



# Policy: Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk

**Date agreed by Governance Board: March 2018**

**Staff annual review date: March 2019**

**Full Board review March 2021**

## **Policy statement**

Brighton & Hove Speak Out supports adults and young people (18+ years) with learning disabilities to speak up about their lives, the issues they are facing and any changes they would like to be supported to make.

To be effective in achieving our aims, Speak Out must maintain a safe environment, where staff and volunteers are equipped to respond appropriately to any information they receive, or observations they make concerning possible abuse.

Speak Out has produced 'Guidelines for Safeguarding Adults at Risk' containing information on recognising abuse and procedures for responding to suspected abuse. While Speak Out does not provide direct services to children some of these adults supported by the project may also be parents. Speak Out has separate 'Guidelines for Safeguarding Children'.

Speak Out is signed up to:

- **Sussex Multi Agency Policy & Procedures for Safeguarding Adults at Risk**
- **Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Manual**

These procedures will be followed by all staff and volunteers at Speak Out when a situation arises where there is information or evidence suggesting that an individual is being harmed or is at risk of significant harm themselves or of harming another person.



The Six key guiding principles to local Safeguarding are:

- **Empowerment** - People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent.
- **Prevention** - It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** - The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** - Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership** - Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability** - Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding. The Care Act (2014) has deemed it a legal requirement that when no other appropriate adult is available, an advocate should be present to support the person through the Safeguarding process

#### **Staff and volunteer recruitment**

Speak Out takes measures to ensure that the recruitment of staff and volunteers maintains the safety of the people with learning disabilities we work with. All volunteers and Speak Out staff will provide an enhanced DBS check as well as other organisational checks. (see Policy: Staff and volunteer recruitment and DBS policy).

#### **Training for staff and volunteers**

The above policies and procedures will be covered in staff induction and volunteer induction training alongside Speak Out's guidelines for responding to suspected abuse. Staff are expected to complete online Council Refresher training every 2 years or sooner if legislation (ie Care Act) is updated.

Guidance will also be given about appropriate behaviour when working alongside adults with a learning difficulty as equals. This will cover issues such as agreeing and keeping appropriate boundaries, and safety when working alone with people using the project for support. Training will use scenarios and make frequent reference to other policies such as:

- Lone working Policy
- Keeping Safe at Speak Out accessible guidelines
- Health & Safety Policies and procedures
- Confidentiality policy
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Guidelines and Flowchart

Staff and volunteers undertaking frontline work will also sign up to Speak Out's 'Code of Practice' for advocates and volunteers which covers advocacy practice, including safeguarding procedures.



Dealing with violent or aggressive situations will also be covered in induction training, although emphasis will be on minimising the risk by good preliminary risk assessment and making arrangements to deal with risk. Staff who are in roles where there is a risk of encountering unexpected behaviour (i.e. in the drop-in) should have refresher training every 2 years.

Where an incident of suspected abuse arises, staff and volunteers must work with Speak Out's Confidentiality Policy and as far as possible ensure that individuals are in control of actions taken as a result of information disclosed or observations made.

### **Responding to suspected abuse**

Discrimination, physical, sexual, domestic, modern slavery, psychological, financial, organisational abuse, neglect and self-neglect may all occur at a range of levels from very mild & temporary, to extreme and traumatic.

Deciding how to view and respond to information indicating abuse can be difficult. Staff and volunteers must follow the **Guidelines for Responding to Suspected Adult and Child Abuse**, summarised in the **Safeguarding Flowchart of Safeguarding Procedures**.

### **Escalating concerns**

If the vulnerable adult or child is at immediate risk of harm staff/volunteers may need to contact adult social care or the emergency service straight away. If there is no immediate risk of harm they should contact the Speak Out office as soon as possible. An initial internal meeting (or phone conversation if key staff are not available in the office) will be arranged within 24 hours involving at least one manager or the Volunteer Coordinator and a member of staff or volunteer, as appropriate. This will decide on the best course of action and whether to contact with the Adult Learning Disability Duty team, Children's Services Duty Team or other appropriate people. Speak Out's Confidentiality Policy sets out how and when Safeguarding information can be shared with external agencies when necessary.

### **Recording safeguarding concerns and alerts**

Written records outlining all details of a safeguarding concern, the decisions and subsequent actions must be made, dated, and stored securely in the services user/s record in Speak Out's CharityLog data base.

A summary of all Safeguarding alerts are also recorded in a central register, including a summary of action taken and any outcomes. This will include a record of 'Safeguarding concerns' that do not result in an external alert.

If an external alert is made and no response is received within appropriate time scales then this will be followed up.

### **Safeguarding Investigations**



It is not the role of a Speak Out staff member or volunteer to carry out an investigation. However it may become the advocate's role to support the service user through an investigation. In some situations they may be asked to give evidence or take part in a subsequent adult protection strategy meeting.

Speak Out managers will support advocates and volunteers through supervision to ensuring that the following take place:

- Gain confirmation whether the alert has been accepted
- Where the alert has been declined, on occasion, ask that it be reassessed
- Identify who the Safeguarding Lead for the case is
- Seek confirmation of protective measures put in place to keep the person safe
- Get confirmation of the Safeguarding Strategy Plan
- Seek information on the safeguarding plan to keep the person safe
- Support the person through every stage of this process, where they wish to have advocacy support, and ensure as far as possible that they understand the safety plan.

A record of actions and outcomes relating to the Safeguarding investigation will be kept securely in the service user's case notes in the Speak Out database. A summary of the alert and the response/outcome must be added to Speak Out's Safeguarding Register.

### **Staff support and supervision**

Staff or volunteers involved with incidents of suspected abuse will be given a chance to debrief after any incident and given support. They will also be supported through supervision throughout the process, including when supporting a service user through a safeguarding investigation.

### **Safeguarding lead**

The nominated person at Speak Out in relation to safeguarding is:

Emily Barratt,  
Deputy Director  
Speak Out - 01273 421921

This person is responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures are reviewed regularly and implemented appropriately. This person will have received Safeguarding training for managers provided by Brighton & Hove Council. This will be refreshed every 2 years or earlier if legislation changes.

This policy states clearly the importance of using the following guidelines where appropriate to ensure everyone involved with Speak Out is safe:

- **Speak Out Guidelines for Safeguarding Adults at Risk** - Guidelines for staff and volunteers on protecting vulnerable adults - from recognising problems to deciding when to instigate the Sussex Multi-agency Policy



- **Speak Out Guidelines for Safeguarding Children at Risk** - Guidelines for staff and volunteers on protecting children
- **Summary Flow Chart of Safeguarding Procedures** – for responding to a suspected incident of adult or child abuse, including contact numbers for reporting.
- **Speak Out Confidentiality Policy** - including guidance for volunteers on when confidentiality will be breached.
- **Accessible Confidentiality Policy** – for people with learning difficulties who use the project explaining when confidentiality might be broken and what would happen.
- **Keeping Safe at Speak Out** – Accessible information for people with learning difficulties about keeping safe.
- **Safety in Advocacy Partnerships Policy** – Accessible practical guide for partnerships, explaining what being 'safe' means.