**SWAN WOMENS CENTRE**

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS POLICY**

This policy aims to ensure that no act or omission by staff or the services they provide puts a client at risk; and that rigorous systems are in place to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable persons and to protect them from abuse.

The policy recognises that safeguarding vulnerable persons is a shared responsibility with the need for effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise if vulnerable persons are to be protected from harm.

This policy also sets out how staff should be alert to signs of abuse and take appropriate action to safeguard vulnerable persons. For the purposes of this policy the term ‘Vulnerable Persons’ relates to clients belonging to the following groups:

* People whose health or usual function is compromised
* People with visual / hearing impairment
* People with physical disabilities
* People with learning disability
* People with reduced independence, including those who do not speak English as their first language
* Children or young persons

The Aims of this Policy are to:

* Ensure that all staff in the geographical areas that SWAN operates, know and understand their local Adults and Children’s Safeguarding policies and procedures.
* Actively promote the empowerment and well-being of vulnerable adults and children through the services we provide.
* Act in a way which supports the rights of the individual to lead an individual life based on self-determination and personal choice.
* Recognise that some adults and children are unable to make their own decisions and/or to protect themselves, their assets and bodily integrity.
* Recognise that the right of self-determination can involve risk and ensure that such risk is recognised and understood by all concerned, and minimised whenever possible.
* Ensure that when the right to an independent lifestyle and choice is at risk the individual concerned receives appropriate help, including advice, protection and support from relevant agencies.
* Ensure the law and statutory requirements are known and used appropriately so that vulnerable adults receive the protection of the law and access to the judicial process.

Definitions

3.1 A Child: Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (Children Act 1989 and 2004). The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces is in hospital, prison or a young offender’s institution does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989. Young people who are in this category as well as younger adolescents often fall through the net of services, not seen as an adult but no longer a child; they are often very vulnerable. Whilst ‘unborn children’ are not included in the legal definition of children, intervention to ensure their future well-being is encompassed within safeguarding children practice Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) and (2013).

3.2 Adult at risk: The term ‘adults at risk’ has been used to replace the term vulnerable adult. This is because the term adult at risk focuses on the situation causing the risk rather than the characteristics of the adult concerned. No Secrets Guidance (2000) defines an adult at risk as a person who “is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself from significant harm or exploitation”

3.3 Abuse of Children:

For children’s safeguarding, the definitions of abuse are taken from *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, 2013).

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| Abuse and neglect | Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. |
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| Physical abuse | 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. |
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| 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 children 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 the 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. |
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| 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. |
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| Neglect | Neglect is 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); or * ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. * It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs. |

**3.4 Abuse of Vulnerable Adults (adults at risk):**

For **adult** safeguarding, the definitions are taken from *No Secrets* (Department of Health and the Home Office, 2000) - *Revised Statutory Guidance will be issued alongside the Care Act 2014 and the enactment of the Care & Support Bill in 2015. In the meantime, the current Guidance on adult safeguarding in respect of definitions of abuse: No Secrets: Guidance on Developing and Implementing Multi-agency Policies and Procedures to Protect Vulnerable Adults from Abuse (2000) continues to apply.*

Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by other person or persons. Abuse may consist of single or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. Of particular relevance are the following descriptions of the forms that abuse may take:

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| **Physical abuse**: | Including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, and misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions. |
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| **Sexual abuse** | Including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting. |
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| **Psychological abuse** | Including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. |
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| **Financial or material abuse** | Including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. |
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| **Neglect and acts of omission** | Including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. |
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| **Discriminatory abuse** | Including racist, sexist, that based on a person’s disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment. |

1. **Statement Principles**

We recognise and respond appropriately to ensure that the clients who access our centre are safe and understand our safeguarding policy and procedures. It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and trustees to promote a culture of safeguarding.

1. **Race, Ethnicity and Culture**

SWAN are committed to providing a service that is welcoming and accessible to women regardless of race, ethnicity or culture.

1. **Specific Related Issues**

If you have any concerns seek advice from our Safeguarding leads in SWAN who are Karen Christie –CEO, Galina Jordanova – Bhebe -Counselling and Wellbeing Manager or Sue McGregor – Children’s Counselling Co-ordinator.

* All SWAN staff have attended safeguarding training provided by Sefton Council.
* All staff who provide one to one support including counselling, have undergone a DBS check (previously CRB).
* SWAN staff have a responsibility to raise any concerns regarding safe practice within SWAN with either their line manager, CEO or Trustees. For further information refer to the Whistleblowing policy.

**Structures and responsibilities**

Galina Jordanova - Bhebe – Safeguarding Lead (staff and volunteers)

Christine Wallis – Lead Safeguarding Officer (Trustees)

**Responsibilities of all staff**

If you are concerned or suspect that abuse of anyone, referred to above, you have a duty to act. You can discuss this with any of the Safeguarding Leads above or ring Sefton Social Services for further advice.

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS ACTION CHART**

**DISCLOSURE/SUSPICION**

**EMERGENCY**

**NO**

**YES**

**Police etc**

* **Report to appropriate colleague or**
* **Galina Jordanova- Bhebe 07874614094**

**or**

* **CEO Karen Christie 07804894241 or**
* **Telephone Sefton Social Services for further advice**

**Contact Number for all Social Services on previous page.**

**Police emergency: 999**

**Non-emergency: 101 (all areas)**

1. **Core Principles:**

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This organisationrecognises that safeguarding children and protecting adults at risk is a shared responsibility and there is a need for effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have differing roles and expertise if vulnerable groups are to be protected from harm. To achieve effective joint working, there must be constructive relationships at all levels which need to be promoted and supported by:

* A commitment of staff to seek continuous improvement with regard to safeguarding.
* Clear lines of accountability within the organisation for safeguarding
* Service developments that take account of the need to safeguard all service users, and is informed where appropriate, by the views of service users
* Staff training and continuing professional development so that staff have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regards to safeguarding children and adults at risk.
* Safe working practices including recruitment and vetting procedures
* Effective interagency working, including effective information sharing.

1. **Implementation and Dissemination**

The Safeguarding Policy for SWAN is on our website. Staff, volunteers and Trustees are given safeguarding training on induction into the organisation. All staff, volunteers and Trustees have signed to say that they have read and understand the policy. A paper version of the policy is available on request. Clients to the service sign to say that they understand our confidentiality and safeguarding commitment.

1. **Monitoring Compliance**

See above

1. **Legislation and Guidance**

Children Act 1989, 2004

Care Act 2014 (replaces No Secrets, 2002)

Care & Support Bill due for enactment 2015

Working Together 2013

Mental Capacity Act 2005

Local Safeguarding Children Boards

Local Safeguarding Adult Boards

Intercollegiate Document 2014

Review August 2022 – Next review due August 2023

(or before if changes in legislation)