

**SENSE ABILITY MATTERS**  
**Safeguarding Children and Adults**  
**Policy**



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# 1. Safeguarding Principles

Six key principles underpin all safeguarding work:

The Department of Health Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014, describes six principles that underpin all safeguarding work which applies to all sectors and settings including care and support services, further education colleges, commissioning, regulation and provision of health and care services, social work, healthcare, welfare benefits, housing, wider Local Authority functions and the criminal justice system. These principles should always inform the ways in which professionals and other staff work to safeguard adults and children from harm or neglect.

<b>Empowerment</b>	People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent. <i>“I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.”</i>
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<p><b>Prevention</b></p>	<p>It is better to act before harm occurs. <i>“I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.”</i></p>
<p><b>Proportionality</b></p>	<p>The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. <i>“I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, as I see them and they will only get involved as much as needed.”</i></p>
<p><b>Protection</b></p>	<p>Support and representation for those in greatest need. <i>“I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want.”</i></p>
<p><b>Partnership</b></p>	<p>Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. <i>“I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together</i></p>

	<i>and with me to get the best result for me.”</i>
<b>Accountability</b>	Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding. <i>“I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.”</i>

## **2. Responsibilities of Staff and Volunteers in relation to Safeguarding Children and Adults**

All staff including managers, Board of Trustees, volunteers, and anyone working on behalf of Sense Ability Matters have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a person or child. However, they are not responsible for diagnosing, investigating, or providing a therapeutic response to abuse. In addition, not all concerns relate to abuse, there may be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind and consider what is known about the person and their circumstances. No action should be taken without discussion with one of the following senior staff:

Designated Safeguarding Lead; Carol McAllister

Tel: 0191 4785959

Mob: 07950 575656

email: [carol.mcallister@visionandhearingsupport.org.uk](mailto:carol.mcallister@visionandhearingsupport.org.uk)

Deputy Safeguarding Lead; Sarah French

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The people who use our services could be people who are more likely to experience abuse. Our service users are primarily people with sensory loss but who may also have additional problems such as:

- A learning or physical disability
- Mental ill health, cognitive issues or dementia
- Frailty due to age
- Drug/alcohol problems

Front line staff and managers are required to attend Safeguarding training provided by Gateshead Council or South Tyneside Council. Refresher training must be undertaken every 2 years or when there is a significant change in the law.



## 4. Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children namely:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Care Act 2014
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014

## **5. Safeguarding Children**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This policy applies to all managers, the board, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, students, or anyone working on behalf of Sense Ability Matters. For the purposes of this policy, as in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, we define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

### **5.2 Purpose**

The purpose of this policy:

- To protect children and young people who directly or indirectly access Sense Ability Matters services.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

Sense Ability Matters believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of a child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 2004

- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead
- adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures for staff and volunteers
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers via leaflets, posters, one to one discussions
- using safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately

- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring there is a policy and procedure to deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that there is an effective complaints procedure and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

### 5.3 Types of Abuse

The four main types of abuse are:

- **Physical Abuse** - this may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm or deliberate ill health to a child.
- **Sexual Abuse** - involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts, involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

- **Emotional Abuse** - is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child that adversely effects their development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, and inadequate, or where inappropriate expectations are put upon them. Racially and sexually abusive remarks constitute emotional abuse, and this can be a feature of bullying.

- **Neglect** - is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. This is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development and can include failing to provide shelter, food, clothing, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs. A child can also suffer neglect if a parent/guardian does not seek medical aid or prevent injury where possible.

## **Possible Indicators of Abuse**

There are many indicators that a child may be suffering from abuse. These may include, but not be limited to:

- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour
- Nervousness, watchfulness
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Inappropriate sexual language
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Scavenging, compulsive stealing
- Persistent fatigue
- Running away
- Inappropriate photos sent by email or phone text

- **Physical abuse**

- Have injuries that cannot be easily explained
- Have injuries that have not been treated adequately
- Have injuries on parts of their body where accidental injury is unlikely, such as the chest, cheeks, or thighs
- Have bruising that leaves hand, finger and pattern bruising marks
- Have injuries such as cigarette burns, bite marks, scalds

- **Sexual abuse**

- Have stomach pains or discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Have bruising or other injuries on parts of the body not normally seen
- Use language or behaviour inappropriate to their age
- Use overtly sexual behaviour

- **Emotional abuse**

- Show delayed physical or emotional development
- Have sudden speech disorders
- Exhibit compulsive nervous behaviour
- Be reluctant to have their parents contacted
- Show lack of confidence or need for approval or attention

- **Neglect**

- Constantly hungry
- Tired all the time
- Dressed inappropriately for the weather
- In a scruffy, shabby unwashed state
- Untreated illness or abrasions

- Inadequate care.

The lists of signs and symptoms detailed above are those most commonly encountered signs and often several will be present at any one time. It is important to remember that most children will demonstrate one or more these symptoms at some stage in their lives – do not jump to any conclusions, but if you are concerned in any way, you must seek advice from the internal Safeguarding Leads:

## **5.4 Internal Contact Details**

Designated Safeguarding Lead; Carol McAllister

Tel: 0191 4785959

Mob: 07950575656

email: [carol.mcallister@visionandhearingsupport.org.uk](mailto:carol.mcallister@visionandhearingsupport.org.uk)

Deputy Safeguarding Lead; Sarah French

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## **6. Safeguarding Adults**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. Every member of staff of Sense Ability Matters, including managers, the board, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, students, or anyone working on behalf of Sense Ability Matters has a responsibility to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, whilst at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes and beliefs in deciding on any action (Care Act 2014). Those working with vulnerable adults must act positively to report abuse where it is identified or suspected.

### **6.2 Purpose**

This policy outlines the role of Sense Ability Matters in preventing the abuse and neglect of adults at risk, raising concerns where adults at risk are experiencing abuse or neglect, and in initiating or supporting multi agency safeguarding adult's procedures in line with both South Tyneside Council or Gateshead Council's Multi Agency policies and agreements.

Adherence to this policy provides for a systematic and consistent approach to the prevention of abuse and the management of suspected or alleged abuse, or all adults at risk living in the areas that we service.

## **Adults at Risk Defined**

For the purposes of this policy an adult is a person, aged 18 years and over who is at a greater risk of suffering abuse or neglect because of physical, mental, sensory, learning or cognitive illnesses or disabilities; and substance misuse or brain injury, and includes:

- those who purchase their care through personal budgets
- those whose care is funded by Local Authorities and/or health services
- those who fund their own care
- informal carers, family and friends who provide care on an unpaid basis
- adults who are in prison or living in approved premises on licence
- those aged between 18 and 25 years and in receipt of children's services
- informal carers, family and friends who provide care on an unpaid basis

## **What We Mean by Adult Safeguarding**

The Care Act 2014 Guidance describes safeguarding as the means of protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It further states that 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. Within this context, the guidance recognises that adults sometimes have complex

interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

Abuse and neglect can take many forms and it is important that staff working in all organisations should not be constrained in their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, and the circumstances of an individual case should always be considered.

It should be emphasised however that safeguarding procedures are not a substitute for:

- Providers' responsibilities to provide safe and high-quality care and support;
- Commissioners regularly assuring themselves of the safety and effectiveness of commissioned services;
- The [Care Quality Commission](#) (CQC) ensuring that regulated providers comply with the fundamental standards of care or by taking enforcement action
- The core duties of the police to prevent and detect crime and protect life and property.

## 6.3 Types of Abuse and Neglect

Abuse or Neglect may be:

- a single act or repeated acts
- multiple in form
- a deliberate act of neglect or a failure to act
- an opportunistic act or a form of serial abusing where the perpetrator seeks out and grooms the individual(s)

The Department of Health Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 sets out the different types and patterns of abuse and neglect, though stresses that the list is not exhaustive, and describes the different circumstances in which they may take place.

<b>Physical Abuse</b>	<b>Financial or Material</b>
Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.	Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult'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.

<p><b>Sexual Abuse</b></p>	<p><b>Psychological Abuse</b></p>
<p>Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Modern Slavery</b></p>	<p><b>Discriminatory Abuse</b></p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.</p>

<b>Organisational Abuse</b>	<b>Neglect and Acts of Omission</b>
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	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
<b>Self-Neglect</b>	<b>Domestic Abuse</b>
This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.	Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can be, but not limited to: psychological, sexual, financial and emotional.

If you are concerned in any way, you must seek advice from the internal Safeguarding Leads:

## **6.4 Internal Contact Details**

Designated Safeguarding Lead; Carol McAllister

Tel: 0191 4785959

Mob: 07950 575656

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## **7. Disclosure of Abuse**

If a person or child discloses that they are being abused or if any person who uses our services discloses that they are involved in abuse of a vulnerable person or child or if in any situation a member of staff or volunteer has any reason to believe that abuse is taking place, they must take the action detailed below. All actions must proceed urgently and without delay.

## **8. Action to be Taken**

At all times it must be remembered, if possible, in the circumstances, to seek consent from the person making the disclosure before proceeding with the steps set out below. Note that consent is not required from a child.

- Whenever possible, remind the person making the disclosure that everything they say will be confidential unless they tell you something that suggests someone is being hurt or will be hurt. This includes financial abuse and lack of proper care by carers
- Stay calm
- Listen carefully and patiently
- Reassure the person that they are doing the right thing in making the disclosure
- Explain that you will need to do the following:
  - Obtain emergency medical treatment if needed
  - Treat the information seriously
- Make relevant notes of the information given, noting the date, time and place of the disclosure along with names of anyone else present
- Report the disclosure to the appropriate senior member of staff (see above)
- Act to protect the person at risk
- Deal with immediate needs

Report to the appropriate senior manager who will then ask you to:

- Write a factual report of the disclosure made using the persons own words
- Give a copy to the senior manager

The appropriate manager will then:

- Consider reporting the matter to the police if a crime has taken place
- Report the disclosure by raising a concern with the appropriate local authority

- Gateshead: Adult Social Care Direct 0191 4337033
  - Gateshead: Children's Services 0191 433 2653 or 0191 477 0844 (out of hours)
  - South Tyneside: Safeguarding Adults Let's Talk Team on 0191 424 6000
  - South Tyneside: Children's Services 0191 424 5010 or 0191 456 2093 (out of hours)
- The senior manager will complete the Safeguarding Log and store securely

### **What you should not do:**

- Do not appear shocked
- Do not press for more details – you are not the investigator. The designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy as required) will gather information and take advice to decide if a referral is required. The relevant authority will investigate as appropriate.
- Do not contaminate or remove possible forensic evidence
- In cases where a medical examination or forensic examination is likely do not suggest that the person has a wash, bath, food or drink until after that examination
- Do not promise to keep secrets
- Do not confront or inform the abuser. This may place the person making the disclosure at further risk

## **9. Referral Pathways and Timescales**

Staff and volunteers must discuss any disclosure or suspicion of abuse with the appropriate manager as soon as possible and on the same day.

After consultation with the relevant manager a decision will be made as to whether a safeguarding concern should be raised with the appropriate local authority.

If it is agreed that a concern should be raised it must be done on the same working day as the disclosure of abuse is made.

## **10. Information to Include When Raising a Concern**

- Full details of the adult or child at risk
- Details of the alleged perpetrator (if known)
- All details known of the alleged abuse
- Details of the person raising the concern
- Whether consent has been given by the person at risk

This information must also be recorded on the Safeguarding Log

## **11. Confidentiality**

All of our services are confidential which means that no information will be shared outside of the organisation unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as:

- It is a requirement of the law
- Consent has been given by the service user
- When the service user or others would be at risk of harm if confidentiality is not breached
- Where the service user lacks capacity to give consent and the breach of confidentiality would be in the best interests of the service user

Wherever possible consent to share information should be sought from the person making the disclosure.

## **12. Preventing Abuse by Staff and Volunteers**

All staff and volunteers working with service users will be required to have a DBS check.

DBS checks will be renewed every 3 years.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for checking the DBS disclosure form and making a judgement on the contents.

Until a satisfactory DBS disclosure form has been completed no member of staff or volunteer will be allowed to work with service users unless another appropriate member of staff is present and a 'Pending DBS' risk assessment is in place.

A record of the DBS reference number, the issue date and renewal date will be kept on a secure database maintained by the DBS administrator.

The DBS document will be returned to the employee or volunteer for safekeeping.

All staff and volunteers will be given access to this policy and be informed of any changes.

## **13. Managing allegations against a Person in a Position of Trust (PiPOT).**

A person in a position of trust is an employee, volunteer or student who works with adults with care and support needs. This work may be paid or unpaid.

Examples of such concerns could include allegations that they have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed an adult or child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to an adult or child
- behaved towards an adult or child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to adults with care and support needs.

Allegations against PiPOT will be taken seriously and the Sense Ability Matters will approach any allegation in consistently and without prejudice.

Safeguarding allegations about members of staff, volunteers or students must be reported immediately to the DSL. Allegations against the Operations Manager (DSL) or Chief Executive (Deputy DSL) should be taken to the Chair of Trustees.

### **13.1 Action to be taken**

- Always seek guidance from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) before taking any action;

guidance from the LADO will override this procedure if different actions are recommended.

- Inform the staff member and if necessary, arrange an alternative role/way of working for them whilst an investigation is carried out – it should be noted that this is not an assumption of guilt;
- (see Disciplinary Policy) conduct an investigation;
- Keep and maintain any written records
- The investigation may include:
  - informing the police if a criminal offence is alleged;
  - conducting an internal investigation and possible disciplinary action in line with the Disciplinary Policy.
- The Local Authority Child or Adult Designated Team will be contacted if:
  - a staff member has behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or at risk adult;
  - a staff member has committed a criminal offence in relation to a child or at-risk adult;
  - a staff member has behaved towards children or at-risk adults in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children or at-risk adults.
- The DSL will co-operate fully with the Police or Local Authority Child or Adult Designated Team and take advice from them on the course of action to be taken in relation to the staff members employment and informing them of the details of the investigation.
- Once investigations are complete If a staff member is found to have harmed a child or at-risk adult or poses a risk of harm to a child or at-risk adult;
  - the DSLO will inform the Disclosure and Barring Service and the member of staff will be disciplined in line with Sense

Ability Matters's disciplinary policy, this may result in dismissal.

- If allegations are unfounded, the individual's line manager with support from the DSL will ensure that they are properly supported in their role.
- Where an investigation establishes poor practice rather than abuse then the line manager will consider appropriate training and supervision and the DSL will review general practice in relation to safeguarding. This may result in action being taken in line with our Capability Policy and Procedure.

## 14. Resources and Further Information

Additional information can be found at;

North and South of Tyne Safeguarding Children Partnership  
Procedures Manual

- <https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion>

SOUTH TYNESIDE SAFEGUARDING

- [www.Southtynesidesafeguardingapp.co.uk](http://www.Southtynesidesafeguardingapp.co.uk)

GATESHEAD SAFEGUARDING

- <https://www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk/>

NENC ICB - <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/our-work/safeguarding/>

<b>Approved By:</b>	Trustees
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<b>Associated Policies:</b>	Confidentiality Policy Whistleblowing Policy H&S Policy Disciplinary Policy Capability Policy