

# **South Wight Area Youth Partnership**

## **ADULT SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**Safeguarding Officer: Richard Webb**

### **Overview:**

As a Christian organisation, South Wight Area Youth Partnership (SWAY) affirms our belief in the God-given value of every individual with whom we work or have contact. We are committed to treating each individual with value and dignity and aim that none suffers abuse of any kind.

It is the responsibility of each one of us to safeguard adults at risk of harm against any form of harm and to report any abuse discovered or suspected. With this in mind, SWAY is committed to supporting, resourcing and training all those who work with adults at risk of harm across our activities.

SWAY will review this safeguarding policy on an annual basis in July and any updates or revisions to the policy will be confirmed at the next Board Meeting.

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## Organisation Details

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Charity Number: 1160139

## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **Introduction**

SWAY is committed to the prevention of abuse and the appropriate handling of suspicions or concerns regarding the abuse of adults at risk of harm. We recognise that each individual worker (employed staff, volunteer or trustee) is responsible for ensuring everyone in their care is kept safe from harm and any concerns regarding the infliction of harm or the failure to prevent harm are reported appropriately.

SWAY will ensure that at risk of harm in our care are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

#### **A. Responding to an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse**

##### **1. Reporting Responsibilities**

If abuse is suspected, observed, disclosed or otherwise alleged; under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation. In all cases, they should follow the procedures as below:

The person in receipt of an allegation or who has suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to their **Safeguarding Officer**:

Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding

Richard Webb Tel 01983 731873

In the absence of the Safeguarding Officer or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Officer, then the report should be made to the Chair person of the Board of Trustees.

If all else fails the contact should be made to the Isle of Wight Safeguarding Board. The absence of the nominated safeguarding officers should not delay referral of the allegation to the relevant bodies.

#### **2. Process for Safeguarding Officers**

The role of the safeguarding officer is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate. It is not the role of the Safeguarding Officer, or anyone within SWAY, to investigate allegations and concerns, unless directed to do so by the relevant statutory agency. A written record of the concerns, observations or disclosure should be made as soon as practically possible (ideally within 1 hour) in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place. The date, time, location and people present should be included in the written record.

##### **a.) Dealing with Allegations of Physical Injury, Neglect or Emotional abuse**

If an adult at risk of harm has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Officer will:

- *Contact Isle of Wight Adult Safeguarding Board immediately for advice in cases of deliberate injury or if an adult at risk of harm is afraid to return home. If there is immediate danger, threat or risk from further harm, then the police may be contacted.*
- *Seek and follow advice given by the Isle of Wight Adult Safeguarding Board*
- *Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.*
- *Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so.*

##### **b.) Dealing with Allegations or Suspicions of Sexual Abuse**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Officer will:

- *Contact the Police direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.*
- *Seek and follow the advice given by Isle of Wight Adult Safeguarding Board if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact the Police.*

##### **c.) Dealing with Allegations or Suspicions relating to Staff or Volunteers**

If an allegation is made against a worker (employed staff, volunteer or trustee) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Officer will inform the Isle of Wight Adult Safeguarding Board. If the allegation involves the designated safeguarding lead then the Chair of the Board will be informed.

In any of the cases above, the safeguarding officer will:

- *keep their nominated trustee informed*
- *not discuss details of the case to anyone else, other than those nominated above*
- *seek advice from Isle of Wight Adult Safeguarding Board – this can be done at any stage, but is most helpful and effective when advice is sought at the earliest possible time*

### 3. DBS

Where there is a proven allegation against a worker (employed staff, volunteer or trustee), there is a requirement under law to make a referral to the DBS who manage and maintain the lists of people barred from working with adults at risk of harm. We have a duty to ensure that individuals who pose a threat to vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups. They must be informed by way of a referral where the 'employer' (of a paid or volunteer worker) withdraws permission for an individual to be engaged in the relevant activity, or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant, or been transferred to a position which is not regulated or controlled. The referral should be made when the organisation has obtained sufficient evidence and, where appropriate, has consulted with the relevant statutory designated officer.

### 4. Charity Commission Notification

Any serious safeguarding incident involving a SWAY worker must also be reported to the Charity Commission by the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the Trustee Board. They have a duty to report what happened and explain how this was handled, even if you have reported it to the police or another agency. Further guidance can be obtained from the Charity Commission. This applies to where the incident relates to a worker whether employed or a volunteer.

## B. Prevention of Abuse

### 1. Safer Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

Having in place robust practices surrounding the recruitment of staff and volunteers; including trustees, is an essential element in our safeguarding arrangements. These help to deter, detect and prevent those we would wish not to be working with adults at risk of harm from doing so at the earliest point. SWAY will ensure all staff and volunteers are appointed and supervised in accordance with recruitment policy and guidelines. It is advised that suitable questions around safeguarding should be asked as part of the interview process.

### 2. Guidance on Recruiting Workers with a Criminal Record

If there is evidence that an applicant for a role has a criminal record, either through self-disclosure or through the DBS check, or it comes to light that a current worker or volunteer has a previously undisclosed criminal record, then the following guidelines outline the relevant process.

#### a.) Context

The Police Act 1997, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the ROA (Exceptions) Order 1975 will apply. SWAY recognises that gaining employment is an essential part of successful individual rehabilitation and that failure to secure employment or meaningful voluntary opportunities can be a key reason for re-offending. Consideration must be given as to whether SWAY is an appropriate place for this rehabilitation for each individual. It is unlikely that any policy can cover all of the circumstances which may arise, but the intention is to ensure equal opportunity and fairness to all prospective members of staff and volunteers.

#### b.) Recruitment and Employment

Offers of work will be based primarily on the person's ability to undertake the tasks as stated in the job or role description. The nature of any criminal conviction will be considered as to its relevance to the work in question and will not of itself be a reason for non-employment. An assessment will be carried out by the Trustees, risks will be assessed and consideration given to not allowing a risk to be knowingly imposed on any of those whom SWAY is serving, or on other staff or volunteers. An examination of the circumstances and events leading to an offence will be considered, as will repeat offences and the time since an offence took place. Careful attention will be given to relevant references and advice sought from appropriate agencies, taking into account the requirements outlined below. When there is an offence relating to adults at risk of harm, or there is a known or suspected risk, SWAY will undertake a risk assessment and agree appropriate action to mitigate any risks. For existing workers, this may involve removing the person from the relevant activity, either temporarily or permanently. Alternatively, SWAY reserves the right to supervise the individual concerned, if any known risk is assessed as manageable and will set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. This may involve the use of behavioural supervision agreements. Whatever action is taken, appropriate pastoral care will also be offered.

### **c.) Requirements**

Information contained in a Disclosure or obtained from an individual about a criminal record will be treated in strict confidence and on a need-to-know basis in accordance with The Disclosure and Barring Service code of practice and GDPR. Disclosures from applicants for a role will be kept securely retained for no longer than six months from the date they were received, and disposed of securely. Information on spent convictions will be asked only of those who are applying for work which allows exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. Applicants who wish to submit confidential information concerning any criminal convictions will be encouraged to do so separately from the application form, sent to the Chair of trustees or other nominated person.

### **d.) Decision**

The decision to employ someone with a criminal record is the legal responsibility of the trustees. Consideration should be given to any and all possible risks and how these can be minimalised or excluded, including:

*The length of time since the conviction*

*The severity and nature of the offence(s)*

*Whether there was a repetition of offences*

*All and any potential risks*

*Evidence of rehabilitation*

In taking such decisions, advice should be sought from Isle of Wight Adult Safeguarding Board.

### **Training and Supervision Training**

SWAY is committed to on-going safeguarding training for all workers, including trustees; developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding to help protect everyone. All workers at both national and local level should receive safeguarding training during their induction period. This will be updated every 2/3 years. Workers involved in recruitment and management will also receive appropriate training which includes safeguarding considerations. Appropriate evidence of training in safeguarding will be detailed to trustees annually as part of an annual cycle of review of policy and practice. Local ministries may seek advice on training levels and needs from the national Local Ministries team or the national safeguarding officers.

### **Supervision of Staff and Volunteers**

SWAY commit to ensuring all staff and volunteers are appropriately line managed and/or supervised by a named individual who arranges regular meetings. This is critical to the cycle of review and to ongoing development in all areas, not just safeguarding. Part of the role of the line manager/supervisor is to ensure all training needs are met and that those they supervise have understood their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and are able to raise any concerns or suspicions appropriately. The Line Manager/supervisor should also be aware of each worker's performance in their role and their approach to personal relationships with adults at risk of harm in their care. It is expected that each Line Manager/Supervisor will regularly observe the worker in their role. They should also keep a written record of supervision meetings and ensure any concerns or training needs are addressed. Evidence of training attended should be kept. Appropriate evidence should be presented to trustees as part of an annual cycle of review which demonstrates good working practice in this area.

### **3. Whistle-blowing**

In addition to effective management of allegations against staff, there is a mechanism in place for staff and volunteers to raise legitimate concerns (e.g. improper actions or omissions) about other workers. This is known as 'whistleblowing'. The reporting principles of which are contained in the Public Disclosure Act 1998 which gives legal protection to workers against being dismissed or penalised as a result of disclosing certain legitimate concerns. The policy is designed so that workers can raise safeguarding or other concerns internally and at a high level. It is not necessary for the worker to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient. The worker has no responsibility for investigating the matter - it is SWAY's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

Individuals are encouraged to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns raised anonymously are less credible but will still be considered at the discretion of SWAY. If told not to raise or pursue wrongdoing, even by a person in authority such as a manager, employees should not agree to remain silent. They should report the matter to their line manager, supervisor or designated trustee. SWAY upholds the importance of creating and working in a culture which encourages individuals to feel safe, open and transparent.

There may also be occasions when a worker has a personal difficulty which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Workers have a responsibility to discuss each situation with their line manager or supervisor so professional or personal support can be offered. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults.

#### **4. Pastoral Care – supporting those affected by abuse**

SWAY is committed to offering pastoral care to all those affected by abuse. This may be adults or those working within the organisation as employees, volunteers or trustees who have been personally affected by abuse in the past or have been involved in dealing with abuse in some form as part of their current role. In offering pastoral care, we seek to work with each individual to provide the most appropriate support, working with an individual's home church if applicable and any local contacts, including relevant statutory agencies.

Support may be provided in a variety of ways including through personal contacts, local clergy or other church connections, pastoral care teams, through counselling agencies, specific Safeguarding services or any other possibilities. The main aim is to ensure that no-one feels isolated because of their experiences, and no one is left to deal with difficult feelings or stress because of the safeguarding aspects of their role within SWAY.

#### **5. Categories of Abuse**

Abuse is any form of maltreatment of a vulnerable adult and includes somebody inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may take place in any context; a family setting, an institution or a community setting and may involve someone known to the adult or may involve a stranger. Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual or by a group and may be by an adult or a child or children.

#### **6. Abuse and Additional Needs**

Additional needs cover a wide range of disabilities and impairments, including but not limited to moderate, severe, profound and multiple learning disabilities; physical or visual impairments; deafness; autism and autistic spectrum needs, physical or mental health needs; speech, language and communication needs and behavioural, emotional and social development needs. This range of needs have a different impact on each individual adult and their experience of disabling barriers. Any one adult's experience of their impairment will be unique to them.

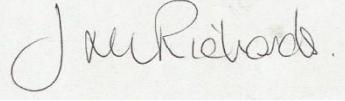
Research consistently shows that disabled young people are more likely to experience abuse (NSPCC 2018) and specifically more likely to experience multiple kinds of abuse and multiple episodes of abuse. The increased risk applies to disabled adults in all impairment groups and all forms of abuse.

One of the factors that places disabled adults at higher risk is that they may have less access to services and support which would otherwise protect them. Consideration needs to be given of any barriers to communication and sense of isolation they may have, either as a result of their needs or as a consequence of our own attitudes or assumptions. Consideration needs to be given to appropriate training for all workers engaging or adults with additional needs to ensure there are no ongoing skills gaps or any lack of awareness.

In implementing this policy and our safeguarding procedures, SWAY seeks to ensure that specific consideration is given to those with additional needs and to ensuring that our services and safeguarding support is accessible in ways appropriate to all, regardless of any disability or impairment. Consideration should also be taken to adults with sensory needs such as hearing or visual impairment.

## **SWAY- Adult Safegaurding Policy**

<b>Date approved</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2025
<b>Date reviewed</b>	April 2025

<b>Signed</b>	
<b>Minuted</b>	
<b>Date of next review</b>	April 2026