

Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy

The Sheila McKechnie Foundation acknowledges their duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults and children and is committed to ensuring high standards of safeguarding across SMK's practice. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and this policy applies to all SMK staff, contractors, and volunteers.

SMK works frequently with partners. SMK expects that partner organisations demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding principles and all associated legislation, and both parties understand their duties and responsibilities regarding safeguarding. To support this, SMK will make this policy available to all partners.

In the normal course of SMK's operations, SMK does not interact with any under 18s, therefore has not put in place any specific procedures for the safeguarding of children.

Principles

SMK places the welfare and interests of all people as the highest priority in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, that everyone:

- Has a positive and enjoyable experience of campaigning with SMK
- Are protected from abuse whilst participating in campaigns training and campaign activity

In order to achieve this, SMK is committed to creating a culture of zero-tolerance of harm to adults which necessitates:

- Creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment, and an open, listening culture where people feel able to share their concerns without fear of retribution
- Ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities with regards to safeguarding
- Providing appropriate training to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns
- Ensuring that appropriate action is taken promptly in the event of incidents or concerns of abuse, and providing adequate support to the individuals involved
- Ensuring that confidential, detailed and accurate records are maintained and securely stored in line with SMK's Data Protection Policy
- Using safe recruitment practices to prevent the employment of unsuitable individuals and sharing information about anyone found to be a risk with the appropriate bodies
- Regularly review safeguarding arrangements and procedures to ensure they are robust
- Co-operating fully with the Police and the relevant Local Authorities in taking action to safeguard an adult

Central to SMK's safeguarding procedures is the principle that adults have the agency to make decisions about their own lives – known as a Person Centred Safeguarding Approach. This recognises that adults may make choices that mean one part of their wellbeing suffers at the expense of another, for example, caring for a partner with dementia even though they become abusive when disorientated. Adults, including vulnerable adults, will be actively supported to communicate their views and the outcomes they want to achieve. Those views and wishes will be respected and supported unless there are overriding reasons not to – such as those outlined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (England and Wales), Adults with Incapacity Act 2000 (Scotland).

Definitions

Adult at Risk

An adult at risk is defined differently in Scotland and England. As SMK is registered in both regions, this policy takes both definitions into account.

England (Care Act 2014): An adult at risk is an individual aged 18 years and over who:

- 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 or neglect, AND;
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Scotland (Adult Support and Protection Act 2007): An adult at risk is an individual aged 16 years and over who:

- Is unable to safeguarding their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests,
- Is at risk of harm, and
- Because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, is more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

This is not a static definition. A person's health, well-being, ability or disability and need for care and support change can change over time. These factors can also create barriers to raising concerns and seeking help.

Abuse

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It can occur in any relationship and in any context, and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. Often the perpetrator is known to the victim and are often in a position of trust and power. It can be the result of deliberate intent, negligence, omission or ignorance.

There is a wide variety of categories of abuse, including but not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse or exploitation
- Psychological, emotional or mental abuse
- Neglect and other acts of omission

- Self-neglect
- Financial abuse or exploitation, scams
- Domestic abuse
- Human trafficking or Modern Slavery
- Discrimination

Safeguarding Procedure

SMK takes all allegations of abuse seriously and will respond with appropriate measures. All allegations will be treated with confidence, but SMK cannot commit to keeping all information confidential.

Training

In order to develop SMK's culture of maintaining a safe and positive environment, all new staff are required to read this policy during onboarding and meet with the Safeguarding Lead to clarify any queries.

Staff can also complete this [free online training](#).

Prevention

SMK seeks to provide a safe and positive environment for everyone involved in SMK's work. In order to promote transparency and safety, staff are advised to:

- Include safeguarding in all risk assessments and planning of events
- Have calendar events as viewable by all staff
- Meet with external contacts in public places, and inform other staff of their location
- Consider carefully communication with other staff and external contacts on personal devices or through social media

Many of SMK's workshops occur online, and so additional considerations should be taken to ensure safeguarding principles are upheld during virtual delivery. Online sessions should always be hosted through an SMK Zoom account, never through staff's personal accounts.

Staff should consider:

- Who has access to the link or invitation into the online session?
- Should the online session make use of the lobby/waiting room function to control access to the call?
- Can participants send private messages to you or other participants during the call?
- If staff or presenters are sharing their screen, be aware of what windows may inadvertently be open, making sure to have closed any private emails.
- Make sure staff get consent for any recording that is taking place

Reporting

Instances of abuse can be reported either through the grievance process, whistleblowing process or informally. Staff can report safeguarding concerns about themselves, concerns about others, or in response to direct disclosures.

It is most likely that staff members will become alerted to abuse through disclosures.

When receiving a disclosure, try to:

- Take it seriously and listen carefully to what is said
- Stay calm
- Be sensitive
- Keep questions to a minimum, but be sure to get as clear details as possible, such as the name of the individual, the nature of abuse, dates and times of specific incidents
- Reassure them they have done the right thing in revealing the information
- Ask them what they would like to happen next
- Explain that you will have to share the information with SMK's Safeguarding Lead
- Ask for their consent to share the information outside the organisation if needed
- Make arrangements of how to contact them safely

Do not undertake your own investigation of the case or confront the person causing harm.

Responding to Reports

Where there is immediate physical harm or danger or a serious crime is being committed, staff members should call the police or an ambulance immediately.

Reports of concerns of or incidents of abuse should then be reported to SMK's

Safeguarding Lead and / or the Trustee in charge of Safeguarding:

Safeguarding Lead: Katie Roberts

katie.roberts@smk.org.uk

020 3687 3186

07900953106 (out of hours).

Safeguarding Trustee: Sami Gichki

sami.gichki@smk.org.uk

+44 79320 26169

Staff should initially contact the Safeguarding Lead but should contact the Trustee if they are unable to reach the Safeguarding Lead. They will then decide whether further action needs to be taken. This could be:

External:

- Call the Police (Non-Emergency line: 101)
- Call a Doctor (Non-Emergency or Out of Hours GP Support: 111)

Internal:

- Safeguarding allegations could lead to disciplinary action, and may be treated as gross misconduct

- If an investigation into the incident is taking place, the accused individual may be suspended for the period of investigation, as per the disciplinary process.

Duty to Refer

Where abuse is identified, SMK is legally required to refer certain information about the individual to the Disclosure and Barring Service. This would include circumstances where:

- An individual is dismissed because they have or may harm someone
- SMK has suspended an individual but has reason to believe that they have harmed or may harm someone
- SMK has suspended an individual because they have received a caution or conviction for a related criminal offence
- The individual has resigned in a situation where there is suspicion that they have harmed or may harm someone. For example, a resignation before SMK is able to begin disciplinary action.

Safeguarding incidents should also be reported to the Charity Commission (RSI@charitycommission.gov.uk) by the Trustees. The Charity Commission needs to be informed if:

- An individual has been, or alleged to have been, abused or mistreated by SMK staff or someone associated with SMK, such as a Trustee or Associate
- Someone has been, or alleged to have been, abused or mistreated in an SMK environment
- There has been a breach of policy at SMK which has led to individuals being put at risk

SMK will refer to [How to Report a Serious Incident](#) and [Deciding What to Report](#) when referring incidents.

Further Resources

This video provides a helpful explainer of abuse: [Safeguarding - Raising awareness](#)

The Ann Craft Trust has a number of helpful resources on safeguarding adults, including overviews definitions and principles: [Safeguarding Resources & Guides - ACT](#)

NVCO has resources on organisational requirements and best practice: [Safeguarding | NCVO](#)

