



Brighton and Hove Speak Out

Policy: Safeguarding Adults, Young People and Children at risk

Date agreed by Governance Board: Oct 25th 2021

Staff Annual Review: Oct 2022

Next Board review: Oct 2023

1. Policy statement

Brighton & Hove Speak Out supports adults and young people (17+ 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 recognises every adult's right to live free from abuse and neglect. Speak Out will do all that it can to ensure the safety of the people who use its projects; including its workers, and volunteers. We will prevent abuse from happening wherever possible and aim to reduce the risk of abuse, harm, or neglect to people who use our services or work for us. We intend to safeguard adults in a way that supports them to make choices and have control about how they want to live.

This policy applies to all people working or volunteering at Speak Out. This includes core and sessional paid staff, volunteers, students on placement, and Trustees.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Speak Out's '**Guidelines for Safeguarding Adults at Risk**' which contain 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, and staff may come into contact with their children. Speak Out has separate '**Guidelines for Safeguarding Children and young people**'.

2. Partnership working

Speak Out works with others in both the voluntary and statutory sectors who are committed to improving the lives of people with learning disabilities. This commitment extends to working with others to safeguard any vulnerable adults at risk and promoting ways to keep people safe from abuse.

Speak Out is signed up to:

- **Sussex Safeguarding Adults Procedures**
<https://sussexsafeguardingadults.procedures.org.uk/>
- **Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Manual**
<https://sussexchildprotection.procedures.org.uk/>

Speak Out's guidelines for responding to abuse are aligned to Sussex Multi-Agency procedures and 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.

3. What We Mean by Adult Safeguarding

The Care Act 2014 Guidance defines safeguarding as protecting an adult's right (someone who is 18 years or older) to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It further states that it is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted, including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. Within this context, the guidance recognises that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

Abuse and neglect can take many forms and it is important that staff and volunteers working for Speak Out should not be constrained in their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, and the circumstances of an individual case should always be considered.

Abuse or Neglect may be:

- a single act or repeated acts
- multiple in form
- a deliberate act of neglect or a failure to act
- an opportunistic act or a form of serial abusing where the perpetrator seeks out and grooms the individual(s)

The Department of Health and Social Care Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 sets out the different types and patterns of abuse and neglect, though stresses that the list is not exhaustive, and describes the different circumstances in which they may take place.

4. Types of abuse and neglect

See Speak Out's 'Guidelines for Responding to Abuse' for details on types of abuse.

5. Safeguarding Principles

The Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 also describes six principles that underpin all adult safeguarding related work. This applies to all sectors and settings including care and support services, social work, healthcare, welfare, benefits, housing, wider Local Authority functions and the criminal justice system. These principles should always inform the ways in which professionals and other staff work with adults.

These six key guiding principles also underpin local Safeguarding procedures. These are:

- **Empowerment** - People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent. "I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens."
- **Prevention** - It is better to take action before harm occurs. "I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help."
- **Proportionality** - The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. "I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, as I see them and they will only get involved as much as needed."
- **Protection** - Support and representation for those in greatest need. "I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want."
- **Partnership** - Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. "I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me."
- **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. "I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they."

6. Key roles and responsibilities

Staff and volunteer safe 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 Speak Out's Staff and Volunteer Recruitment Policy and DBS Policy).

Training for staff and volunteers

This policy and the above, procedures will be covered in staff and volunteer induction training alongside Speak Out's guidelines for responding to suspected abuse (including recognising signs and symptoms of abuse). Staff are expected to complete refresher safeguarding training every 2 years or sooner if legislation (i.e. Care Act) is updated (this could be online Council, SafetyNet or other training agreed by line managers). A record of staff safeguarding training is kept up to date by the safeguarding lead and officers.

We want to ensure staff and volunteers are confident in the following:

- To familiarise themselves with the examples of types of abuse and examples of signs to look out for
- To make sure that they are aware of the contents of this policy and to follow its requirements
- To make sure that they are aware of local authority policies and procedures in place for safeguarding adults in Sussex and to follow these procedures where relevant.
- To remember that all the parties involved have rights which should be respected and balanced against each other (in line with the Human Rights Act 1988).

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 who use the project for support. Training will use scenarios and make reference to other policies such as:

- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Guidelines and Flowchart
- Lone Working Policy
- Health & Safety Policies and procedures
- Confidentiality Policy

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 any risk through 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 drop-in sessions) should have refresher training on managing behaviour every 2 years.

Staff and volunteer responsibilities when responding to potential abuse

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.

Discrimination, physical, sexual, domestic, modern slavery, psychological, financial, organisational abuse, neglect and self-neglect and other abuse 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**.

When responding to disclosures or concerns that arise during Speak Out drop-in sessions follow the **Drop-in Flow chart for responding to suspected adult abuse**

Escalating concerns

Speak Out staff and volunteers will follow the **Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures** and **Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Manual** will be followed when reporting incidents of suspected abuse.

If the vulnerable adult or child is at immediate risk of harm staff/volunteers may need to contact Brighton and Hove social care services or the emergency services straight away:

Emergency services (police, ambulance) - 999

**For safeguarding concerns about a vulnerable adult contact:
Brighton and Hove City Council**

Access Point on 01273 295 555

Email accesspoint@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Online: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/adult-social-care/keep-people-safe/help-adult-risk-abuse-or-neglect>

The person reporting the situation may be asked to fill out a [safeguarding adults at risk form](#) via the Brighton and Hove Council website recording the incident.

For safeguarding concerns about a child or young person (under18)

[Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#) via Front Door for Families

C/O Whitehawk Community Hub and Library
179A Whitehawk Road, Brighton, BN2 5FL

Telephone: 01273 290400

Email: FrontDoorForFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Front Door for Families [Online Referral Form](#)

Out of Hours Emergency Duty Service – children’s services

Telephone: 01273 335905 or 335906

Any further investigation will be carried out by the Social Services Department and/or the police, following the Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures (link on page 1) or the [Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Manual](#). The safeguarding teams are experienced in dealing with these situations with sensitivity.

If there is no immediate risk of harm volunteers should contact the Speak Out office as soon as possible. An initial internal meeting or phone conversation, 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 adult social care, children’s services 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 should be recorded (within 12 hrs of an incident) and include the decisions and subsequent actions taken, dated, and stored securely in the services user/s record in Speak Out’s data base.

A summary of all Safeguarding alerts and concerns must also be recorded in Speak Out’s central Safeguarding Concerns 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.

Speak Out’s Safeguarding Lead regularly reviews the safeguarding register. Trends in safeguarding concerns are analysed and if appropriate a meeting will be arranged with the Trustee Safeguarding Lead (TSL) and/or relevant staff to discuss these and an action plan made to raise the issues with external stakeholders.

A summary report on any trends, issues or incidents is made to the Operations sub group of the Board every 3 months, via the TSL every 3 months.

Safeguarding Investigations

It is not the role of Speak Out staff or volunteers 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
- Get confirmation of the Safeguarding Strategy Plan
- Seek information on the safeguarding plan to keep the person safe
- Seek confirmation of protective measures put in place 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 supervision and support

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

The Designated Safeguarding (DSL) Lead's responsibilities

The nominated person at Speak Out in relation to safeguarding is:
Speak Out's Deputy Director

This person has a responsibility to:

- Ensure that the Safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed regularly in line with changes to local procedure or legislation and implemented appropriately across the organisation.
- Make sure that all workers and volunteers receive mandatory Safeguarding training, and supervision and support in relation to safeguarding.
- Ensure that the Board (via the Trustee Safeguarding Lead) are informed of any serious safeguarding alerts or trends in concerns.

(See DSL role description for full details)

This person will have received Safeguarding training for managers provided by Brighton & Hove Council or SafetyNet. This will be refreshed every 2 years or earlier if legislation changes.

Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) responsibilities

Speak Out's Team leaders are also Designated Safeguarding Officers. They have the following responsibilities:

- Ensure staff members and volunteers in their project area (1-1 advocacy, Groups advocacy and engagement and volunteers) work in line with this policy and follow correct safeguarding procedures.
- Make sure the relevant local authority department is informed in line with procedures.
- Make sure that a proper written confidential record of any safeguarding incident and investigation is made in the safeguarding register and service user case notes.
- Provide appropriate support and supervision for staff and volunteers.
- Alert the Safeguarding Lead or Director to any safeguarding issue or incident which directly involves a staff member or volunteer.
- Make sure that up-to-date risk assessments are in place for all people receiving advocacy and for Speak Out activities in their project area

(See DSL role description for full details)

Trustee Safeguarding lead (TSL) responsibilities

The Operations subgroup of Speak Out's Governance board have responsibility for ensuring Safeguarding policies and procedures are in place reviewed every two years, or as soon as possible after any significant change in legislation or official guidance.

There are specific responsibilities for the Trustees Safeguarding Lead:

- Check regularly, through internal reporting (regular quarterly and by exception) and other means, that this policy is being complied with.
- Respond appropriately and promptly to any issue or incident reported to them by the DSL or Speak Out's Director.
- Report a summary of safeguarding incidents, serious alerts or trends in concerns to the Operations subgroup of the Governance board every 3 months.

The Trustee Safeguarding Lead is Speak Out's Governance Board Chair.

Whistleblowing

Speak Out's Whistle Blowing Policy sets out the procedure for staff or volunteers to anonymously raise a safeguarding concern about the conduct of other Speak Out staff or volunteers (see Speak Out's Whistle Blowing Policy for details).

Speak Out Internal Safeguarding Investigations

Where a safeguarding concern potentially involves a member of Speak Out staff or a volunteer the Safeguarding lead officer will inform the Trustee Safeguarding lead.

All allegations of abuse and neglect against workers and volunteers from vulnerable persons, will be fully investigated. Where appropriate they will contact the Brighton and Hove Lead Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and if necessary also inform the Charity Commission.

Local Authority Designated Officer ([LADO](#))

Telephone: 01273 295643

Email: darrel.clews@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Other Speak Out policies and procedures

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.
- **Summary Flow chart for Speak Out staff and volunteers when responding to suspected adult abuse in a drop-in**
- **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.
- **Speak Out Whistle blowing policy** – Guidance for staff and volunteers.

Related Policies, Procedures and Safeguarding Related Offences

County Lines

This is a term used when drug gangs from cities start operating in smaller towns, exploiting children and adults at risk of abuse (including human trafficking) to sell drugs. These dealers use dedicated mobile phone lines, known as 'deal lines', to take orders from drug users. This is a growing and significant problem across London and Sussex.

Cuckooing

Criminal gangs target the homes of vulnerable people to be used for drug dealing – a process known as Cuckooing after the 'Cuckoo' bird that invades other bird's nests. Victims are often left with little choice but to co-operate. Drug dealers will often approach the vulnerable person offering money or free drugs to use their home for dealing. In some instances, after providing free drugs, the dealers will then force the person to sell drugs for them in order to 're-pay' their drug debts. These criminals are selective about who they target, a lot of the time victims are lonely, isolated, frequently drug users themselves and can already be known to the police. Cuckooing means the drug dealers can operate from a property rather than the street, which is out of sight from the police making it a very attractive option. They can then use the premises to deal drugs from, which is difficult for the police to monitor.

Domestic Abuse (MARAC)

The role of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is to provide a consistent approach to the risk assessment of those individuals that have been identified at the highest risk of serious harm from domestic abuse in order to safeguard them and to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety. The MARAC facilitates, monitors and evaluates effective information sharing between representatives of the local police, probation, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors. MARAC works on the assumption that no single agency or individual is able to see the complete picture of the life of a potential victim, but all may have insights that are crucial to their safety. The offence of coercive and controlling behaviour in intimate and familial relationships was introduced into the Serious Crime Act 2015. The offence imposes a maximum 5 years imprisonment, a fine or both. The offence closes a gap in the law around patterns of coercive and controlling behaviour during a relationship between intimate partners, former partners who still live together, or family members. Domestic Abuse (Support for Staff) Agencies should also consider the implications for domestic abuse on their own staff (and volunteer) group, as this is very likely to affect many people in the same way it does across the wider community. Organisations could deliver specialist and sensitive training for staff, which aims to highlight the subject and promote ways in which members of staff can seek help and support, whilst considering setting up a network of champions within the workforce who can signpost colleagues to relevant support services.

Hate Crime

Hate crime involves any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic. The definition covers five main strands:

- disability
- gender identity
- race
- religion or faith
- sexual orientation

The website True Vision is supported by all police forces in England and provides information for victims and the public about what hate crime is and why it is important to report it, together with setting out the range of ways hate crimes can be reported, including via an online reporting form. The site also provides links to organisations that can offer support and advice on hate crime related issues and can be accessed.

PREVENT

PREVENT is part of the national counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST) and aims to stop people being drawn into or supporting terrorism. The strategy focuses on three key areas which are:

- respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat from those who promote it
- prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support
- work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address.

Mate Crime

Mate Crime is the exploitation, abuse or theft from an adult by those they consider to be their friends. Those that commit such abuse or theft are often referred to as 'fake friends'. Mate crime is most prevalent when the victim lives with a disability and is especially common when that disability is Autism or Asperger's.

Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements are a set of arrangements to manage risk posed by the most serious sexual and violent offenders under the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. They bring together the Police, Probation and Prison Services into MAPPA responsible authorities. A number of other agencies are under a duty to co-operate (DTC) with the responsible authority including Social Services and Health Trusts.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern slavery is an umbrella term, encompassing human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced labour. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Protocols set out the local partnership approach to tackling Modern Slavery by outlining the definition and identifying indicators of Modern Slavery, and the referral pathways services need to follow to support any potential victim. Safeguarding Children Local Child Protection Procedures apply to people who are under the age of 18. More information can be found at on the Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

Self-Neglect and Hoarding

Self-Neglect and Hoarding Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures provides guidance aimed at a wide range of professionals involved in working with people who may self-neglect. This includes anyone whose role may lead them to identify issues of self-neglect, requiring an appropriate response, and then referral on to other agencies.