



Southend on Sea CIO

Adopted: January 28th 2021

Reviewed: July 23rd 2026

Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Age Concern Southend on Sea (ACSOS) accepts the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for children, young people, and adults at risk, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse when they are in receipt of services provided by us.

We aim to do this by:

- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people, and adults at risk.
- Raising the awareness of the duty of care responsibilities relating to children, young people, and adults at risk throughout the organisation, including paid staff, volunteers, board of trustees, and external contractors that may use our premises.
- Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children, young people, and adults at risk to protect them from harm.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all our services, avoiding situations where harm or abuse may occur.
- Ensuring that appropriate DBS checks are applied for in relation to all staff, volunteers and trustees, and that employment history is verified.
- Have designated staff member/s to lead within teams, known as the responsible manager/s. The CEO, Sarah Wilson is the named organisational safeguarding lead and The Community Hub Manager, Marie Antoniou, and The Day Centre Supervisor, Joanne Saunders are the deputy DSLs.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are trained to the right level in accordance with their level of responsibility, in line with local safeguarding boards development framework.
- Supporting and supervising staff and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children, young people, and adults at risk from abuse, and minimise risk to themselves.
- Responding to any allegations of misconduct, harm or abuse of children, young people or adults at risk in line with this Policy and the Local Area Safeguarding Boards and best practice guidance, as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Requiring staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by the Company's Children, Young People and Adults at risk Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

- Reviewing and evaluating this Policy and Procedures document on an annual basis.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are trained to recognise and report abuse in accordance with this policy and that this training will be refreshed at least annually.
- This policy should be used in conjunction with any local safeguarding policy and procedures required by the Local Authority.

While it is not ACSOS's responsibility to establish whether or not abuse is taking place, it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns they have over the welfare of children, young people, or adults at risk. This duty extends to the identification of abuse, harm, poor practice by members of staff, as well as allegations brought to the attention of ACSOS by a member of the public/community.

Legislation recognised in this policy and procedure

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance update 2026
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
- Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 and LPS 2019
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR 2018
- Children and Social Act 2017

Safeguarding Children

The national guidelines define safeguarding children and promoting their welfare as:

1. Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
2. Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
3. Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
4. Enabling those children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

The Care Act 2014 sets out the legal duty to safeguarding adults and identifies the legal framework with which to work under to protect adults from actual, or adults who are at risk of, abuse, harm, or mistreatment.

Definition of an adult at risk of harm (Care Act 2014)

The statutory framework introduced under the Care Act applies to any person **aged 18 or above** who:

- Has needs for care and support (regardless of the level of need and whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or neglect, **and**
- As a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Definition of a child

Any person who has not yet reached their **18th Birthday**

Child protection duties are **grounded** in the Children Act 1989. The additional responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including their wellbeing, is identified in the Children Act 2004.

The meaning of 'wellbeing' is encapsulated in **s.10 Children Act 2004**, and makes specific reference to children's:

- Physical and mental health
- Protection from harm and neglect
- Education, training and recreation
- Contribution to society
- Emotional, social and economic wellbeing

Duty of Care

'Duty of care' is a phrase used to describe the obligations implicit in the role of worker and volunteer. Everyone involved in the care and support of other people has a duty of care.

- **All paid workers: full/part time or temporary, all designations and grades**
- **Students, Apprentices and Trainees**
- **Volunteers**
- **Trustees**

There are several broad types of abuse: physical abuse, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, discriminatory abuse, modern slavery, organisational abuse, financial abuse, neglect and acts of omission and self-neglect.

- **The welfare of children, young people and adults at risk is the primary concern**
- **All children, young people and adults at risk have the right to protection from abuse**
- **It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse**
- **All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately**
- **All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR 2018.**

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned in the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. Information will be processed and shared on a need to know basis only.

The Responsible Manager will ensure their staff team understands the appropriate and timely sharing of information in line with GDPR 2018.

There may be occasions where a child, young person or adult at risk expresses a wish for concerns not to be pursued. Workers and managers have a duty of care to report to Local Authority Social Care Departments, who will then consider the individual's wishes; workers' and volunteers' duty of care is to report all concerns.

Mental Capacity considerations will apply to all people 16 years or over.

The Responsible Manager will:-

- Ensure that the procedures are followed appropriately in consultation with Social Care departments and the Police, if appropriate.
- Ensure that the appropriate agencies are informed in a timely manner.
- Ensure that information is recorded, stored, and processed in accordance with GDPR.
- Provide information to staff reporting concerns about support available to them.

Responding to Concerns

This Policy and its procedures inform all staff and volunteers of what actions they should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected abuse.

Staff and volunteers may come across cases of suspected abuse through direct or indirect contact with children, young people, and adults, for example in the delivery of care or support services, or through informal discussions with users of services. It is not the staff member's responsibility to decide whether or not a child, young person or adult has been abused. It is their responsibility to report any and all concerns. The initial response should be to inform the individual that concerns about them will be shared, aim to get consent in every situation, then ensure that any relevant information is passed to the Responsible Manager.

Responding to Suspensions

Most suspicions arise because a member of staff notes a pattern of occurrences or a significant incident happens. If you have a concern about the safety or welfare of a child, young person, or adult at risk:

- Note the concerns and your reasons
- Discuss your concern with the adult, or parent of the child where appropriate
- Report to a Responsible Manager as soon as possible
- Make an accurate written record, continue to maintain confidentiality

PLEASE SEE SAFEGUARDING REPORTING PROCEDURE

Staff Members raising concerns about a Colleague

If a concern arises about a colleague's conduct, this must be referred to the Responsible Manager in the first instance. Staff and volunteers will be supported through the reporting process; the whistleblowing procedure supports this process.

When a member of staff or a volunteer raises concerns with their Responsible Manager, the Manager will ensure that:

- Staff involved are supported as required in line with the ACSOS Whistleblowing Policy
- The procedures are followed appropriately in consultation with Social Care Services, the LADO (local authority designated officer) and/or Police

- The appropriate agencies, staff members, LPA, parents/ carers are informed
- Information is recorded and stored appropriately

ACSOS recognises that when safeguarding concerns relate to a colleague's conduct, this can be difficult for the whistleblower. ACSOS will fully support and protect all members of staff or volunteers who, in good faith (without malicious intent), report his or her concern about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child or adult may be being abused. This will be in full accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy.

Responding to Disclosure

Abused children, young people and adults are more likely to disclose details of abuse to someone they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening and taking seriously what the child, young person or adult is saying workers and volunteers are already helping the situation. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately.

What to do if a child, young person or adult discloses information to you:

React calmly

Take what the person says seriously

Do clarify your understanding of what the person has said but avoid asking detailed or leading questions. **Do not interrogate.**

Reassure the person that they were right to tell **and do not make promises not to tell anyone**

Be open and honest, explain to them that you will have to share your concerns with your manager.

Immediately record all details in writing, using the child, young person or adult's own words.

As soon as possible notify and give your original notes to the Responsible Manager

Actions to Avoid

The person receiving the disclosure should not:

Dismiss the concern

Panic

Allow their shock or distaste to show

Probe for more information than is comfortably offered – do not overpressure for a response

Speculate or make assumptions

Make negative comments about the alleged abuser

Make promises or agree to keep secrets

Should not suggest any action/s or consequences that may be undertaken in response to the disclosure

Below are some examples of types of abuse that are relevant to both Children and Adults. This list is not exhaustive

Physical Abuse • Hitting • Slapping • Rough or inappropriate handling • Pushing • Kicking • Hair pulling • Inappropriate use of medication such as sedatives • Unnecessary or inappropriate restrictions or restraint	Domestic Violence Incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality. Domestic abuse is not just about partners but all family relationships. This includes: • So called 'honour' based violence • Female Genital Mutilation • Forced marriage.
Neglect and Acts of Omission • Ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs • Failure to provide access to health, care and support or educational services • The withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating, access to toileting facilities • Failure to protect from physical and emotional harm or danger	Psychological Abuse • Threats of harm or abandonment, insults, ridicule, bullying, enforced isolation, deprivation of contact, lack of privacy or choice • Denial of dignity • Harassment • Intimidating behaviour
Organisational Abuse • Neglect and poor care practice within an organisation that supports people or a specific care setting • This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. • It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes, and practices within an organisation.	Sexual Abuse • Rape or sexual assault • Inappropriate touching • Sexual innuendo • Offensive or sexual language • Viewing sexual activity or sexually explicit material • Grooming
Discriminatory Abuse Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power. This includes forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion.	Financial or Material Abuse • Misuse of finances, Fraud • Theft • Coercion in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions • Misappropriation of money or goods, property or possessions
Self-Neglect Self-neglect is characterised as the behaviour of a person that threatens his/her own health or safety. Self-neglect generally manifests itself as a refusal or failure to provide himself/herself with adequate food, water, clothing, shelter, personal	Modern Slavery Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and