

SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURES

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| Owner | Andrew Ridgewell |
| Adopted | March 2023 |
| Updated | June 2024 |
| Next review | June 2025 |

Safeguarding Leads

Our trustees here at Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) have collective responsibility for safeguarding, and delegate the day-to-day management and implementation of this policy to the staff team.

To support the implementation of this policy, SCF trustees have appointed a safeguarding officer from the executive who will be responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented. A lead trustee for safeguarding has also been appointed to provide advice and support to the executive and other trustees.

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Position</i> | <i>Contact</i> | <i>From</i> |
|------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Andrew Ridgewell | Programmes Director Safeguarding Officer | 01749 597129 Email | 06/02/2023 |
| Helen Gulvin | Lead Trustee | | 06/10/2022 |

IF YOU HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

In an emergency always contact the police by dialling 999

Do not hold on to concerns. No matter how insignificant they may appear, remember to follow the 4Rs:

- **Recognise**
- **Record**
- **Report**
- **Refer**

Other contacts

Somerset Council - 0300 123 2224
childrens@somerset.gov.uk / adults@somerset.gov.uk

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Statement

- Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances.
- All children and vulnerable adults regardless of age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy/maternity, marriage or civil partnership, should never experience abuse of any kind and have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- We will take action if we know, or suspect, that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm.

Context

We are a grantmaking charity. We fund other charities and facilitate giving.

By integrating safeguarding in our overall approach to funding, we can play a critical role in promoting practices and organisational cultures which keep people safe. As a charity in our own right, we must also prioritise safeguarding within our own internal practices even where they have limited contact with children and vulnerable adults.

Therefore, the purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to safeguarding. It is designed to cover:

- People who work or volunteer for us
- People who apply to us for funding
- People who receive services that we have funded
- People donating to us.

Scope

This policy applies to all SCF employees, volunteers, contracted workers, trustees, donors and any other SCF representative. It should be considered in conjunction with our Complaints Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Data Protection Policy, IT Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, Grants Policy and Procedures.

Legal framework

This policy has taken into account the [responsibilities](#) outlined by the UK Charity Commission as well as [frameworks](#) provided by the Association of Charitable Foundations (ACF) and Somerset safeguarding policies and procedures.

DEFINITIONS

Definition of a child

Child protection procedures apply to children and young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday. Procedures also apply to young people with additional support needs, which may place them at increased risk, up to 25 years.

Definition of a vulnerable adult

A vulnerable adult is a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, disability, illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Definitions of abuse

The safeguarding leads will be aware of the wide range of activities and signs involved under the following headings and symptoms individuals might display:

- **Physical abuse** – includes a wide range of abuse from hitting to deprivation of liberty.
- **Psychological/Emotional abuse** – includes range of abuse such as threats, ignoring, humiliation, coercion, leaving a person feeling worthless to denial of human rights.
- **Sexual abuse** includes sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation, female genital mutilation, forced marriage.
- **Neglect** is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and is the most common form of child abuse. Consist of physical, educational, emotional and medical neglect.
- **Criminal exploitation** – includes drug running, human trafficking and modern slavery.
- **Bullying or harassment** – including cyber abuse.
- **Extremism** and radicalisation.
- **Financial and material abuse** may involve the unauthorized taking (theft) or misuse of any money, income assets, personal belongings or property or any resources of an individual without their informed consent. This also includes the withholding of money or the unauthorised or improper use of a person's money or property, usually to the disadvantage of the person to whom it belongs. Staff borrowing money or objects from a service user is also considered financial abuse.

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

General safeguarding procedures

SCF representatives are most likely to be in direct contact with children and vulnerable adults via telephone, video meeting, email or in-person in the following circumstances:

- Individuals contacting us, applying to, or receiving funding from, grant programmes for individuals
- Groups contacting us, applying to, or receiving funding from, grant programmes for organisations
- Individuals who have made, or are thinking about making, a donation
- SCF or third party organised events and meetings.

In response, we will:

- designate an appropriately trained and informed individual to be the SCF Safeguarding Officer
- ensure that safeguarding procedures are understood, maintained and followed by SCF representatives
- ensure all trustees have read and signed our Code of Conduct and also read the Charity Commission [guidance](#)
- ensure that all SCF representatives who may come into direct contact with children or vulnerable adults receive safeguarding training, or can evidence they have received appropriate training
- ensure we practice safe recruitment, including risk assessments, in checking the suitability of appropriate staff and volunteers, including the completion of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for anyone who may come into direct contact with children or vulnerable adults as part of their work with SCF
- ensure anyone else that may come into regular contact with children or vulnerable adults as a result of their relationship with SCF is subject to a risk assessment and undertakes a DBS check
- store and process personal and sensitive information according to GDPR and Data Protection guidelines
- provide the Board with a safeguarding report and a review of this policy at least once a year, taking into account changes in legislation, best practice guidance and other factors that may arise
- make this Safeguarding Policy available to the public through the SCF website and upon request.

Our Safeguarding Officer will:

- promote safeguarding and provide guidance and advice to staff, trustees and volunteers where needed
- be available for consultation with staff, trustees or volunteers raising safeguarding concerns
- maintain a register of statutory and non-statutory safeguarding contacts

- contact and liaise with other agencies involved in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults as appropriate
- advise the CEO about what actions need to be taken by SCF and ensure safeguarding alerts are raised as appropriate
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns/allegations are maintained and securely stored
- ensure that the organisation is compliant with local and national Safeguarding Policy
- review the SCF Safeguarding policy and procedures, and no less than once a year, in order to implement any necessary changes in accordance with legislation changes, organisational changes, updated DBS guidance
- the Safeguarding Officer will be provided with training and support to fulfil these duties.

The Safeguarding Lead Trustee will:

- advise the Executive Team on operationalising this policy
- provide strategic oversight for all aspects of safeguarding work across the organisation and ensure our policies and procedures are up to date and effective in protecting people who use services from potential or actual harm
- provide assurance that the agreed policies, procedures and standards for SCF's work on safeguarding are being adhered to
- raise the profile of children and adults' safeguarding in all of SCF's work.

Safeguarding procedures for meetings, interviews or events

SCF representatives, and persons accompanying them, may come into contact with children or vulnerable adults in a number of ways, for example visits to funded groups, meetings or at SCF events. We will carry out appropriate risk assessments before undertaking visits or events that may be attended by children or vulnerable adults.

As a minimum, a parent/guardian or other designated adult must always accompany anyone under the age of 18 where they are invited to meet with SCF representatives. Similarly vulnerable adults should be invited to have a designated trusted adult with them.

Safeguarding procedures for donors and donations

At times we may find ourselves being approached by, or approaching donors who may be vulnerable or need additional support to make a decision about a donation.

We recognise that a one size fits all approach is not likely to be successful, so we commit in these instances, to recognising individuals' situations and responding to their needs. We do this in line with the guidelines of the Fundraising Regulator's [Code of Fundraising Practice](#)

We recognise that vulnerability can come from a number of reasons including, but not limited to, mental ill-health, times of financial change and bereavement.

If we believe that someone is not in a position to make a decision will not accept that donation and commit to not making an ask to that person in the future. This will be the decision of the CEO with advice from the Philanthropy Director. If we are unsure about their situation or capacity to make a decision, we will ensure that our donation process includes:

- making sure that all of our information is clear and accessible – if interactions are verbal, we will follow up with written clarification/information.
- never pressurising someone into making a donation or expecting them to make a decision on the spot.
- encouraging donors to seek input from their own professional adviser such as solicitor or financial planner.
- ensuring that we record our interactions with a donor on Salesforce and any concerns that we might have.

Safeguarding procedures for funded groups

All groups applying for funding from SCF are required to have a safeguarding policy that meets a set of published [minimum standards](#).

SCF undertakes due diligence checks on all groups applying for funding, which extends to their safeguarding arrangements.

Concerns about the Safeguarding Policy of an organisation that may be offered funding will be addressed as follows:

- minor concerns that can be easily addressed and do not materially change the strength of the policy will be raised with the group, who will be advised that we may request to review relevant changes at a later date.
- major concerns that require fundamental redrafting and/or review of procedures may lead to rejection of an application or the grant offer being conditional upon submission of an acceptable new policy.

Terms and conditions of our funding must state that during the funding period groups must adhere to their Safeguarding Policy and, upon request from SCF, and are expected to share information about any safeguarding incidents and how they were addressed with SCF, keeping the identify of those involved confidential.

Safeguarding procedures for addressing concerns within funded groups

If a safeguarding incident in a funded organisation is reported to SCF, we will seek to:

- understand the response of the group to the incident, including adherence to their policy and procedures and reporting to statutory safeguarding partners as necessary.
- assess the impact of the incident on the work funded by SCF and on the organisation as a whole.

If we believe the response by a funded organisation to a reported incident has not been adequate, the Safeguarding Officer, in consultation with the CEO, may report the incident directly to the relevant statutory authorities.

If a safeguarding concern (such as, one that is not about a specific incident) is reported by an individual to SCF about a funded organisation, we will advise that they raise this with the relevant statutory authorities; if we believe this is unlikely to happen, the Safeguarding Officer, in consultation with the CEO, may raise it directly with the relevant statutory authorities.

Safeguarding procedures for addressing concerns within groups we do not fund

If we receive a report of a safeguarding concern in an organisation or relating to one or more individuals where we do not have an active relationship (e.g. an organisation that had been previously funded) SCF will not seek to substantiate the claims. However, the Safeguarding Officer will make a recommendation to the CEO about whether to report the concern to statutory safeguarding partners.

If a report is made, a clear record of the report should be held by SCF for no longer than two years.

This is distinct from our Whistleblowing Policy which addresses whistleblowing related to SCF staff, trustees and volunteers, which may also involve a safeguarding risk.

Safeguarding procedures for funded individuals

If we receive a report of a safeguarding concern about an application from an adult with no supporting organisation (e.g. they apply independently of the leaving care team) the programmes manager will discuss with the safeguarding lead.

If it is agreed that the concern needs addressing with the applicant then the Safeguarding Lead and Programmes Manager will discuss the concern with the individual to see if they would want to address the concern through a referral elsewhere, if available. This conversation should be recorded in writing.

The applicant should be told the record of the concern will be kept confidentially and not passed on to others. The applicant can have a copy of the record should they want one.

If the concern materially affects the grant application, the applicant should be told how and why. This should then be put in writing and sent to the applicant.

The record should be kept for the lifetime of the grant.

Safeguarding procedure for incidents involving an SCF representative

If any allegation is made against a SCF representative, including persons accompanying them, this must be reported to the CEO and Chairman at the earliest opportunity who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of

the individual in question and any other persons who may be at risk. If the allegation is against either the CEO or Chairman, or they are unavailable, then the Safeguarding Officer and Lead Trustee should be notified and take their roles respectively.

Under no circumstances should a staff member, trustee or volunteer carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

Immediate action is rarely necessary or advisable. Calling external agencies without consultation should only ever be undertaken in an emergency where there is significant risk of immediate harm. In all other circumstances the CEO and Chairman will determine how to address the incident, taking advice from the Safeguarding Officer, Lead Trustee and line managers as necessary.

If someone is in immediate danger the CEO or Safeguarding Officer should contact the Police or social services immediately. Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone else.

Timely information sharing is key to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. If practical consent to share information should be asked for but if consent isn't given information can still be shared with relevant professionals if you are preventing a child from significant harm or there is a legal requirement to do so.

A clear and legitimate purpose for sharing information about a child or vulnerable adult should be recorded and stored securely. A clear record of the circumstances and actions taken by SCF should be kept and retained for an appropriate time.