police investigation.  ∙ Take photographs of any alleged injuries. Any such recording must only be done by an approved medical or other practitioner, following referral.  ∙ Discuss the issue with anyone other than the Safeguarding lead. |