**SARSVL Child Protection Policy**

Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. For the purposes of this document that is defined as:

* protecting children from maltreatment
* preventing impairment of children's health or development
* ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
* taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Child Protection is part ofsafeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. There is a list of useful definitions to be found at **Appendix 4** to this document.

**Introduction**

1. SARSVL is a feminist organisation that exists to provide free and confidential support to women and girls whose lives have been affected by rape and sexual violence, to promote their needs, and to work towards the elimination of sexual violence.
2. SARSVL achieves these aims by providing a service which offers confidential listening, support, information, advocacy, counselling and signposting, within a women-only safe space.
3. SARSVL is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from neglect, harm, abuse and exploitation. SARSVL acknowledges its duty to act appropriately when responding to reports or suspicions that cause concern for the protection, welfare or safety of a child or young person.
4. This policy has been informed by the ‘[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018’](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2) document.
5. Whilst there is no single piece of legislation that covers ‘child protection’ or ‘safeguarding’ in the UK there are a number of laws that are continually being amended, updated or revoked. The Children Act 1989 provides a comprehensive framework for the care and protection of children. It centres on the welfare of children up to their 18th birthday. It defines parental responsibility and encourages partnership working with parents. Interagency co-operation is encouraged. The Children Act 2004 supplemented the 1989 Act and reinforced the message that all organisations working with children have a duty in helping safeguard and promote the welfare of children. As such SARSVL recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people within the legal frameworks of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and other legislation, regulations and guidelines relating to the protection, welfare and safety of children and young people.
6. The SARSVL Child Protection Policy and Procedures sets out the duties, obligations, responsibilities and actions that SARSVL will adhere to when responding to allegations, reports or suspicions that cause concern for the protection, welfare or safety of a child or young person.
7. The SARSVL Child Protection Policy and Procedures have been designed to ensure the protection, welfare and safety of the children and young people who access SARSVL’s services or otherwise come to SARSVL’s attention.
8. The SARSVL Child Protection Policy and Procedures applies and will be made available to employees, volunteers, directors/trustees and other such persons who work with or for SARSVL on a temporary or permanent basis and whose role requires that they share responsibility with SARSVL for the protection, welfare and safety of children and young people.

**Duties and Obligations**

1. In implementing this Child Protection Policy, SARSVL will ensure that:
   1. the legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from neglect, harm, abuse or exploitation is understood;
   2. the responsibility to work to the standards detailed within the Child Protection Policy and Procedures is understood;
   3. at all times high standards of practice in relation to children and young people are adhered to;
   4. information is provided on the duty to report concerns about children or young people or concerns about the conduct of another person in relation to children or young people;
   5. Safeguarding Lead(s) (see **Appendix 1**) exist to whom concerns about a child or young person can be reported;
   6. Safeguarding Lead(s) understand their responsibilities to refer concerns about a child or young person to statutory agencies, including the Police and/or Children and Young People’s Social Work Services;
   7. internal procedures relating to reports or suspicions of improper, inappropriate, abusive or illegal behaviour or conduct are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner;
   8. opportunities are provided for the development of skills and knowledge in relation to the protection, welfare and safety of children and young people, including through training;
   9. children and young people are provided with the opportunity to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues, in a variety of ways (for example, in sessions directly with workers and in writing), and these are recorded in our monitoring systems;
   10. children and young people have access to SARSVL’s Complaints Policy and Procedure and this Child Protection Policy and Procedures; and
   11. knowledge of national developments relating to the protection, welfare and safety of children and young people is kept up to date.
   12. SARSVL will seek to recruit a Safeguarding/Child Protection expert to the SARSVL Board of Trustees to assist with a – k above.

**Recruitment and Checks**

1. To attempt to minimise the risk posed by SARSVL to children and young people, employees and volunteers who directly provide services and directors/trustees will not be appointed without:
   1. the satisfactory completion of an application form;
   2. two satisfactory references, completed by persons unrelated to the applicant;
   3. a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring certificate; and
   4. the completion of any relevant procedure, process or check required by the Independent Safeguarding Authority or other such body with responsibility for the protection, welfare and safety of children and young people.
2. SARSVL will ensure that procedures, processes and checks are carried out at regular intervals in line with any guidance, regulation or protocol that may be in place.
3. Where other persons may have access to children or young people through their work with or for SARSVL on a temporary or permanent basis and where their role requires that they share responsibility for the protection, welfare or safety of children and young people, SARSVL may deem it appropriate that the checks as described above apply to such a person before any appointment can be made.
4. An employee, volunteer, director/trustee or other person working with or for SARSVL and to whom the Child Protection Policy and Procedures applies must immediately notify the person responsible for their management, supervision or delegation of responsibility if:
   1. under investigation for or suspicion of improper, inappropriate, abusive or illegal behaviour or conduct in relation to a child, young person or adult at risk; or
   2. arrested or cautioned for, charged with or convicted of an offence relating to the neglect, abuse, harm or exploitation of a child, young person or adult at risk.

A failure to immediately notify the relevant person may result in immediate dismissal from the relevant person’s position as employee, volunteer, director/trustee or opportunity to work with or for SARSVL. This applies to both contracts of employment and commercial contracts.

1. Where possible and where legally permitted to do so, SARSVL will aim to recruit women to employee, volunteer, director/trustee positions and other opportunities to work with or for SARSVL.

**Management, supervision and training**

1. SARSVL is committed to the appropriate management, supervision and training of employees, volunteers, directors/trustees and others who work with or for SARSVL.
2. To ensure the protection, welfare and safety of children and young people, all employees, volunteers, directors/trustees and others who work with or for SARSVL, will be appropriately managed and supervised and will have clear lines of accountability in place in relation to SARSVL’s work with and responsibilities towards children and young people.
3. Where an employee, volunteer, director/trustee or other person who works with or for SARSVL has responsibility for the protection, welfare and safety of children and young people, these matters will be discussed as part of formal and informal management and supervision processes and/or through peer support and debriefing.
4. SARSVL will ensure that there is access to training and/or information on child protection for all employees, volunteers, directors/trustees or other people who work with or for SARSVL and have responsibility for the protection, welfare and safety of children and young people.
5. Trustees / directors will ensure all employees of SARSVL are competent to carry out their responsibilities for protecting and promoting the welfare of children including but not restricted to, frontline staff working directly with children or indirectly via adults that use their services.
6. Training and/or information on child protection should have the aim of increasing awareness of the signs and indicators of child neglect, abuse, harm and exploitation and of external safeguarding processes and procedures. SARSVL will ensure that training and/or information is provided on internal processes and procedures relating to the protection, welfare and safety of children and young people.
7. The Safeguarding Lead(s) should complete additional training on the processes and procedures of recording and reporting the neglect, abuse, harm and exploitation of children and young people. The Safeguarding Lead(s) should also keep up to date with procedural and legislative changes relating to the protection, welfare and safety of children and young people by taking part in regular training and information exchange from local Safeguarding Board(s) linked to statutory bodies.
8. SARSVL will set out risks in relation to child protection and how they will be managed, in a risk register, which will be regularly updated.
9. This policy will be reviewed at least every two years or sooner if there are developments or changes internally or externally which affect the policy or procedures involved in the protection, safety or welfare of adults at risk and in need of safeguarding. Amendments to this policy are subject to the approval of and ratification by the Board of Directors/Trustees.

(end)

**SARSVL Child Protection Procedures**

**Introduction**

Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. For the purposes of this document that is defined as:

* protecting children from maltreatment
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* ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
* taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Child Protection is part ofsafeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. There is a list of useful definitions to be found at **Appendix 4** to this document.

**Recognising and identifying the neglect, abuse, harm and exploitation of a child or young person**

1. SARSVL will come into contact with individuals in a variety of ways, including through its advocacy service, telephone, text and email helpline services and counselling service, as well as at training sessions, presentations, conferences and other events. SARSVL may become aware that a child or young person is being neglected, abused, harmed or exploited in a number of different ways.

The following list is not intended to be exhaustive but outlines the ways in which SARSVL is most likely to learn that a child or young person is being neglected, abused, harmed or exploited:

* 1. a child or young person informs SARSVL that they have been neglected, abused, harmed or exploited;
  2. a child or young person informs SARSVL that they are at risk of or are concerned about being neglected, abused, harmed or exploited;
  3. a person tells SARSVL that they have neglected, abused, harmed or exploited a child or young person;
  4. a person tells SARSVL that they will or are likely to neglect, abuse, harm or exploit a child or young person;
  5. a person tells SARSVL that someone else has or is suspected to have neglected, abused, harmed or exploited a child or young person;
  6. a person tells SARSVL that someone else is or is suspected of neglecting, abusing, harming or exploiting a child or young person;
  7. a person tells SARSVL that they suspect that someone else will or is likely to neglect, abuse, harm or exploit a child or young person;
  8. a person tells SARSVL that they suspect a child or young person is being neglected, abused, harmed or exploited due to the presence of signs and indicators but they do not know the perpetrator of neglect, abuse, harm or exploitation is; or
  9. concerns are raised either internally or by an external person about the inappropriate, improper, abusive or illegal behaviour of an employee, volunteer, director/trustee or other person working with or for SARSVL towards a child or young person.

See **Appendix 4** for useful definitions of harm.

**Responding to reports and suspicions of the neglect, abuse, harm and exploitation of a child or young person**

1. Where a report or suspicion of the neglect, abuse, harm or exploitation is received, whether from a child or young person who is being or is at risk of being neglected, abused, harmed or exploited or from any other person, the following procedure applies:
   1. carefully listen to/read the information that is being given;
   2. take the person and the report or suspicion seriously;
   3. explain that SARSVL has a duty to ensure the protection, safety and welfare of children and young people and they will be discussing the concern with an organisation safeguarding lead;
   4. explain that information relating to the neglect, abuse, harm or exploitation of a child or young person must be shared with other agencies such as the Police and/or Children and Young People’s Social Work Services;
   5. explain that the provision of a name, address, date of birth or other identifying information relating a child or young person is likely to result in the child or young person being identified by agencies such as the Police and/or Children and Young People’s Social Work Services;
   6. follow the procedures at **Appendix 2** ‘Safeguarding Concern Flow Chart’, and see **Appendix 1** for a list of SARSVL Safeguarding Leads and their roles.

There may be circumstances where it is inappropriate to seek consent in respect of sharing information. This may include but not necessarily be restricted to a scenario where a staff member / volunteer / trustee, has a legitimate concern that the welfare or wellbeing of the child would be compromised were consent to be sought. In these circumstances 4 a. and 4 b. also apply.

When information is shared without consent, SARSVL will keep a record of what has been shared in line with GDPR.

**Managing reports or suspicions concerning SARSVL**

1. As explained above, SARSVL may learn that a child or young person is being neglected, abused, harmed or exploited in a number of different ways. If a report is received that an employee, volunteer, director/trustee or other person working with or for SARSVL is responsible for or is suspected of the neglect, abuse, harm or exploitation of a child or young person, the procedure at **Appendix 2** applies. However, there are the following additional procedures:
   1. where relevant and possible, ensure all children and young people are safe and away from the employee, volunteer, director/trustee or other person working with or for SARSVL about whom the report or suspicion has been received;
   2. ensure that the Safeguarding Lead is notified immediately and do not attempt to make contact with or inform an employee, volunteer, director/trustee or other person working with or for SARSVL that a concern has been raised in which they are implicated;
   3. where the report or suspicion is about the Safeguarding Lead do not attempt to make contact with or inform the named person and ensure that another Safeguarding Lead is informed immediately;
   4. where the report or suspicion is about the Safeguarding Lead or where it is not possible to contact a Safeguarding Lead who has not been implicated in the report or suspicion, ensure that another senior staff member or, director/trustee working for SARSVL is notified immediately; and
   5. when deciding who to give notification of a report or suspicion to other than the Safeguarding Lead, take into account which woman may be best placed to deal with such a report or suspicion, including factors such as her role, experience and knowledge of child protection and safeguarding procedures and her independence and impartiality from the report or suspicion.
2. The Safeguarding Lead or other woman will take immediate action following notification that a report or suspicion of the neglect, abuse, harm or exploitation of a child or young person has been received and in which an employee, volunteer, director/trustee or other person working with or for SARSVL has been implicated. The action taken will be done in accordance with **Appendix 2**. In addition, the following procedures apply:
   1. advice on how to manage the report or suspicion internally should immediately be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer in Children and Young People’s Social Work Services within 1 working day and/or the Emergency Duty Team or the Police;
   2. actively participate in and co-operate with any external investigation deemed necessary by the Police and/or Children’s Social Work Services;
   3. invoke the relevant internal investigation and disciplinary procedures; and
   4. consider whether support is required by other employees, volunteers, directors/trustees or others working with or for SARSVL who have not been implicated in the report or suspicion.
   5. Inform trustees who have not been implicated

**Recording, managing and sharing information**

1. In order to properly and consistently record details of reports or suspicions that a child or young person is being neglected, abused, harmed or exploited, SARSVL will use a designated form. See **Appendix 3** ‘Safeguarding Cause for Concern Form’.
2. SARSVL is committed to managing confidential information safely in accordance with its policies and procedures on confidentiality and data protection.
3. SARSVL will ensure confidentiality of information as far as possible and in accordance with its confidentiality policies and procedures. This means that information relating to the neglect, abuse, harm or exploitation of a child or young person will only be shared with employees, volunteers, directors/trustees and others working with or for SARSVL where appropriate and necessary and information will only be shared with external agencies in accordance with the duties and obligations as set out in SARSVL’s Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

**Young People who tell is they intend to take their own life**

1. If a young person under the age of 18 tells us that she has harmed herself, or intends to take her own life, SARSVL will follow the processes set down in SARSVL’s Young Person’s Suicide and Self-harm Guidance. See **Appendix 5**.

**Fundraising**

1. SARSVL will never knowingly approach under 18s with fundraising materials.

**Child Protection Reports**

1. The Safeguarding Leads will make a bi-annual report to the Board on Adult Safeguarding and Child Protection which will include how many referrals have been made.

**Review**

1. These procedures will be reviewed at least every two years or sooner if there are developments or changes internally or externally which affect the policy or procedures involved in the protection, safety or welfare of adults at risk and in need of safeguarding. Amendments to this policy are subject to the approval of and ratification by the Board of Directors/Trustees.

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(end)