SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2026

ADULTS at Risk

1. Policy Statement

Safeguarding means protecting someone's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It involves people and organisations working together to prevent and stop that abuse or neglect. A ll safeguarding will honour the feelings, beliefs, and decisions of the person in question.

SEND and You is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and wellbeing of adults at risk of abuse or neglect. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and doing nothing is not acceptable.

SEND and You provides Special Educational Needs & Disability Information, Advice and Support (SENDIAS) services across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

As an advisory organisation, we do not conduct statutory safeguarding investigations.

Our responsibility is to: **Recognise → Record → Report → Refer**

This policy is reviewed at least annually or more frequently if required to take into account organisational learning or changes in legislation or guidance.

This Policy was last reviewed on: **11th May 2026**

Named Roles within this policy:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Santie Human (SENDIASS Manager)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): TBC (SENDIASS Deputy Manager)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Florence Buchanan (CEO)

Safeguarding Lead Trustee: Rona Chellew

Staff Safeguarding Leads: Kirsty Armitage & Joanne Dean (IAS Line Coordinators)

Associated Policies

Safeguarding Policy - Children and Young People, Whistleblowing, Lone Working, GDPR, Safer Recruitment, Code of Conduct, Online Safety.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY for Adults

2. Scope

This policy applies to all adults aged 18+, young people aged 16–25 where appropriate, and all SEND and You staff, volunteers, contractors, and trustees.

3. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is aligned with the Care Act 2014, Mental Capacity Act 2005, Human Rights Act 1998, Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Equality Act 2010, Prevent Duty, GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018, and local safeguarding procedures.

4. Definitions

An adult at risk is any person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves.

Safeguarding will also recognise that people sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships, and they may be ambivalent, unclear, or unrealistic about their own personal circu mstances.

The Care Act 2014 defines abuse as physical, domestic violence, sexual abuse, psychological, neglect, self-neglect, financial, modern slavery, discrimination, organisational abuse, and domestic abuse from other family members/close friends who are not parents. Abuse can be one off, regular, and planned/unplanned and there is no specific pattern to abuse. Historical abuse also comes within the scope of this policy; there may be occasions when an adult will disclose abuse (either sexual or physical) which occurred in the past, or during their childhood. This information needs to be treated in the same way as a disclosure or suspicion of current abuse. The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to adults, or to children, now.

5. Principles of Safeguarding

SEND and You follows the six Care Act principles: Empowerment, Prevention, Proportionality, Protection, Partnership, Accountability.

6. Our Responsibilities

SEND and You will recognise, record, report, and refer concerns, follow multi-agency procedures, and provide appropriate training to all Staff and Volunteers.

SEND and You are not responsible for diagnosing abuse, but we do have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs of abuse. Not all concerns about adults relate to abuse, and there may well be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind and consider what is known about the adult and their circumstances.

SEND and You will not investigate concerns or interview alleged perpetrators.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

SEND and You must appoint a **Designated Safeguarding Lead** (DSL) who holds lead responsibility for safeguarding across the organisation. The DSL must be a suitably trained senior member of staff and must be formally designated, documented, and communicated to all staff.

At least one **Deputy DSL** (DDSL) must also be appointed to ensure operational cover. The DSL and DDSL(s) must ensure safeguarding leadership is always available and must not be absent at the same time.

Current DSL/DDSL role titles will be listed in internal safeguarding notices and reviewed annually.

Staff and volunteers must recognise, record, and report concerns immediately – see 'Employees' Responsibilities' & 'Volunteers' Responsibilities' for more detail.

Trustees oversee safeguarding governance. The trustee board will appoint a named **Safeguarding Lead Trustee** who will work with the DSL and wider safeguarding team to monitor organsational policies and practices, participate in reflective practice and safeguarding reviews and provide advice to the board of trustees on Safeguarding matters.

8. Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Abuse is when anyone violates someone else's human and civil rights. Abuse doesn't have to be done on purpose; the most important thing is whether the adult at risk has been harmed. Staff must remain alert to physical, behavioural, environmental, online, and third-party indicators of abuse. For adults in particular, the following types of abuse may apply:

physical: any form of assault, over-medication, unnecessary restraint or bad manual handling

sexual: rape or any sexual act that the victim didn't consent to or couldn't understand

psychological or emotional: threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment or bullying

financial: theft, borrowing money and not repaying it, and any pressure about wills, property, possessions or benefits

neglect: ignoring medical or physical needs, not providing access to care, withholding essentials such as medication, food, water and heating
discriminatory: all forms of harassment based on a disability, ethnicity, gender or sexuality

institutional: repeated poor care and treatment of vulnerable adults, and unsatisfactory professional practice

modern slavery: slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude

self-neglect: not caring for personal hygiene, health or surroundings, including behaviour like hoarding which puts the person, or others, at risk

In adult safeguarding (UK context, Care Act 2014), the distinction between a safeguarding **concern** and an **allegation** is about what is being reported and who is implicated, rather than the seriousness of the issue.

A **safeguarding concern** is any information, worry, or suspicion that an adult with care and support needs:

- Is experiencing abuse or neglect, **or**
- Is at risk of abuse or neglect
- Is unable to protect themselves because of those needs

Key features

- Can be **vague, emerging, or unconfirmed**
- Focuses on the **adult at risk and their safety**
- May relate to abuse or neglect by **anyone** (family member, friend, neighbour, stranger, another service user, informal carer, or professional)
- Does **not** require proof or investigation before reporting

An **allegation** in adult safeguarding is a specific type of safeguarding concern that involves a person in a position of trust. This is often referred to as "Concerns about a person in a position of trust", or "Allegations against staff or volunteers"

A person in a position of trust is someone who:

- Works with adults with care and support needs (paid or unpaid)
- Has power, responsibility, or authority over them

Key features

- The concern is about **the behaviour or conduct of the worker/volunteer**
- It may indicate the person:
    - Has abused or neglected an adult at risk
    - May pose a risk to others
    - Has behaved in a way that questions their **suitability** for their role
- Triggers **additional processes**, alongside safeguarding (e.g. employer action, HR, regulators, police)

When abuse is disclosed or observed (a concern or allegation), action must be taken as per the procedure below.

9. Safeguarding Procedure

If you have concerns about a service user or Young Person (18 – 25) who is volunteering at SAY:

Step 1: Recognise
Step 2: Respond

Whoever has raised the concern/allegation will be informed that the information cannot be kept confidential and will have to be passed on to appropriate agencies.

Whoever the concern is about will be informed that the information cannot be kept confidential and will have to be passed on to appropriate agencies.

Step 3: Record & Report

An accurate and contemporary record will be made and kept for future reference using the SAY safeguarding reporting procedure and form.

The DSL, and if that person is not available, the DDSL or Staff Safeguarding Lead, will be told immediately of suspected abuse of an adult.

Step 4: Refer - DSL/DDSL refers externally if required

A referral means sharing information with external agencies to protect an adult at risk. SAY is not making an accusation but acting to safeguard the individual's welfare.

Referrals are normally made with the agreement of the DSL or DDSL but must not be delayed if they are not available.

Referring Concerns to Statutory Agencies

If, after discussion, there is an agreed concern regarding an adult's safety:

- The staff member, supported by the Staff Safeguarding Lead/DDSL/DSL, will **refer to the Local Authority Adult Safeguarding Team** (See Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset contact details)
- Referral forms may be completed by the staff member or supporting manager.
- The adult (or their carer if capacity is lacking) should be informed unless doing so places them at further risk—especially where the carer may be the alleged abuser.
- Urgent cases will be escalated by the DSL if possible.

If informing the adult is likely to be challenging, the supporting manager should take responsibility for that communication. The DSL must always be informed of concerns and actions taken.

Employees' Responsibilities

If staff have general concerns about an adult that they do not feel come within the descriptions of abuse, they should discuss them with the Staff Safeguarding Lead in the first instance.

If this person is not available, they should contact the DDSL or DSL. The DSL may want to discuss further with the Safeguarding Trustee.

Volunteers' Responsibilities

Volunteers will go to the Staff Safeguarding Leads as a first point of contact. They will then be referred onto the DSL or DDSL if it is felt that the concern needs to be taken further. If the DDSL or DSL is not available and there is a safeguarding issue that needs dealing with, it should go to the Safeguarding Lead Trustee for advice.

See **Volunteer/Staff Safeguarding Adults Processes 2026** for flowchart

If you have concerns about the behaviour of a volunteer (including trustees) or staff member at SAY:

Report immediately to Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

If concern is about DSL, report immediately to Chair of Trustees

All concerns about those working with adults at risk must be referred to LADO

10. Additional Definitions

Safeguarding means protecting someone's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It involves people and organisations working together to prevent and stop that abuse or neglect. All safeguarding will honor the feelings, beliefs, and decisions of the person in question.

Safeguarding will also recognise that people sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships, and they may be ambivalent, unclear, or unrealistic about their own personal circumstances. Staf f must remain alert to physical, behavioural, environmental, online, and third-party indicators of abuse.

Types of abuse: The Care Act 2014 defines abuse as physical, domestic violence, sexual abuse, psychological, neglect, self-neglect, financial, modern slavery, discrimination, organisational abuse, and domestic abuse from other family members/close friends who are not parents.

Abuse can be one off, regular, and planned/unplanned and there is no specific pattern to abuse.

Historical abuse also comes within the scope of this policy; there may be occasions when an adult will disclose abuse (either sexual or physical) which occurred in the past, or during their childhood. This information needs to be treated in the same way as a disclosure or suspicion of current abuse. The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to adults or children now.

Confidentiality is crucial to all our relationships - but the welfare of adults is paramount. Confidentiality may not be maintained if the withholding of the information will prejudice the welfare of the adult or others.

Referral means sharing information about concerns with outside agencies. It is important to remember that if SEND and You makes a referral, we are not reporting an individual – we are referring to protect the welfare of the individual.

Relevant Agencies with regard to referrals are the following Local Authorities:

For concerns regarding Adults at risk residing in Bristol:

Report suspected abuse: safeguarding adults at risk - bristol.gov.uk

For concerns regarding Adults at risk residing in South Gloucestershire:

Category: Adults | SafeguardingSouth Gloucestershire Safeguarding

For concerns regarding Adults at risk residing in North Somerset:

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LADO contact details:

LADO Concerns Professionals Bristol Referral Form

The Role of the LADO & The Allegations Management Process | Gloucestershire County Council

Reporting concerns about an adult | Childrens Safeguarding Partnership

If your concerns are for an adult who does not reside in the above local authorities, please refer to the appropriate LA safeguarding referral information.

10. Support, Consultation & Advice

Recognition should be given to the impact of dealing with safeguarding issues. SEND and You will ensure that appropriate practical and emotional support is available to all involved. This may be provided by:

- named members of the Board of Trustees who have knowledge of local authority safeguarding processes
- external named persons who understand the impact of working with safeguarding issues.

Online safeguarding training is available for all staff.
SEND and You have an Employee Assistance Programme which employees can use to access online support.

Contact telephone numbers for those able to provide support, consultation and advice should be noted and readily available to SAY's Employees.
Employees and Volunteers may also be subject to allegations of abusing adults. In these circumstances the DSL will ensure that local authority and/or Police are given assistance in pursuing any investigation. Suspension and/or the disciplinary procedure will be followed in these circumstances.