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Safeguarding Adults at Risk
May 26

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1	Board Approval	Hof C&CS	4/7/22	Board	4/7/22
2	Change link to new safeguarding process	HofC	12/09/22	Board	
3	Update with new procedures	HofC	01/11/24	SMT	
4	Update to include domestic abuse wording	BOM	02/12/25	SMT	
5	Updated with ICB feedback	CEO	280526	Board	08/06/26

Safeguarding Adults at Risk - Policy Update May 2026

Please read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Procedures

1. Purpose

Sue Lambert Trust (SLT) believes that all adults have the right to live free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, coercion and harm.

The safety, wellbeing, dignity and human rights of the people we support are central to our ethos and trauma-informed approach.

SLT is committed to:

- safeguarding adults at risk,
- preventing abuse and neglect wherever possible,
- responding promptly and proportionately to safeguarding concerns,
- working collaboratively with statutory and partner agencies,
- and promoting empowerment, safety and recovery.

SLT recognises that trauma, abuse, coercive control, discrimination, social exclusion and inequality can significantly affect a person's safety, wellbeing, autonomy and ability to seek support or protect themselves from harm.

This policy applies to:

- all SLT staff,
- trustees,
- volunteers,
- counsellors,
- students,
- contractors,
- associates,
- and anyone acting on behalf of the organisation.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Procedures
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Mental Capacity Act & DoLS Policy
- Information Sharing Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy

2. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by and should be read in conjunction with:

- Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Code of Practice
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Mental Health Act 1983 (as amended)
- Modern Slavery Act 2015

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

SLT recognises safeguarding as both a legal and moral responsibility and will ensure safeguarding practice is:

- trauma-informed,
- rights-based,
- proportionate,
- anti-discriminatory,
- and person-centred.

3. The Six Principles of Safeguarding

SLT adopts the six safeguarding principles outlined within the Care Act 2014.

Empowerment

People are supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and provide informed consent wherever possible.

Prevention

It is better to take action before harm occurs.

Proportionality

Responses should be proportionate to the level of risk and presented in the least restrictive way possible.

Protection

Support and representation should be provided for those in greatest need.

Partnership

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and requires collaborative working with individuals, families, carers, communities and partner agencies.

Accountability

Safeguarding practice must be transparent, lawful, appropriately recorded and subject to oversight and scrutiny.

4. Definition of an Adult at Risk

For the purposes of this policy, an adult at risk is a person aged 18 years or over who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not those needs are being met),
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect,
- and because of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

An adult may be considered at increased risk due to factors including:

- trauma,
- disability,
- mental ill-health,
- cognitive impairment,
- substance use,
- coercive control,
- homelessness,
- social isolation,
- age,
- exploitation,

- or previous experiences of abuse.

SLT recognises that vulnerability can fluctuate and may not always be immediately visible.

5. Categories of Abuse and Neglect

Safeguarding concerns may include, but are not limited to:

Physical Abuse

Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Sexual Abuse

Including rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, coercion, grooming, non-contact abuse, exposure to sexual content, or any sexual activity without valid consent.

Psychological or Emotional Abuse

Including intimidation, threats, humiliation, blame, coercive control, isolation, verbal abuse, bullying, harassment or emotional manipulation.

Domestic Abuse

Including physical, emotional, sexual, financial or psychological abuse between people aged 16 or over who are personally connected.

Financial or Material Abuse

Including theft, fraud, scams, exploitation, coercion relating to finances, misuse of benefits or property, or pressure in connection with wills, inheritance or financial arrangements.

Neglect and Acts of Omission

Including ignoring medical needs, withholding support, inadequate supervision, failure to provide access to services or basic necessities.

Discriminatory Abuse

Including abuse linked to disability, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or other protected characteristics.

Organisational Abuse

Including poor care practices, unsafe cultures, neglect within services, institutional harm or failure to uphold dignity and rights.

Self-Neglect

Including severe self-neglect, hoarding, poor self-care, refusal of essential support or behaviours placing health or safety at significant risk.

Modern Slavery and Exploitation

Including human trafficking, forced labour, servitude, criminal exploitation or sexual exploitation.

Online or Digital Abuse

Including online exploitation, cyberbullying, coercion through technology, image-based abuse or financial exploitation online.

Radicalisation and Extremism

Including vulnerability to extremist ideology, grooming into terrorism-related activity or exploitation linked to extremism.

6. Mental Capacity and Consent

SLT recognises the importance of autonomy, informed consent and lawful decision-making.

All staff must work in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the organisation's Mental Capacity Act & DoLS Policy.

The five statutory principles of the Mental Capacity Act are:

1. Presumption of capacity
2. Support to make decisions
3. Respect for unwise decisions
4. Best interests
5. Least restrictive option

Capacity must never be assumed absent solely because a person:

- appears distressed,
- has experienced trauma,
- has mental ill-health,
- uses substances,
- or makes decisions others consider unwise.

Where there is reason to doubt a person's capacity to make a specific decision, a formal mental capacity assessment must be considered.

Where a person lacks capacity:

- decisions must be made lawfully and in their best interests,
- the least restrictive option must be identified,
- and any person acting under a valid and applicable Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA), Court Appointed Deputyship or other legal authority should be appropriately involved where relevant.

Family members, carers or partners do not automatically have legal authority to make decisions on behalf of another adult.

7. Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

SLT recognises its responsibility to identify and escalate concerns relating to potential deprivation of liberty.

A deprivation of liberty may occur where a person:

- lacks capacity to consent to arrangements for their care or treatment,
- is under continuous supervision and control,
- and is not free to leave.

This is commonly referred to as the “acid test”.

SLT staff are not authorised to deprive individuals of their liberty and must escalate concerns where restrictive practices or care arrangements may amount to a deprivation of liberty.

Any potential deprivation of liberty must:

- be recognised,
- recorded,
- escalated appropriately,
- and referred to relevant statutory agencies where required.

Staff should seek advice from safeguarding leads where there is uncertainty.

8. Prevent Duty and Radicalisation

SLT recognises its safeguarding responsibilities under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Prevent concerns must be managed:

- lawfully,
- proportionately,
- trauma-informed,
- and without discrimination.

SLT does not support profiling based on race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, political belief or cultural identity.

Concerns must be based on behaviour, safeguarding risk and contextual vulnerability rather than protected characteristics or lawful belief.

Staff must:

- remain alert to signs of radicalisation or extremist exploitation,
- discuss concerns promptly with safeguarding leads,
- record factual observations,
- and follow safeguarding and Prevent referral procedures where appropriate.

The organisation’s Prevent Policy provides additional guidance.

9. Safeguarding Children and Transitional Safeguarding

SLT recognises that adult safeguarding concerns may also involve:

- children,
- unborn babies,
- parenting capacity,
- young carers,
- or risks within family systems.

Where safeguarding concerns relate to a child or young person under 18, staff must follow the Safeguarding Children Policy and relevant multi-agency procedures.

SLT recognises the importance of transitional safeguarding for young people moving between children's and adult services.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All staff, volunteers and associates must:

- maintain safeguarding awareness,
- respond appropriately to disclosures,
- report safeguarding concerns promptly,
- maintain accurate records,
- and participate in safeguarding training and supervision.

Designated Safeguarding Leads are responsible for:

- providing safeguarding advice and support,
- decision-making and escalation,
- liaison with statutory agencies,
- safeguarding oversight,
- and promoting safe organisational culture.

The CEO and Board retain overall accountability for safeguarding governance.

11. Reporting and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

All safeguarding concerns must be:

- taken seriously,
- responded to promptly,
- accurately recorded,
- and escalated in line with safeguarding procedures.

Staff must not:

- investigate concerns themselves,
- promise confidentiality where safeguarding risk exists,
- or delay action due to uncertainty.

Where an adult is at immediate risk of serious harm:

- contact emergency services on 999.

Where concerns meet safeguarding thresholds under the Care Act 2014, referrals should be made to Adult Social Care.

The preferred route for referrals in Norfolk is via the Norfolk County Council online safeguarding portal (<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/77730/Report-a-safeguarding-concern---professionals>).

12. Norfolk Safeguarding Contacts

Emergency

Police / Ambulance / Fire: 999

Non-Emergency Police

101

Norfolk Adult Social Services

Norfolk County Council Adult Social Care

Preferred referral route: Norfolk Services Portal

(<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/77730/Report-a-safeguarding-concern---professionals>)

Telephone: 0344 800 8020

Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team: 0344 800 8020

Norfolk MASH

Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS)

Prevent / Channel

Prevent referrals should be discussed with safeguarding leads and escalated through Norfolk Prevent pathways where appropriate.

Samaritans

116 123

13. Training and Workforce Development

SLT is committed to maintaining a skilled and safeguarding-aware workforce.

Mandatory Training

Level 1

All staff, volunteers, trustees and associates:

- safeguarding awareness,
- Prevent awareness,

- information sharing,
- trauma-informed practice.

Level 2

Client-facing practitioners and counsellors:

- adult safeguarding,
- domestic abuse,
- mental capacity,
- responding to disclosures,
- professional boundaries,
- trauma-informed safeguarding.

Level 3

Designated Safeguarding Leads, managers and safeguarding leads:

- advanced safeguarding,
- multi-agency safeguarding,
- Prevent leadership,
- MCA/DoLS,
- safeguarding supervision,
- complex risk and escalation.

Refresher Training

- Safeguarding training minimum every three years
- Annual safeguarding updates
- Annual Prevent training
- Additional role-specific learning as required

Safeguarding supervision and reflective practice will support ongoing professional development and safe decision-making.

14. Recruitment and Safer Working Practice

SLT is committed to safer recruitment practices designed to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with adults at risk.

Recruitment processes may include:

- references,
- identity checks,
- qualification verification,
- DBS checks,
- barred list checks where applicable,
- safeguarding declarations,
- and safeguarding induction.

All staff are expected to maintain professional boundaries and work in accordance with organisational values and policies.

15. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Information sharing must be:

- lawful,
- necessary,
- proportionate,
- relevant,
- accurate,
- timely,
- and recorded appropriately.

Information may be shared without consent where:

- there is safeguarding risk,
- risk of serious harm,
- legal obligation,
- public protection concerns,
- or where required by law.

SLT will process information in accordance with:

- Data Protection Act 2018,
- UK GDPR,
- Human Rights Act 1998,
- and safeguarding duties.

16. Governance, Audit and Quality Assurance

SLT will monitor safeguarding practice through:

- safeguarding meetings,
- case review processes,
- learning reviews,
- training compliance monitoring,
- safeguarding audits,
- policy review,
- incident and complaint review, and Board reporting.

Safeguarding activity and themes may be reported through governance structures including the Quality and Safeguarding Committee and Board.

Learning from safeguarding concerns, incidents and reviews will inform service development and organisational improvement.

17. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- every two years,
- following legislative or safeguarding guidance changes,
- following safeguarding incidents or learning reviews,
- or where organisational change requires review.

18. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

SLT is committed to safeguarding practice that:

- upholds dignity and human rights,
- promotes equality and inclusion,
- recognises structural inequalities and discrimination,
- and actively challenges discriminatory practice.

Safeguarding responses must never discriminate on the basis of:

- age,
- disability,
- sex,
- gender identity,
- sexual orientation,
- race,
- religion,
- culture,
- immigration status,
- or socioeconomic background.