

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy & Procedures



Reviewed December 2023

About this Policy

Introduction

This Policy covers Stable Minds responsibility to safeguarding participants and clients.

Stable Minds is committed to best safeguarding practice and to uphold the rights of all adults to live a life free from harm from abuse, exploitation and neglect.

Who should read and understand this policy?

All Stable Minds staff including full and part time staff, sessional staff, volunteers and placement students.

What is the purpose of the policy?

All Stable Minds staff need to be able to promote the wellbeing and welfare of the children and adults we provide services for; understand our responsibilities in dealing with safeguarding reports and how to action and handle these concerns or incidents; and encourage good practice in all we do.

This document also explains:

- Types of abuse
- Consequences of abuse
- Evidence of abuse
- The law
- Procedures for dealing with a safeguarding issue
- Safer recruitment and DBS checks

Policy Statement

Stable Minds is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults that it comes in to contact with. The purpose of this policy and procedure is to:

- promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- ensure the safe recruitment of staff and conduct of all staff
- identify staff responsibilities in dealing with reports or suspicions of abuse and to provide clear and robust guidance on how to handle these concerns
- encourage good practice in the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults

Stable Minds recognises that the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount;

- everyone has the right to live free from abuse or neglect regardless of age, ability or disability, sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status.
- we are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.

- safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and we are committed to prevent abuse and neglect through safeguarding the welfare of all adults involved.
- Actions taken by Stable Minds will be consistent with the principles of safeguarding ensuring that any action taken is prompt, proportionate and that it includes and respects the voice of the individual concerned.
- all concerns, and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously

Safeguarding definitions

Safeguarding is defined by the Children Act 1989 and Joint Chief Inspectors Report on Arrangements to Safeguard Children (2002) as meaning that:

'Agencies (and organisations) working with children and young people take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to the individual's welfare are and where there are concerns about children and young people's welfare, all agencies (and organisations) take all appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies and procedures, working in partnership with other local agencies.'

Vulnerable Adult: This is a person aged 18 years and over who may be unable to take care of or protect themselves because they have a physical or mental health problem, disability or are elderly.

Emotional Abuse: Persistent lack of love and affection, where a child/vulnerable adult may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted, may make the child/vulnerable adult nervous or withdrawn. Emotional abuse may also occur if there is constant overprotection, or there is neglect, physical or sexual abuse.

Psychological/Mental Abuse: This type of abuse is similar to emotional abuse and can be in the form of threats, intimidation, harassment, stopping a child/vulnerable adult from seeing friends and family or invasion of privacy.

Neglect: This is when the child/vulnerable adult's basic needs such as food, warmth, and adequate clothing are not provided, as well as a failure or refusal to give love, affection and attention. It can also occur when there is inadequate supervision or the child/ vulnerable adult is left alone.

Physical Abuse: Where adults physically hurt or injure children/vulnerable adults by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, and biting or use excessive force when trying to restrain a child/vulnerable adult, or by giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs etc.

Sexual Abuse: Some adults - both male and female - may seek to satisfy their own sexual needs by abusing girls, boys and vulnerable adults. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation,

oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children/vulnerable adults pornographic material is also a form of sexual abuse.

Financial Abuse: This includes: fraud; stealing; pressuring a child/vulnerable adult to part with money, benefits, possessions or property. Abuse may involve/occur in one or more of the above.

Evidence that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be being abused could include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if sustained on part of a body not normally prone to such injuries
- A situation in which the explanation for an injury seems inconsistent or unlikely
- The child/vulnerable adult describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends
- Not socialising with their peers
- Displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
- Loss of weight for no apparent reason
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.
- It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more indicators is not proof that abuse is taking place.

Understanding the law and legislative framework

The Children Act 1989

This act provided legislation to ensure that the welfare and developmental needs of children are met, including their need to be protected from harm.

The Police Act 1997

This act contained the provision to set up the Criminal Records Bureau for England and Wales. Under this act it is a criminal offence for an employer to

- not check an employee working with children or vulnerable adults
- give a job to someone who is inappropriate to work with children or vulnerable adults when they know this to be case.

The Protection of Children Act 1999

Under this act, childcare organisations (defined as those that are 'concerned with the provision of accommodation, social services or health care services to children or the supervision of children') must make use of the Disclosure Service in their recruitment and reporting processes and urges other organisations working with children to also do so.

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000

This act covers Disclosures and child protection issues. It contains the list of convictions that bar offenders from working with children in 'regulated positions'. These types of 'regulated positions' are defined in this act and include:

- any employment in schools, children's homes, day care premises where children are present
- caring for, training, supervising, or being in sole charge of children
- unsupervised contact with children
- other positions which give the kind of access or influence which could put
- children
- at risk if held by a disqualified person (e.g. management committee members).

Disclosure & Barring Service 2013

Criminal record checks: guidance for employers – employers or organisations can request criminal records checks on potential employees from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Care Standards Act 2000

A DBS disclosure is required for most roles in organisations providing care or health services regulated under this act. This act also sets out the Protection of Vulnerable Adults scheme.

Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004

In September 2003 the Government set out in the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' its proposals for a radical reorganisation of children's services – from hospitals and schools, to police and voluntary groups. Subsequently 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' was issued and the Children Act 2004 was passed. It sets out the Government's approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19.

Every local authority will lead on integrated delivery of services for children and young people through multi-agency children's trusts. Local authorities are also required to set up statutory Local Safeguarding Children Boards which are replacing the nonstatutory Area Child Protection Committees. The Children's Trusts are a direct response to Lord Laming's report of the inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié, which highlighted the extent to which better working together and better communication was crucial.

The Every Child Matters agenda has been further developed through publication of the Children's Plan in December 2007, which aims to improve educational outcomes for children, improve

children's health, reduce offending rates among young people and eradicate child poverty by 2020. Further details from www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Introduced the new Vetting and Barring Scheme and the role of the Independent Safeguarding Authority. The Act places a statutory duty on all those working with vulnerable groups to register and undergo an advanced vetting process with criminal sanctions for non-compliance.

Staff Training

As a member of the Stable Minds team, it is important that you feel confident and understand your responsibilities to help keep all our participants and staff members safe.

Depending on your role you will either complete a Level 2 or Level 3 Safeguarding qualification. This may be for safeguarding vulnerable adults or for working with children or for both.

This qualification will require refreshing/updating every 2-3 years.

6 Principles of Safeguarding

First introduced by the Department of Health in 2011, but now embedded in the Care Act, these six principles apply to all health and care settings.

1. Empowerment

People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.

2. Prevention

It is better to take action before harm occurs.

3. Proportionality

The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

4. Protection

Support and representation for those in greatest need.

5. Partnership

Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.

6. Accountability

Accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice

Safeguarding Procedures

Stable Minds delivers counselling services which can involve individuals disclosing information that will trigger a safeguarding concern.

If you are speaking to a client who discloses any report of suffering abuse or neglect of any kind or an intention to risk the safety of themselves or others, a safeguarding report must be actioned.

How to handle the situation when speaking to the client

- Remain calm and listen carefully
- Find an appropriate, early opportunity to explain that it is likely that
- the information will need to be shared. Staff must not promise to keep confidentiality
- Allow the person to continue at their own pace
- Ask questions for clarification only and at all other times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
- Reassure the individual that they have done the right thing in making the allegation/disclosing any intention to harm themselves
- Contact the safeguarding lead at the earliest opportunity

Concerns of abuse: Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult

If you have concerns around abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable adult this it to be communicated to the Local Safeguarding Board. If the concerns are raised out of normal office hours, the matter will be referred to the Social Services Emergency Duty Team.

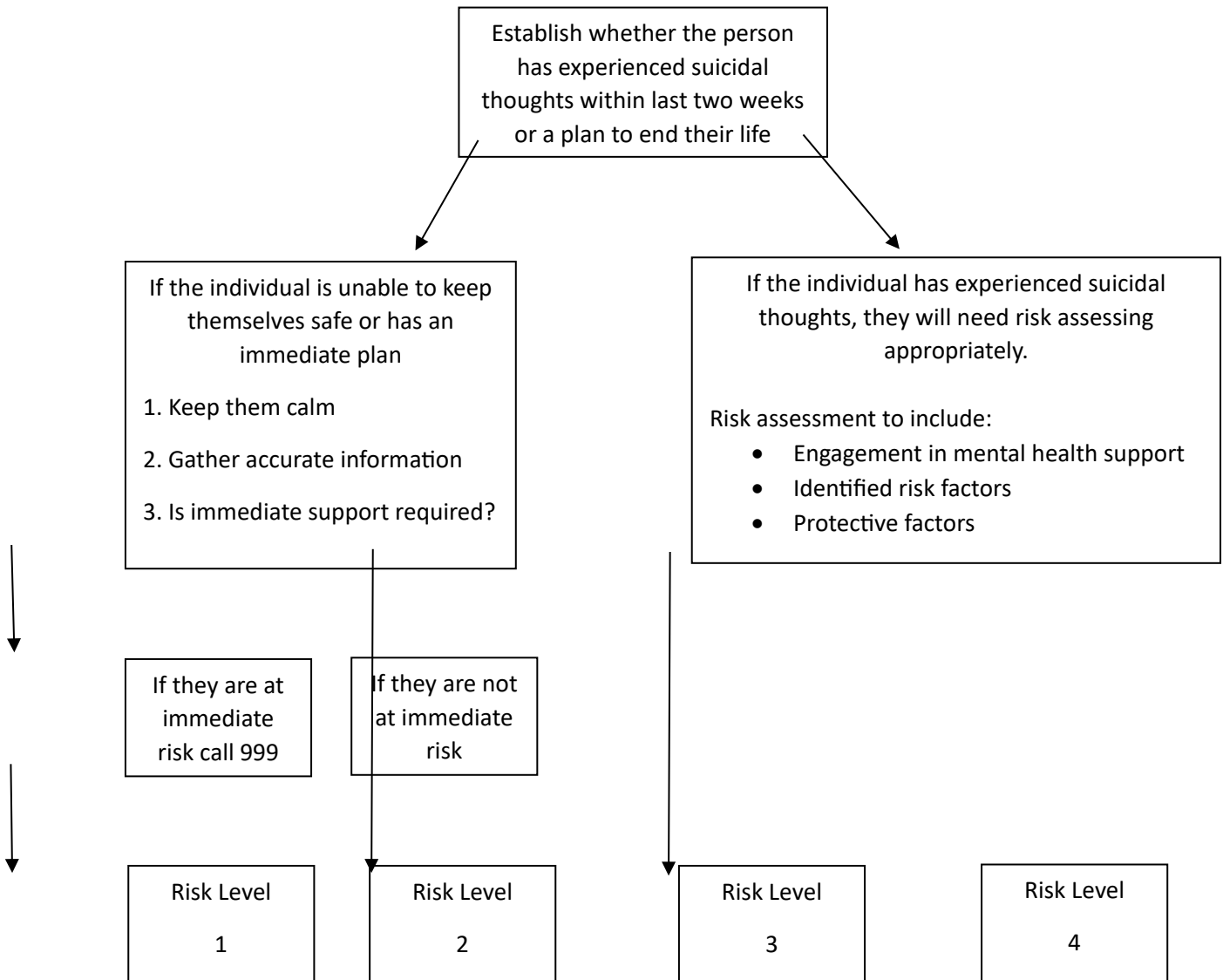
- If any member of the Stable Minds team has a suspicion or is aware that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being abused they must act quickly and appropriately.
- Stable Minds staff are obliged to take action whilst ensuring at all times that the welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount and the interests of the person against whom the allegation has been made are protected.
- Staff should immediately report any suspicion or allegation of abuse immediately to safeguarding lead in the first instance.
- Staff should not attempt to assess whether or not the allegations are true and must not attempt to deal with any suspicion or report themselves. The safeguarding lead will not decide if a child or vulnerable adult has been abused. This is the task of the statutory services.
- Under no circumstances will the concerns be raised or discussed with anyone other than Safeguarding lead and the local authority to avoid any risk of alerting any alleged abuser or breaching confidentiality.

Reporting Concerns to the Local Safeguarding Board

Cheshire East Report a concern about a child	
email: CHECS@cheshireeast.gov.uk Office Hours: 0300 1235 012 Monday - Thursday: 8:30am - 5pm Friday: 8:30am - 4:30pm	EDT Out of hours 0300 123 5022 Cheshire police 101 or 999 in an emergency
Cheshire East Report a concern about a vulnerable adult	
website: https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/staying-safe/keeping-adults-safe/concerned-about-an-adult.aspx Office Hours: 03001235010 Monday - Thursday: 8:30 am - 5pm Friday: 8:30am - 4:30pm	EDT Out of hours 0300 123 5022 Cheshire police 101 or 999 in an emergency
Cheshire West Report a concern about a child	
website: https://www.cheshirewestscp.co.uk/ Office Hours: 0300 123 7047 Monday - Thursday: 8:30 am – 5pm Friday: 8:30am - 4:30pm	Emergency Duty Team (Out of hours) 01244 977277 Cheshire police – 0845 458 0000 999 in an emergency
Cheshire West Report a concern about a vulnerable adult	
Email: accesswest@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk Office Hours: 0300 123 7034 Monday - Thursday: 8:30am-5pm Friday: 8:30am-4:30pm	Emergency Duty Team (Out of hours) 01244 977277 Cheshire police – 0845 458 0000 999 in an emergency

Suicide and Self Harm Risk Assessment

Stable Minds is aware clients may disclose risk of harm to themselves. Our counsellors complete a risk assessment with these clients.



Risk	Information	Actions
1	Thoughts within last 2 weeks Unable to keep self safe or Immediate plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate safety plan • ALGEE - MHFA • Emergency service support required • Notify safeguarding lead by phone • Notify GP by phone/written • Add information to notes • Complete safeguarding reporting form
2	Thoughts within last 2 weeks Able to keep self safe and none Immediate plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify GP by phone/written • Add information to notes • Notify safeguarding lead • Complete safeguarding reporting form • Share risk management plan verbally • Share risk management contacts text, email
3	Thoughts within last 2 weeks no plans Any of the below apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of client previous attempts • Not supported by qualified counsellor • Identified risk concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify GP by phone/written • Add information to notes • Notify safeguarding lead • Complete safeguarding reporting form • Share risk management plan verbally • Share risk management contacts text, email
4	Thoughts within last 2 weeks no plans All of the below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No previous attempts • No Identified risk concerns • Qualified Counsellor Risk Assessed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add information to notes • Notify safeguarding lead • Complete safeguarding reporting form • Share risk management plan verbally • Share risk management contacts text, email
5	No thoughts in last 2 weeks	No risk management intervention necessary

Risk Screening			
Over the last two weeks have you experienced thoughts around ending your life?		yes/no	
<i>What thoughts are you experiencing? How often are you experiencing these thoughts? When was the last time you had this thought?</i>			
Do you have plans to act upon these thoughts?		yes/no	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate/none immediate • What is the plan?
If yes to above	Are you able to keep yourself safe?	yes/no	<i>If unable to confirm safety - We have a duty of care to support you, if you unable to keep yourself safe I will need to escalate my concerns which may include contacting emergency services</i>
Have you acted upon these thoughts previously?			
How do you distract yourself from these thoughts?			
What prevents you from acting upon these thoughts?			
Any other concerns			

Stable Minds CIC Safeguarding

Amelia Peel is the Safeguarding Lead for Stable Minds.

If any member of the team has a safeguarding concern these must be communicated to the Safeguarding lead and a Safeguarding Reporting Form must be completed by the individual team member who has raised the concerns. The form must contain factual information, dates, times and contact information. The safeguarding Lead will review any actions and discuss with the individual team member.

Safeguarding Form link: <https://forms.gle/xSaaNNWNtwUXiV2NA>

Useful Resources

NSPCC

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-checklist>

The NSPCC Safeguarding and Child Protection Standards for the Voluntary and Community Sector booklet is available within the safeguarding folder. It contains information on incorporating 6 standards in the workplace to promote a safer working environment and strengthened safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Mind

<https://www.mind.org.uk/need-urgent-help/what-can-i-do-to-help-myself-cope/> Mind has some excellent resources for directing to clients to help them cope through times of crisis.

Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding>

Prevent Training

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-duty-training>

Female genital mutilation: Recognising and Preventing FGM

<https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/resources/free-courses/recognising-and-preventing-fgm>

Cheshire West and Chester Safeguarding Training

<https://www.cheshirewestscp.co.uk/training/>

Men's Advice Line

For male domestic abuse survivors

Tel: 0808 801 0327

Galop LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Tel: 0800 999 5428

Victim Support

Tel: 0808 168 9111

www.victimsupport.com

Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales

www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support

Safe recruitment

All Stable Minds staff must have an enhanced current DBS check and have been deemed suitable to deliver work for Stable Minds. The aim is to help protect children and vulnerable adults when recruiting people into positions of trust. Prior to delivering any work they must complete a DBS application.

If the check is not clear, the individual must share details of the convictions/allegations that have been returned on the DBS check. A decision will then be made in line with Stable Minds's recruitment policy, whether the individual's offer of employment will be withdrawn.

Staff must keep their original DBS document in a safe and secure place and show this document to Stable Minds when requested.

Data Barring Service

Stable Minds will complete this during the new member of staff's recruitment process.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

This act made any convictions 'spent' after a certain period and the convicted person would not normally have to reveal or admit the existence of a spent conviction. In most circumstances, an employer cannot refuse to employ someone, or dismiss them, on the basis of a 'spent' conviction. However, under this act all applicants for positions which give them "substantial, unsupervised access on a sustained or regular basis" to children, must declare all previous convictions whether spent or unspent, and all pending cases against them.

Recruitment Process

Stable Minds is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and confers an obligation upon all staff to share this commitment. To ensure that the risk of harm is minimised, we will employ a safe recruitment policy if the need to recruit staff

who will work with these groups becomes necessary. We will take every precaution to ensure that we are satisfied that any new staff member is fit to work with such groups.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Procedure:

Job adverts will clearly state that we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and that we expect all staff and to share this commitment. This will require all successful applicants to undertake a DBS check. In addition, employment records, references and qualifications will be confirmed.

Job descriptions will clearly state that the work involves contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults with a person specification which clearly states the qualities required in the individual and that at the interview stage, attitudes to and understanding of safeguarding and protection will be rigorously explored. Any unexplained employment breaks or very regular job changes will be thoroughly scrutinised.

References will be taken up after interview. Open references are not acceptable and all references will be verbally verified prior to the offer of a position. All successful candidates will be subject to a DBS check even if this has been recently carried out by a previous employer. Failure to reveal pertinent information at interview will lead to the job offer being withdrawn. Newly appointed staff will be required to undertake an induction in safeguarding and promoting principles and procedures. This will also include anti-bullying and equality and diversity training.