

CWRC Safeguarding Policy & related procedures



CAMBRIDGE WOMEN'S RESOURCES CENTRE
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CWRC SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS POLICY & PROCEDURES

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OUR SAFEGUARDING STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

Everyone working (including staff **and** volunteers) within CWRC will be familiar with this document which:

- sets out our vision for safeguarding all women who come in to contact with CWRC,
- establishes key safeguarding roles and responsibilities and how we train and supervise staff to understand these.
- defines and describes what safeguarding is and the risks we might recognize, including operational and organisational risks.
- outlines how we respond and report.

This strategy and the safeguarding policies and procedures are available to all on our website. An accessible version can be made available upon request.

OUR SAFEGUARDING VISION

CWRC is committed to ensuring safety and appropriate care for all women who use our services. We take our responsibilities relating to safeguarding children, young people and adults seriously, and recognise that the women who come to CWRC have family members, children and adults, who we may need to safeguard in order that they are protected, irrespective of age or ability, from any form of abuse. Safeguarding is everyone's business.

CWRC works to create a positive and safe environment within our organisation, and to prevent the risk of harm to all people, including adults and children, those with a disability, and those who are disadvantaged in other ways. We have sound recruitment and management practices in place to support this.

CWRC is committed to ensuring that all staff are able and ready to identify and respond proactively to situations where abuse is disclosed or where we suspect abuse. We place emphasis on collaborative and caring relationships with our service users and our partners in delivery. We believe this contributes to getting the right help early.

Our safeguarding approach ensures that we:

- have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures that all trustees, staff and volunteers follow, which fit with the policies and procedures of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough safeguarding children or adults' partnership.
- make sure all staff and volunteers receive regular training on child protection or working with adults at risk.
- appoint a safeguarding lead to work with your local authority safeguarding partnerships or boards and/or create a plan for responding to concerns overseas.
- manage concerns, complaints, whistleblowing and allegations relating to child protection or adults at risk effectively.
- have clear policies when DBS checks are required, how you assess the level of check needed and how you handle the information.

RELEVANT SAFEGUARDING LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

CWRC is subject to charity law and regulated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The charity trustees (Board of Trustees) are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with CWRC are not harmed in any way through contact with it. We have a zero-tolerance policy for any abusive or harassing behaviour across all its activities.

- The [Charity Commission](#) guidance

- [Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023](#)
- [The Care Act](#) (2014)
- [The Domestic Abuse Act](#) (2021)
- [Mental Health Act](#) (1983) and [Mental Capacity Act](#) (2005)

The CWRC policy is linked to other key CWRC policies, including:

- Safe Recruitment Process and Disclosure and Barring Service policy
- Data Protection and Retention Policies.
- Complaints Policy and Management

DEFINITIONS

What do we mean by 'safeguarding'?

CWRC use the term '*safeguarding*' in the broadest sense, to describe an overall approach to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children, young people and adults. Depending on the context 'safeguarding' within CWRC can mean:

- **protecting** children and adults from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- **preventing** impairment of the health and development of children and adults.
- **promoting** the welfare of the women (and their families) that use CWRC by supporting and advocating for them regarding their circumstances, and offering them appropriate emotional support and guidance.
- **taking action** to enable the best outcomes for all who come in to contact with CWRC.

Most of our offer to women will sit in the latter three of the above aspects of safeguarding and we will work with women to enable them to accept any help from other agencies.

CWRC's offer will, for some women, help them become less vulnerable through empowering and enabling them, thus preventing future harm from abuse or neglect. Where a woman may need additional help, CWRC will work with agencies who make other offers of help for women and will signpost or actively assist a woman to access those services. These include the professional and direct support resources from the [Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership](#).

However, there may be instances when we need to take active steps to protect an adult or a child and our safeguarding policy and procedure below addresses this, usually by making a referral to report the suspected abuse of an adult or child.

What do we mean by 'child or adult' protection'?

The term 'child protection' (s47 Children Act 1989) or 'adult safeguarding' (s42 of Care Act 2014) refers to the procedures and processes that support the multi-agency safeguarding response to suspected child/adult abuse and neglect. These processes could be initiated by a referral.

What do we mean by 'Think Family'?

A Think Family approach refers to the steps taken by practitioners working with children, young people and adults to identify wider family needs which extend beyond the individual they are supporting. Although our primary focus and contact will be with the women, we recognise that their emotional wellbeing and mental health is contingent upon the wellbeing of their children and others that they may have caring responsibilities for or have significant relationships with.

Where possible, we will support and enable the women to access help and intervention for themselves and other members of their family.

CWRC'S SAFEGUARDING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The protection and safeguarding of children and adults are paramount in all work undertaken by CWRC. The safeguarding roles set out below show lines of accountability for safeguarding throughout CWRC.

All staff

Trustees, staff and volunteers should be able to **recognise, respond and report** suspected for confirmed abuse and or neglect of adults or children (see policy and procedure below). They should know how to support service users to access help and intervention to prevent risk of abuse and neglect escalating.

Role of Board of Trustees: Leading on Safeguarding Governance.

The CWRC Board of Trustees is accountable for ensuring that the organisation has appropriate structure, processes, and resources to ensure safeguarding is central to all the organisation does, and for monitoring compliance.

Trustees discharge their safeguarding responsibilities by:

- maintaining regular oversight of safeguarding issues within the organisation and receiving regular update reports from the CEO.
- ensuring that serious safeguarding incidents are reviewed and analysed and the outcomes scrutinised. After any necessary consultation, the Board will decide as to whether incidents meet the Charity Commission threshold for reporting.
- reviewing this safeguarding strategy annually.
- ensuring there is a lead safeguarding trustee to provide expert advice and guidance to the Board on safeguarding matters. The safeguarding lead will receive copies of all documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Receiving or commissioning audits or assessments into any area pertaining to safeguarding within CWRC.

CWRC's trustees must all be familiar with the Charity Commission's [The essential trustee](#) guidance which explains the key duties of charity trustees and what they need to do to carry out those duties competently.

Role of The Chief Executive Officer as Designated Safeguarding Lead: ensuring effective operational safeguarding arrangements.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the senior accountable individual for all aspects of safeguarding across CWRC. The CEO discharges these responsibilities by:

- working with the Board's safeguarding lead to ensure robust safeguarding reporting and governance structures are in place and they are operating effectively, including safeguarding reporting.
- ensuring that there is a strong culture of safeguarding across CWRC, that staff are trained in safeguarding and receive suitable support.
- implementing clear reporting processes, structures, and ensuring management accountability to safeguard women and their families if needed.
- ensuring that all are held accountable for safeguarding within their respective work areas and across the organisation as a whole.
- ensuring that safeguarding policy and practice is developed, implemented, managed and monitored across the charity.
- having oversight of any safeguarding concerns, that employees are seeking expert safeguarding advice appropriately, and that there are systems in place to ensure that safeguarding matters are appropriately reported and escalated in a timely manner.

- receiving regular safeguarding updates from different service leads

Role of Staff and volunteers – everyday safeguarding

- attend safeguarding training and supervision opportunities as required. This can enable staff to recognise, respond and report safeguarding concerns.
- reading and adhering to safeguarding information and policies & procedures so that they are aware of what to do if they have concerns.
- contribute and collaborate to enhance knowledge and best practice at CWRC.
- ensure a safer environment for staff and service users, including safe recruitment and selection processes.
- be an organisation that understands and learns from practice to ensure quality of service.
- ensure all staff receive an induction that includes safeguarding, and are provided with ongoing learning and development opportunities.
- understand the lived experience of the child, young person or adult, to ensure quality of life and positive outcomes.

CWRC's Safeguarding Training and Development

Our CEO is our designated safeguarding lead and receives training and quarterly safeguarding supervision as well as informal peer support from partners who deliver help and support to women in Cambridge. She regularly updates the staff team and the trustees on key safeguarding matters.

All staff and volunteers will receive basic safeguarding training every two years in recognising, responding and reporting abuse and neglect.

CWRC SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The [Charity Commission](#) offers a comprehensive lists of the safeguarding risks that all charities should know how to respond to. This section is intended to guide all at CWRC as to how to recognise, respond and report suspected abuse and neglect. *NB – descriptions of abuse and neglect are difficult to read, but they are important as they help practitioners identify and have a shared understanding of behaviours as abusive and harmful. They are also useful in supporting effective reporting of abuse and neglect.*

Recognising the suspected abuse or neglect of adults

The Care Act is very clear as to which adults should be subject to referrals regarding abuse and neglect, and in reality, there will be very few adults who CWRC will need to refer to the Local Authority Adult Safeguarding for protection.

The Care Act indicates that an adult **at risk**:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs), and
- is experiencing, or at risk of abuse and neglect, and
- as a result of their care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from the risk or experience of abuse and neglect.

The Care Act says that care and support needs can arise from:

- physical disability, learning disability or sensory impairment,
- mental health needs, including dementia or a personality disorder,
- long-term health conditions,
- Substance or alcohol misuse to the extent that it affects ability to manage day-to-day living.

There will be some women that use CWRC services will have experienced a range of adversities which may leave them vulnerable to abuse and neglect. There will be some who have care and support needs which will may also leave them vulnerable.

Staff at CWRC may suspect women using our services are *at risk* of the following types of abuse described in the Care Act 2014. There is more detail regarding these descriptions page 34 of this useful document [Cambridge and Peterborough Adult Safeguarding Procedures](#)

- **Physical abuse** - *Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.*
- **Sexual abuse** - *Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography. Witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.*
- **Psychological abuse** - *Including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.*
- **Financial or material abuse** - *Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.*
- **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 force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.*
- **Discriminatory abuse** - *Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.*
- **Organisational abuse** - *Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example or in relation to care provided in one's own home. 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 or practices within an organisation.*
- **Neglect and acts of omission** - *Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.*
- **Self-neglect** - *This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.*

Domestic abuse: In addition to these definitions, it is important to highlight the most recent [definition of domestic abuse](#) from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021:

Domestic abuse involves any single incident or pattern of conduct where someone's behaviour towards another is abusive, and where the people involved are aged 16 or over and = are, or have been, personally connected to each other (regardless of gender or sexuality). The abuse can involve, but is not limited to acts [that are detrimental and harmful]:

- *Psychological*
- *Physical*
- *sexual*
- *financial*
- *emotional*
- *violent*
- *threatening*
- *controlling*
- *coercive behaviour.*

NB: 'Personal connection' means the individuals concerned:

- *are due to be, are currently, or have been, married or civil partners to each other.*
- *are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other.*
- *are, or have been, parents (or had a parental relationship) to the same child.*
- *are relatives (the Act gives further definitions of 'relatives').*

Mental capacity

CWRC staff and volunteers may work with women where questions of mental capacity arise. Mental capacity may be relevant to safeguarding.

Copies of the [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#), the [Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice](#) and the [Care Quality Commission Mental Capacity Act Guidance](#) are made available to CWRC staff and staff recognise their roles and responsibilities under the Act's Code of Practice and 'best interest' decision making.

CWRC Support Workers may assess or reassess the Mental Capacity of women entering into or using our service at any time using the Act's Code of Practice. Outcomes and actions resulting from any informal or formal assessment process are documented in line with CWRC Policy and Quality Assurance, and will be escalated as necessary in line with CWRC Safeguarding Policy including onward referral to relevant Primary Care Services.

Record keeping

Thorough record keeping on anything relating to safeguarding is essential. CWRC uses a bespoke Salesforce platform as a client management/CRM platform.

To log a safeguarding concern:

- Go to the woman's record
- Create a new 'Concerns, alerts and safeguarding' record from the related list on the client record.
- Detail the concerns.
- Continue to create new 'Concerns, alerts and safeguarding' records to log any further information or actions relating to the safeguarding issue.
- If this work moves onto being more support focused, record subsequent casework notes using the 'Support' records, but make sure anything relating to a specific cause for concern, or contact with external agency, is recorded under 'Concerns, Alerts and Safeguarding'.

RECOGNISING THE SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT OF CHILDREN

To keep this document succinct, see the Cambridge and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership procedures page for detailed information on [Recognising Abuse and Neglect](#)

In the UK there are four types of abuse and neglect outlined. The impact of domestic abuse was added in 2021.

These generic descriptions are used in the child protection process:

- Physical Abuse;
- Emotional Abuse;
- Sexual Abuse; and
- Neglect
- Domestic Abuse

These definitions arise from the Children Act 1989. Since the Act was passed, there has been a great increase in the evidence base around abuse and neglect of children. There are now more useful descriptions of abuse and neglect that CWRC can use to recognise, respond and report possible abuse and neglect of children.

Trustees, staff and volunteers should use [the NSPCC](#) resources for more information regarding the following forms of harmful and abusive behaviour towards children:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying and Cyber bullying • Child criminal exploitation and gangs • Child Sexual Exploitation • Child Trafficking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Abuse • Emotional Abuse • Female Genital Mutilation • Grooming • Neglect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-recent (<i>historical abuse – may be relevant to adult reporting their childhood</i>) • Online abuse • Physical Abuse. • Sexual Abuse.
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PREVENTING AND PROMOTING: CHILDREN’S ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITIES

A child may be vulnerable to different types of abuse or neglect depending on their developmental stage or needs. Where our staff or volunteers listen to or support women with their experience of parenting, we are mindful of many possible vulnerabilities.

These include:

- The unborn child may be at risk *in utero* from substance and alcohol misuse or domestic abuse.
- A baby/ infant, especially one that is non-mobile, is vulnerable to many forms of abuse as they are completely dependent on adults, however a non-mobile baby is extremely vulnerable to physical abuse including being physically shaken by an adult.
- Children who are not yet in school or nursery are often not visible to services that might be protective for them.
- Disabled children are more vulnerable and more likely to be abused and neglect due to factors such as not being able to communicate or be understood or not seen.
- Older children, as well as the possible forms of abuse and neglect describe above may also be vulnerable to poor social, emotional or mental health leading to self-harm; or be persistently absent from school and thus isolated and not seen.

CWRC is very aware of, and works to mitigate the harm from, the current 'cost of living' and housing crises, and the ongoing effects of poverty, and poor housing, which is leading to many women and their children being cold, hungry and tired.

RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS REGARDING CHILDREN OR ADULTS.

The nature of the CWRC offer means that our staff and volunteers will be likely to hear women's stories and experiences of abuse or neglect. They may hear information that suggests that a child could be at risk. Our staff and volunteers are trained to respond to any information in the following ways.

- *Keep calm; listen carefully.*
- *Reassure the child/young person/adult at risk, they are not to blame.*
- *Consider who else can hear the conversation – is it safe to continue?*
- *Do not ask leading questions (which prompt a yes or no answer)*
- *promise confidentiality regarding information where a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk.*
- *Avoid criticising a perpetrator.*
- *Where it is appropriate, clarify information.*

If the staff member feels comfortable and able to hold the conversation around a possible concern, a useful approach is the T.E.D. approach – using very open questions:

- **T**ell me what happened?
- **E**xplain to me what happened next?
- **D**escribe to me anything else that happened?

Staff are encouraged to check out the information with the woman if the concern is regarding an adult: *can I help you with this? Is there more you would like me to do? Can I share this with the safeguarding lead?*

If the information is about a child and safeguarding, the staff member or volunteer should inform the person making the disclosure that they need to share this with the CWRC Safeguarding Lead .

REPORTING AND REFERRING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

CWRC acts to prevent harm and seeks help early for women who may be at risk. We work alongside women to enable them to access the right help and support. We will be proactive in ensuring women and their children, or other family members, get the help they need.

Sometimes we will need to make a referral to share concerns. All referrals are made to the [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board](#).

When making a referral it is important to include:

- as much **practical detail** as possible
- **your details** and your role with the woman or the family
- **Sources of information** – visits; reports from neighbours etc; separating fact from opinion
- Any **history or useful background** info – e.g. did the family move recently etc?
- **Be specific about the risk or concern you have**, describe the facts as much as possible.
- Try to answer these : ***what you are worried about? What do you think might happen? What is going well? What do you think needs to happen?***
- Offer a **clear rationale (your analysis)** for making your referral.

SHARING INFORMATION

NB: It is good practice to ask for consent to refer, or to inform someone that you are referring, and this should always be considered if the referral is about the woman who may be at risk.

However, consent is not the [lawful basis](#) for sharing the information with relevant parties, and you do not need consent to share safeguarding information with the relevant bodies:

Information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding – this is recognised and facilitated by the legislation.

- *UK Data Protection Act 2018*: See the ICO's [10 step guide to sharing information to safeguard children](#) for more information.
- *Children Act (1989, S.47) & Children Act (2004, S.16H)*: 'must also comply with requests for information where they are made by safeguarding partners to investigate concerns about a child's safety or welfare'.

To make a referral for a child, you can call 0345 045 5203 or follow [this link to make adult or children online referrals](#)

If anyone, child or adult, is in immediate danger, phone 999.

GETTING HELP REGARDING DOMESTIC ABUSE

The [Cambridgeshire Domestic Abuse and Violence partnership](#) offers advice and signposting to support for domestic abuse. Most relevant for women who may use CWRC is the [Domestic Abuse Support Service](#) (DASS). This is a commissioned service for victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

Women, staff or volunteers can access the DASS via phoning: 0300 373 1073, emailing DASSreferrals@impakt.org.uk or visiting their [website](#).

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

CWRC makes a clear distinction between a workplace allegation regarding a particular individual, a general complaint about the quality of care or practice, or a safeguarding concern (which specifically relates to children, young persons or adult with support and care needs).

An allegation is the term to describe a situation that a member of staff, volunteer or trustee has:

- *behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or adult at risk.*
- *possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or adult at risk; or*
- *behaved towards a child or adult at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to vulnerable groups.*

CWRC adheres to the local policy regarding [Managing Allegations against People in a Position of Trust \(PIPOT\)](#) and the Safeguarding Lead is responsible for this. If the Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the allegation the Chair of Trustees will handle the situation.

WHISTLE-BLOWING AT CWRC

All staff and volunteers at CWRC receive training in how to whistle blow externally if they have concerns that CWRC is not addressing safeguarding issues appropriately. This could be in relation to an issue in the past, present, or something the whistle-blower is concerned may happen in the near future.

Although it is good practice to raise the matter with the CEO or a trustee this might not be possible and the person may feel unable to raise the matter internally. Therefore, any member of staff or volunteer can raise their concern with the Charity Commission in the following way:

- they can email at: whistleblowing@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk

- call the confidential advice line service run by the independent charity Protect, which enables potential whistle-blowers to access support and guidance from the experts and encourages individuals to report wrongdoing in charities to the relevant authorities. Protect's specialist freephone number is 0800 055 7214.
- Individuals who want to make a disclosure can contact the Charity Commission at whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk. A follow up phone call from the Commission ensures that they will be listened to.

SERIOUS INCIDENTS AND REPORTING TO THE CHARITY COMMISSION

There is a duty to report serious incidents to the Charity Commission. These are incidents which are likely to have a material adverse impact upon a charity's beneficiaries, assets or reputation. "*Suspensions, allegations and incidents of abuse or mistreatment of vulnerable beneficiaries*" connected with the activities of a charity are treated as high-risk issues which should always be reported. They may have an element of safeguarding concern.

The Charity Commission has guidance on what constitutes a serious incident and how charities should go about reporting such an incident: [Reporting Serious Incidents – guidance for trustees](#).

CWRC's Safeguarding Lead Trustee will work closely with the CEO to ensure that there is a methodical approach to reporting Serious Incidents relating to safeguarding to the Charity Commission