**The Southmead Project** 

**Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy**

**Reviewed: September 2021**

**Review date: September 2022**

**Introduction**

The Southmead Project makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe.

The Southmead Project comes into contact with adults at risk of harm through its counselling services including one-to-one counselling and group work.

The types of contact with adults at risk will be regulated and controlled.

This policy seeks to ensure that the Southmead Project undertakes its responsibilities with regard to protection of adults at risk and will respond to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support paid and unpaid staff in their practices and clarifies the organisation’s expectations.

**Legislation**

The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:

* Care Act 2014
* Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (DBS)
* Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
* Care Standards Act 2000
* Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
* The Police Act 1996 (CRB)
* Mental Health Act 1983
* NHS and Community Care Act 1990
* Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

**Definitions**

Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of adults at risk wherever possible. In contrast, adult protection is about responding to circumstances that arise.

Abuse is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.

It can take a number of forms, including the following:

* Physical abuse
* Sexual abuse
* Domestic violence
* Neglect
* Financial (or material) abuse
* Psychological
* Discriminatory
* Organisational
* Modern slavery
* Self-neglect

**Definition of Adults at Risk of Harm**

An adult at risk of harm is an adult that the Local Authority has reasonable cause to suspect in its area: [[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs);
2. Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect, and;
3. As a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it

This may include a person who:

* Is elderly and frail
* Has a mental illness including dementia
* Has a physical or sensory disability
* Has a learning disability
* Has a severe physical illness
* Is a substance misuser
* Is homeless

**Responsibilities**

All staff (paid or unpaid) have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures. We expect all staff (paid or unpaid) to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.

**Additional specific responsibilities**

**Trustees** have responsibility to ensure:

* This policy is in place and appropriate
* Sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated to ensure that the policy can be effectively implemented

**The Leadership Team** have responsibility to ensure:

* This policy is accessible to all employees and volunteers
* The policy is implemented
* The policy is monitored and reviewed
* Liaison with, and monitoring of, the Designated Safeguarding Officer’s work

**The Designated Safeguarding Officer** is the Head of Counselling. This person’s responsibilities are:

* Promoting the welfare of adults at risk of harm
* Ensure staff (paid and unpaid) have access to appropriate training/information
* Receive staff concerns about safeguarding and respond to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately
* Keep up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS
* Develop and maintain effective links with relevant agencies
* Take forward concerns about responses

## Contact details

**Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)**

Name: Emma Bull (Head of Therapeutic Services)

Phone/email: 0117 9506 022 / emma.bull@southmeadproject.com

**Deputy DSO**

Name: Rachel Morse (Counselling Lead)

Phone/email: 0117 9506 022 / rachel.morse@southmeadproject.com

**Designated Safeguarding Trustee**

Name: Helen Gunson (safeguarding trustee)

Phone/email: 0117 9506 022 / hgunson@gmail.com

**Implementation Stages**

The scope of this Safeguarding Policy is broad ranging and in practice, it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within the organisation. These include:

* Whistleblowing – ability to inform on other staff or practices within the organisation
* Grievance and disciplinary procedures – to address breaches of procedures/policies
* Health and Safety policy, including lone working procedures, mitigating risk to staff and clients
* Equal Opportunities policy – ensuring safeguarding procedures are in line with this policy, in particular around discriminatory abuse and ensuring that the safeguarding policy and procedures are not discriminatory
* Data protection (how records are stored and access to those records)
* Confidentiality (or limited confidentiality policy) ensuring that clients are aware of our duty to disclose
* Staff induction
* Staff training

**Safer recruitment**

The Southmead Project ensures safe recruitment through the following processes:

* Providing the following safeguarding statement in recruitment adverts or application details: ‘recruitment is done in line with safer recruitment practices’
* Job or role descriptions for all roles involving contact with adults at risk will contain reference to safeguarding responsibilities
* There are person specifications for roles which contain a statement on core competency with regard to protecting and safeguarding adults at risk
* Shortlisting is based on formal application processes/forms and not on provision of CV’s
* Interviews are conducted according to equal opportunity principles and interview questions are based on the relevant job description and person specification
* DBS checks will be conducted for specific roles for all staff (paid or unpaid) working with adults at risk. Portable/carry over DBS checks from another employer will not be deemed to be sufficient. It is a criminal offence for individuals barred by the ISA to work or apply to work with adults at risk in a wide range of posts.
* No formal job offers are made until after checks for suitability are completed (including DBS and 2 references)

**Disclosure and Barring Service Gap Management**

The Southmead Project commits resources to providing Disclosure and Barring Service checks on staff (paid or unpaid) whose roles involve contact with adults at risk.

In order to avoid DBS gaps, the Deputy DSO (CEO) will maintain and review a list of roles across the organisation which involve contact with adults at risk.

In addition to checks on recruitment for roles involving contact with adults at risk, for established staff the following processes are in place:

* A three-year rolling programme of re-checking DBS’s is in place for holders of all identified posts
* For members of staff and volunteers that are on the DBS update service their permission will be sought to check their DBS, which will be checked on an annual basis
* Existing staff (paid or unpaid) who transfer from a role which does not require a DBS check to one which involves contact with adults at risk will be subject to a DBS check

**Service delivery contracting and sub-contracting**

There will be systematic checking of safeguarding arrangements of partner organisations. Safeguarding will be a fixed agenda item on any partnership reporting meetings. Contracts and memorandums of agreement for partnership delivery work will include clear minimum requirements, arrangements for safeguarding and non-compliance procedures.

**Communications training and support for staff**

The Southmead Project commits resources for induction, training of staff (paid and unpaid), effective communications and support mechanisms in relation to safeguarding.

**Induction** will include:

* Discussion of the Safeguarding Policy (and confirmation of understanding)
* Discussion of other relevant policies
* Ensure familiarity with reporting processes, the roles of line manager and Designated Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Safeguarding Officer (and who acts in their absence)
* Initial training on safeguarding including: safe working practices, safer recruitment, understanding child protection and adult safeguarding

**Training**

All staff who, through their role, are in contact with adults at risk will have access to safeguarding training at an appropriate level at least every 3 years. This includes trustees who are responsible for safeguarding.

The most recent training course that the Southmead Project whole staff team and trustees attended was:

* Adult safeguarding (1 day course) with the Training Exchange on 24th May 2022

**Communications and discussion of safeguarding issues**

Commitment to the following communication methods will ensure effective communication of safeguarding issues and practice:

* Safeguarding as a regular agenda item across team meetings, Leadership Team meetings, Trustee meetings, one-to-one meetings (formal or informal) and clinical supervision.
* Participation in multi-agency safeguarding procedures and meetings in order to be involved in child/adult protection procedures.
* Provision of a clear and effective reporting procedure which encourages reporting of concerns
* Encouraging open discussion (e.g. during supervision and team meetings) to identify barriers to reporting so that they can be addressed.
* Inclusion of safeguarding as a discussion prompt during supervision meetings/appraisals to encourage reflection.

**Support**

We recognise that involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be stressful for staff concerned. The mechanisms in place to support staff include:

* Debriefing support for paid and unpaid staff so that they can reflect on the issues they have dealt with.
* Seeking further support as appropriate e.g. access to counselling.
* Staff who have initiated protection concerns will be contacted by line manager/DSM the same day or as soon as possible thereafter.
* Clinical supervision with an external supervisor, paid for by the Southmead Project.
* Regular line management meetings.

**Professional boundaries**

Professional boundaries are what define the limits of a relationship between a counsellor and a client. They are a set of standards we agree to uphold that allows this necessary and often close relationship to exist while ensuring the correct detachment is kept in place.

The Southmead Project expects staff to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the organisation. The following professional boundaries must be adhered to:

* **Giving and receiving gifts from clients:** The Southmead Project does not allow paid or unpaid staff to give gifts to or receive gifts from clients. However, gifts may be provided by the organisation as part of a planned activity.
* **Staff contact with user groups:** Personal relationships between a member of staff (paid or unpaid) and a client who is a current client is prohibited. This includes relationships through social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. It is also prohibited to enter into a personal relationship with a person who has been a client over the past 12 months.
* **Passing on clients’ personal contact details** must not be done without prior consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

* **Degree of accessibility to clients:** staff may not provide clients with their personal contact details.
* **Selling to or buying items** from a client is prohibited.
* **Accepting responsibility for any valuables** on behalf of a client is prohibited.
* **Accepting money as a gift / borrowing money from or lending money to clients** is prohibited.
* **Personal relationships with a third party** related to or known to clients is prohibited.
* **Accepting gifts / rewards or hospitality** from an organisation as an inducement for either doing / not doing something in their official capacity is prohibited.
* **Cautious or avoidance of personal contact** with clients is encouraged.

The Southmead Project’s Employment Policy also contains guidance on staff (paid or unpaid) conduct.

Staff and volunteers should declare actual or potential interests by discussing them with their line manager or Designated Safeguarding Officer. Please refer to the Southmead Project’s Conflict of Interests Policy.

If the professional boundaries and/or policies are breached this could result in disciplinary procedures.

**Reporting**

The process outlined below details the stages involved in raising and reporting safeguarding concerns at the Southmead Project:

**Communicate your concerns with your line manager (or DSO or Deputy DSO if your line manager is absent)**

**Seek medical attention for the adult at risk if needed**

**Discuss with the adult at risk. Obtain permission to make referral if safe and appropriate**

**If needed seek advice from the Adults helpdesk at Bristol City Council**

**Complete the Local Authority Safeguarding Adult Care Referral Form if required and submit to the local authority within 24 hours of making contact**

**Ensure that feedback from the Local Authority is received and their response recorded**

The Local Authority has a process for reporting and this must be adopted. Organisations will be expected to complete the Local Authority’s initial contact form when informing them of a concern about an adult at risk. The use of this form and compliance with the policy is mandatory.

The Bristol Care Direct (Adult Duty Desk) contact details are:

***Call: 0117 9222700***

***Fax: 0117 9036688***

***E-mail:*** ***adult.care@bristol.gov.uk***

***Online referral form:*** [***https://www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/report-suspected-abuse-safeguarding-adults-at-risk***](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/report-suspected-abuse-safeguarding-adults-at-risk)

***Safeguarding Adults Team Advice Line: 0117 9036629***

**Allegations Management**

The Southmead Project recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its staff (paid or unpaid) within the organisation or by a professional from another organisation.

The process for raising and dealing with allegations is as follows:

**First step:** Any member of staff (paid or unpaid) from the Southmead Project is required to report any concerns in the first instance to their line manager/ DSO / Deputy DSO. A written record of the concern should also be completed.

**Second step**: Contact Local Authority for advice.

**Third step**: Follow the advice provided.

The Southmead Project recognises its legal duty to report any concerns about unsafe practice by any of its paid or unpaid staff to the Local Authority.

**Monitoring**

The organisation will monitor the following safeguarding aspects:

* Safer recruitment practices
* DBS checks undertaken
* References applied for new staff
* Records made and kept of line management sessions
* Training – record of staff training on protecting adults at risk
* Monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned
* Checking that policies are up-to-date and relevant
* Reviewing the current reporting procedure in place
* Presence and action of Designated Safeguarding Officer responsible for safeguarding

**Managing information**

Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with the Data Protection and Information Sharing Policy.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard adults at risk. The public interest in safeguarding adults at risk may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, as judged by the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise clients or their families/carers that they will keep secrets.

**Conflict resolution and complaints**

Conflicts in respect of safety of adults at risk will be taken forward by the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer via Bristol City Council Safeguarding Adults Board.

**Communicating and reviewing the policy**

The Southmead Project will make clients aware of the Safeguarding Policy during initial meetings/assessments.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees every year and when there are changes in legislation.

This policy was last reviewed on: 06/09/2021

Signed: Imogen McCabe

1. Care Act 2014, section 42(1) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)