

The Southmead Project

Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy

Reviewed: August 2025

Review date: August 2026

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 and therapeutic 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 the 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 (DBS)
- 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 or abuse
- 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

- a) Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs);
- b) Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect, and;
- c) As a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves 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

¹ Care Act 2014, section 42(1)

The Leadership Team has 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 Therapeutic Services. This person's responsibilities are:

- Promoting the welfare of adults at risk of harm
- Ensuring staff (paid and unpaid) have access to appropriate training/information
- Booking safeguarding training for the team every 3 years
- Providing support and advice to the team around safeguarding
- Receiving staff concerns about safeguarding and responding to them seriously, swiftly and appropriately
- Supporting staff to make referrals
- Overseeing all records relating to safeguarding
- Keeping up-to-date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS
- Developing and maintaining effective links with relevant agencies
- Taking forward concerns about responses

Contact details

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Name: Emma Bull (Head of Therapeutic Services)

Phone/email: 0117 9506 022 / 07393499069 / imogen.mccabe@southmeadproject.com

Deputy DSO

Name: Rachel Morse (Counselling Lead)

Phone/email: 0117 9506 022 / 07393 499 075 / rachel.morse@southmeadproject.com

Designated Safeguarding Trustee

Name: Markkus Trew (safeguarding trustee)

Phone/email: 0117 9506 022 / Markkus.Trew@southmeadproject.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:

- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Employment Policy - whistleblowing (ability to inform on other staff or practices within the organisation); grievance and disciplinary procedures (to address breaches of procedures/policies); and staff induction and training
- Health and Safety Policy and Lone Working Policy – 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 and Information Sharing Policy – how records are stored and access to those records, and confidentiality policy to ensure that clients are aware of our duty to disclose
- Suicide and Deliberate Self-Harm Prevention Policy
- Complaints Procedure for Clients

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'
- There will be at least one recruitment panel member on all staff and volunteer interviews who is trained on safer recruitment
- 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 that 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 two references covering the last 5 years)

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 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 on an annual basis
- Existing staff (paid or unpaid) or volunteers who transfer from a role that does not require a DBS check to one that 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 the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), Deputy DSO, and 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 18th June 2025

Communications and discussion of safeguarding issues

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

- Safeguarding as a regular agenda item across team meetings, Leadership Team meetings, Trustee meetings, line management meetings, and clinical supervision.
- Regular staff updates regarding safeguarding as deemed necessary.
- 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 any 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 of actual harm can be stressful for staff concerned. The mechanisms in place to support staff include:

- Debriefing support for paid and unpaid staff with the DSO, Deputy DSO, their line manager or member of the Leadership Team, as well as with colleagues, so that they can reflect on the issues they have dealt with.
- Seeking further support as appropriate e.g. access to counselling (12 sessions per year with an external private counsellor will be paid for by the Southmead Project).
- Staff who have initiated concerns will be contacted by their line manager, the DSO or Deputy DSO the same day or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Clinical supervision and group supervision with an external supervisor, paid for by the Southmead Project.
- Regular line management meetings.

Reporting

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

Communicate your concerns with the DSO in the instance or if unavailable the Deputy DSO



Seek medical attention for the adult at risk if needed and consider immediate safety



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



If needed, the employee is to seek advice from the Adults helpdesk at Bristol City Council (or other relevant Local Authority)



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



Keep a copy of the form and contact the Local Authority in 2 weeks' time if there is no response. Record their response once received.

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.

Bristol Care Direct (Adult Duty Desk) contact details:

Call: 0117 9222 700 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)

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>

South Gloucestershire contact details:

Call: 01454 868 007 (Monday to Friday)

Call: 01454 615 165 (Out of hours and on weekends)

Web:

<http://sites.southglos.gov.uk/safeguarding/adults/safeguarding-adults-board/safeguarding-contacts/>

Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) contact details:

Call: 01225 394200 (Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm, and Fridays 8.30am to 4.30pm)

or call Emergency Duty Social Work team on **01454 615165** (evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays)

E-mail: Safeguarding_Adults@bathnes.gov.uk

Online referral form:

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Safeguarding%20Adult%20Referral%20Form%20for%20Professionals.docx>

Web: <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/tell-us-about-adult-being-abused-or-neglected>

North Somerset contact details:

Call: **01275 888801** (Care Connect open Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm), or **01454 615165**

(Emergency Duty Team, open out-of-hours and weekends)

E-mail: care.connect@n-somerset.gov.uk

Online referral form:

<https://nssab.co.uk/sites/default/files/2024-01/NSC%20Adult%20Safeguarding%20Concern%20Referral%20Form%20%28January%202024%29.docx>

Web: <https://www.nssab.co.uk/how-you-can-get-help>

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, or if the allegation concerns their line manager they should speak directly to the CEO or Chair of the Board of Trustees. 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
- 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

- Organisational safeguarding log reviewed regularly by designated safeguarding trustee

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.

Review

We are committed to reviewing this policy annually and in light of any significant changes in practices or legislation. A copy of this policy will be made available on the Southmead Project website so that it is easily accessible for all clients, professionals and partner organisations, which can be found here: <https://www.southmeadproject.org.uk/our-resources>

This policy was last reviewed on: 27/08/2025

Signed: Imogen McCabe