

Sovereign Minds

Safeguarding Policy

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1. Monitoring and Reviewing

Sovereign Minds is part of a UK registered charity.

The Sovereign Minds Management Team will undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown above, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

This policy provides all members of Sovereign Minds including staff and volunteers with the guidance they need to ensure they keep all Individuals safe and secure in any of our events/settings. Sovereign Minds is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all in any events we hold and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This policy complies with the statutory and best practice guidance in alignment with current legislation.

All policies and procedure for child protection (safeguarding) must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the local authority in which the establishment is situated, all relevant legislation and the Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidelines from December 2023.

This policy, and any supporting information (where appropriate) is made available to all via our website, to ensure that everyone is clear on how we protect and safeguard adults, children and young people attending any of our events.

The NSPCC helpline number is 0800 800 5000 should a member of staff or volunteer have concerns about child protection concerns within our organisation.

2. Policy

Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children, Young People means;

- Protecting children and young people from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's/ young people's health or development
- Ensuring that all children/young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children/young people achieve their best outcomes.

We all have a duty to act upon any suspicion, concern or disclosure that may suggest a child, young person or a young adult is at risk of significant harm or in need of help.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We all have a responsibility to always understand and implement this policy and related procedures.

All staff will read the safeguarding policy and undergo regular training. Training and renewal training will be updated every two years and/or whenever necessary regulatory change takes place.

Sovereign Minds staff will not be allowed to work with children at a Sovereign Minds event unless they have completed basic awareness training in safeguarding.

A member of Sovereign Minds senior management must check that all staff have completed the necessary training and read the most up to date Sovereign Minds safeguarding policy document before being allowed into contact with children at a Sovereign Minds event.

If applicable Contractors and others on site who might have unsupervised access to children must complete necessary documentation before completing any work they have been hired for.

In recording and managing concerns and allegations regarding the abuse of individuals all staff must use the forms as set out in this policy.

All staff are required to be aware of and alert to the signs of abuse and neglect. All cases of suspected abuse and neglect should be given the highest priority.

3. Sovereign Minds Safeguarding Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Name: Kamaljit Chagger

Phone: +44 7944 799637

Email: kamaljit.chagger@soverignminds.org.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

Name: Harsimrat Bhachu

Phone: +44 7908 619955

Email: Harsimrat.bhachu@soverignminds.org.uk

Sovereign Minds Operations Manager (SOM)

Jaspreet Raino

Email: Jaspreet.raino@soverignminds.org.uk

4. Local Authority Adult Safeguarding Contacts

Local Authority Adults Safeguarding Concerns Contact Details:

Ealing Safeguarding Adults Board,
Social care customer contact centre:

- telephone: [020 8825 8000](tel:02088258000)
- email: sscallcentre@ealing.gov.uk

If you need to contact someone to discuss ESAB, please email: Ealingsab@ealing.gov.uk

5. Local Authority Children Safeguarding Contacts

Local Authority Children's Safeguarding Concerns Contact Details:

Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service (ECIRS)

Children's Social Care, contact ECIRS on 020 8825 8000 (24-hour number)

If a child is in immediate danger, you should call the Police on 999

Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service (ECIRS)

ECIRS acts as a single 'front door' for all enquiries and referrals into Ealing Children's Services from professionals and the public, where there are concerns about the welfare or safety of a child (pre-birth to aged 18 years).

Detailed guidance on understanding and responding to concerns for a child/young person can be found in Ealing's Thresholds of Need Guide. [Thresholds of Need and Assessment Protocols 2019/20 | Ealing Council](#)

6. Steps to consider before making a referral to ECIRS

1. If you are a professional and are unsure about whether to refer and need some advice, you can contact the ECIRS Consultation Line on 020 8825 5236. The line is open Monday to Friday 9am -5pm.

The Consultation Line aims to provide general guidance and advice to professionals regarding the appropriateness of a "what if" situation, but it is not there to be used to discuss or make a specific referral.

If it is considered that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, you will be advised to make an immediate referral to ECIRS.

2. Obtain the consent of parent/s to making a referral unless seeking consent would:

- Put the child at further risk of harm
- Compromise a criminal investigation
- Cause undue delay in taking action to protect the child.

3. Consider whether there are services within your own agency or other professionals involved with the child and family that may be able to help. If the child you are concerned about has an allocated social worker, you should contact the social worker directly in the first instance -if they are unavailable, please contact the duty worker in the Social Worker's team to avoid delay.

4. Where you consider a multi-agency or targeted approach is needed, the Early Help Assessment and Plan ([EHAP](#)) process may be appropriate. Contact Ealing Family Information Service for more information. 020 8825 5588 www.ealing.gov.uk/EHAP

5. Where it is clear a referral to Children's Social Care is needed, contact ECIRS on 020 8825 8000 (24-hour number)

6. If a child is in immediate danger, you should call the Police on 999.

Referrals

Professionals/practitioners and the public can make a referral to ECIRS on 020 8825 8000 (Mon - Fri 9am – 5pm). Out of hours the Emergency Duty Team are contactable on the same number.

Telephone referrals from professionals/practitioners should be followed up by a written referral within 48 hours using the ECIRS Referral Form. Guidance on completing a referral is also available.

Once you have made a written referral you will receive an immediate automated acknowledgement email from ECIRS. If you do not receive this call ECIRS on 020 8855 8000 without delay.

What happens after ECIRS get the referral

ECIRS will screen the referral information. This will be done according to [Ealing's Thresholds of Need & Assessment Protocols 2019/20](#). The Thresholds document helps professionals/practitioners to assess the level of risk to a child or young person and determine the response needed.

If there are concerns that a child has been harmed or is at risk of significant harm, ECIRS will take appropriate action to safeguard the child or young person.

Managers in ECIRS will decide if a referral should be discussed at the MASH. (See below) Where the referral concerns a request for support for a child, young person and family, ECIRS will consider whether the child or young person may be a 'child in need' under s17 Children Act 1989. This may require further assessment by another Children's Services team. In some cases, ECIRS may signpost the referrer to universal services accessible to all. Further information on these can be found on [Ealing's Family Services Directory](#)

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The MASH sits within Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service (ECIRS). It is a partnership of professionals from the three statutory children's safeguarding agencies (Children's Social Care/Police/Health) and other agencies/services that work together to consider safeguarding referrals where the level of risk and need is unclear or complex.

The MASH helps protect vulnerable children through effective information sharing - done in accordance with Data Protection Legislation and Guidance and within the London-wide Multi-Agency Safeguarding Data Sharing Agreement. (See link to the right)

Feedback to Referrers

ECIRS will inform referrers of the outcome of their referral by email once screening has been finalised and a decision has been made.

7. Disclosure of Abuse

Immediate Actions to be taken.

Where a child, young person or young adult discloses abuse or neglect:

- Listen to what they have to say and take them seriously. Reassure them but do not promise to keep it a secret. Children, young people will be informed that if they want to preserve confidentiality, they can also turn to Child Line 0800 1111. If the child/young person/young adult needs medical attention, seek assistance immediately.
- Record in detail the circumstances and timings of the disclosure including the nature and extent of any injuries, explanations given by the young person and any actions taken (which may be used in any subsequent court proceedings) within 24 hours or as soon as possible thereafter of the disclosure. Ensure all details are recorded using an Incident Form.

Do not

- Investigate the incident
- Ask leading questions
- Get the young person to repeat the disclosure over and over
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations
- Approach/inform the alleged abuser

The next step is to notify the DSL within one hour or as soon as is possible. If the DSL is unavailable, then the Deputy DSL should be informed. All staff know that they can contact the Local Authority directly should that be necessary. Any allegation against a staff member must also be reported to the DSL. However, if the allegation is about the DSL/DDSL then the Sovereign Minds Operations Manager must be informed.

Note: where contact is made with the Local Authority in which Sovereign Minds is geographically located, contact will also be made with the individual's own Local Authority and their social worker (where appropriate).

On receipt of the notification, the DSL must record the decisions and actions taken. Action will depend on the nature of the concern, it may include one or more of the following:

- Monitoring the child at a venue being used
- A discussion with parent(s)/ legal guardian(s) – **only if this does not place the child at greater risk of harm**
- Early help intervention from the child's school and/or another agency
- Referral to the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Referral to relevant Children's Social Care service (CSC)
- Report to the police.

The LADO for Ealing is Emmanuel Adofo. Contact details:

asv@ealing.gov.uk

020 8825 8930

The Children's Social Care service for Ealing is:

Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service

Referrals can be made by telephone on 020 8825 8000, email ECIRS@ealing.gov.uk or in writing to:

Perceval House

2nd Floor blue area

14-16 Uxbridge Road, Ealing W5 2HL

Call 999 for the police.

If all external parties (LADO, CSC, police, school, any other agency or individual consulted as required or appropriate) consulted as per the list above confirm that they do not consider the matter to be a safeguarding concern, then the date and time of the contact can be recorded on the Incident Form and it can be marked as a Safeguarding Level 1 – No Further Action.

It is important to allocate a Safeguarding reference on the log even if no further action needs to be taken. This diligent approach will ensure a clear historic record of contact with the all external parties for any matter which is deemed by the DSL to be of concern and has been raised with any external parties or agencies.

In the case of serious harm, and/or the child, young person is in immediate danger the local Police should be informed immediately as well and they can take immediate protective action as necessary.

All information relating to the Safeguarding concerns will remain open until the LADO have confirmed in writing that the concern is closed, and the Sovereign Minds Operations Director has signed to confirm that the investigation is completed in full and can be closed. The Safeguarding will remain open until both elements of sign-off have been completed.

If the DSL feels unsure about what the child, young person has said or what has been said by others they can phone the Local Authority to discuss concerns. To do so would not constitute an abuse referral but may help to clarify the situation but they must record all details of any conversation and advice received on a concern form. He/she can then move to a formal referral or actively monitor the situation.

The LADO will oversee any subsequent investigation of any suspicion or allegation of abuse directed against anyone working within the establishment. The establishment will not investigate allegations without first taking instruction from the LADO. If as the result of an investigation there has been a substantiated allegation against a member of staff, we will work with the LADO to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to our safeguarding policy, procedures, and practice to prevent similar events in the future. We will co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by the Local Authority and/or the Police. Records are kept of all conversations as part of the investigation process and made available as required.

The priority, at all stages throughout this process, is the interests and safety of the Individual. We will try to discuss any concerns about their welfare with their family / carers and where possible seek their agreement to making a referral to the Local Authority. However, where there is a conflict of interests between the child/young person and parent/guardian, the interests of the child/young person must take priority and Sovereign Minds reserves the right to contact child/young person local authority, Social Care or the Police, without notifying parents/carers if this is in their best interests

If urgent medical attention is needed and there is a suspicion of abuse the DSL should take the Individual to the Accident and Emergency Unit at the nearest hospital. There must always be a responsible adult with the individual whether from the child/young person care home, the Local Authority or the Police, if the parents/carers are not included.

8. Allegation of abuse by one or more young person on another young person

All young people involved, whether perpetrator or victim, are treated as being 'at risk'. The procedures for dealing with such abuse, where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a young person is suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm', We will refer young person-on-young person abuse to an external safeguarding agency where there is a risk of significant harm. The DSL will report to the local Authority as above.

9. Allegations against staff

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed.

We must act on every allegation. However, staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress.

All allegations against staff should be reported to the DSL. Allegations against the DSL or DDSL should be reported to the Sovereign Minds Operations Manager .

10. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

If staff have a concern regarding FGM then normal local safeguarding procedures will be activated. In addition, mandatory reporting to the police will occur in line with FGM Act 2003 as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act, 2015

11. Peer on Peer abuse

We will minimise the risk of allegations against other young people by: -

- Providing appropriate information to give them an understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe
- Having systems in place for any young person to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, believed, and valued

All Individuals will be provided with safeguarding information in a format which is appropriate for their understanding and communication. This may take the form of posters or a leaflet/booklet and/or communication displayed on Sovereign Minds website

12. Missing young people

Every precaution is taken using thorough planning and supervision to ensure that children, young people are safe at the Sovereign Minds event. A responsible adult should attend the Sovereign Minds event and stay with them at all times during the event to mitigate the possibility of going missing.

13. Vulnerable Children and Young people

Vigilance is exercised in respect of young people who are the subject of a Child/Young Person Protection Plan and any incidents or concerns involving these young people will be reported immediately to the allocated Social Worker and/or responsible adult attending the Sovereign Minds event with the Child/Young Person.

14. First Aid

Except in cases of emergency first aid will only be administered by qualified First Aiders. If it is necessary for the Individual to remove clothing for first aid treatment, there will always be another adult present. All first aid and nonroutine changing or personal care will be recorded and, where significant, will be shared with parents/guardians/carers.

15. Prevent

All staff are fully aware of their duty in assessing the risk of our children, young people being drawn into terrorism including support for terrorism ideology fundamental to which are extremist ideas. We need to be vigilant in ensuring the safety from extremist and terrorist material when accessing the internet. We consider Ealing Local Authority Safeguarding Children's Board arrangements to fulfil its Prevent duties. Sovereign Minds supports our

children/young people in making positive choices about their lives and endorses the Channel early intervention scheme for those who could be at risk of radicalisation.

16. Abuse of Position of Trust

All staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards those that attend a Sovereign Minds event is unacceptable. In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the staff and a young person under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that young person is over the age of consent.

17. Volunteers

Volunteers undergo checks commensurate with their activities at a Sovereign Minds event and contact with children, young people, i.e. if they are in regulated activity or not. Sovereign Minds Management will ensure that the correct checks have been undertaken for the relevant volunteer before they are allowed to undertake any activities related to Sovereign Minds.

18. Photography and images

To protect our children/young people we will:

- Obtain their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- seek parental consent – where appropriate
- not use their full name with an image where appropriate
- store images appropriately, securely and for no longer than necessary.
- only use professional equipment, i.e. not personal devices.
- encourage our children, young people to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

19. Accountability

Harveer Bhachu is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at Sovereign Minds, and has lead responsibility for protecting and safeguarding children, young people and liaising with the local authority and other local agencies as appropriate. This includes young person protections, referrals, raising awareness, training, allocating resources and supporting/directing staff within the Home. In all matters relating to young person protection and safeguarding Sovereign Minds Staff and volunteers will follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

The content and effective implementation of policy and procedures are subject to routine monitoring by the Sovereign Minds Management, who will undertake a full annual review of the content and effective application of this policy and associated procedures. The date for the next scheduled review is set out on page 1. The policy will be reviewed earlier in

accordance with changes in legislation, regulatory requirements or as a result of best practice guidance.

All staff - are responsible for identifying and responding to allegations of abuse. Staff at senior level need to share a common view of what types of behaviour may be abuse or neglect and what should be an initial response to suspicion or allegation of abuse or neglect.

If the Lead or Deputy safeguarding Lead are on leave or away from the Location and not contactable alternative arrangements will be put in place and the Sovereign Minds Operations Manager will take over any necessary duties where required.

20. Requirements to inform Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS)

We will report promptly to the DBS (but no longer than one month after leaving the Location), any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer required because he/she is considered unsuitable to work with children and young people. This includes making a referral where an employee has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed) had he/she not resigned beforehand.

21. Recording and information sharing

It is vital that safeguarding information is managed confidentially and is only shared with those who need to know and in order to keep someone safe from harm. In addition, safeguarding information should be shared safely and securely.

If you are required to share safeguarding information in your setting, you need to ensure you are following the guidance below:

- Necessary – is the information necessary in keeping the child, children or adult/s at risk safe?
- Proportionate – how much information needs to be shared? It may not be appropriate to share all information. Assess the risk and use this information to make decisions about what information needs to be shared to ensure children and/or adults are safeguarded.
- Relevant – only include information that is relevant to the situation and required to make decisions or to take action to keep children and/or adults safe. Only share information with relevant people on a need-to-know basis. Ask yourself, does the person need this information in order to keep the child/adult safe? If the answer is no, then they don't need the information.
- Accurate – include factual information where possible. If any opinions are stated, these should be evidence based. Include times and dates of information and accurate information about the individuals concerned.

- Timely – if information sharing is required, share information at the earliest opportunity. However, don't rush into sharing information without the appropriate decision-making processes.
- Secure – how is information shared, stored and for how long?

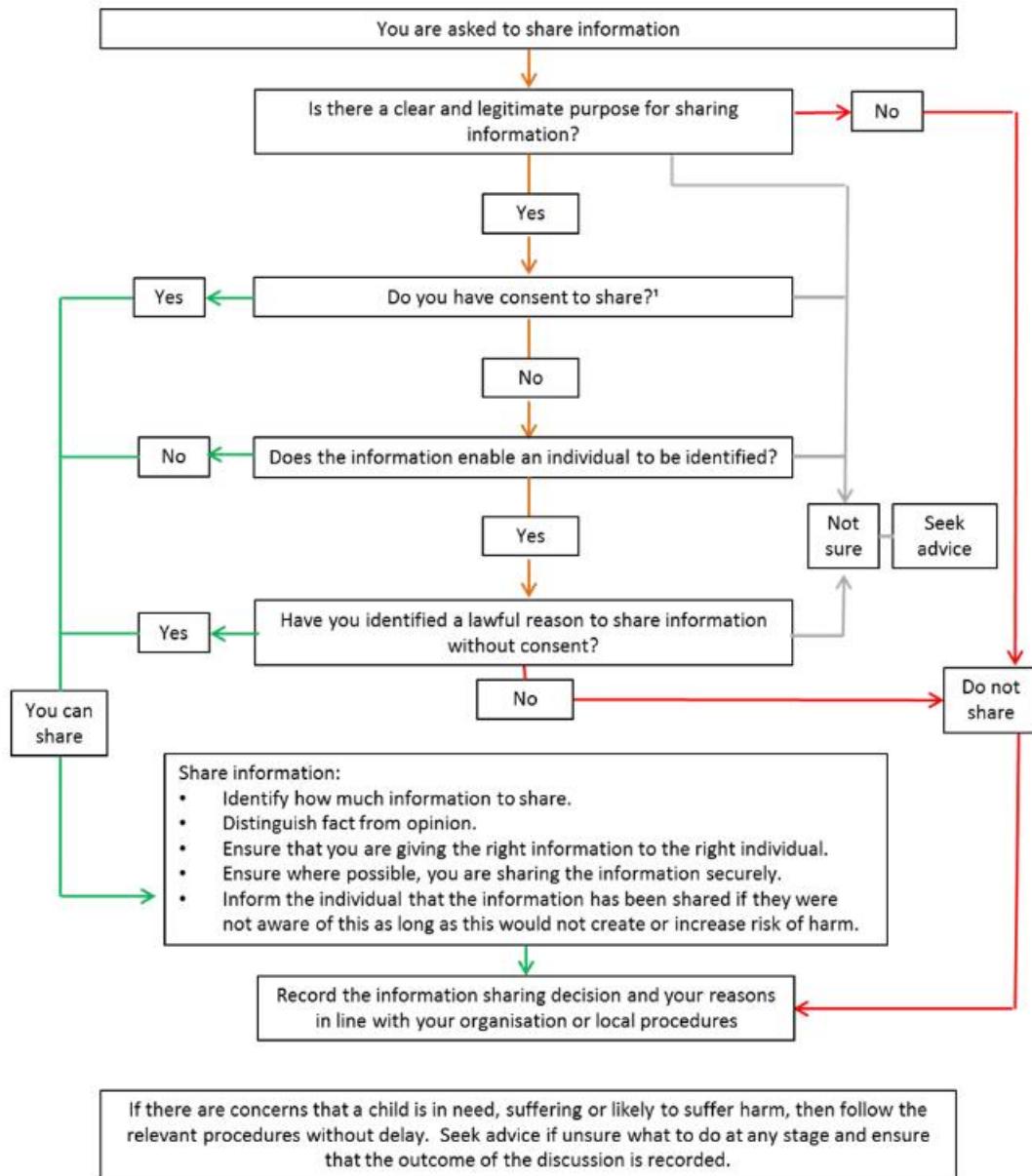
Good Practice Top Tips

Remember that the Data Protection Act and UK GDPR legislation are not a barrier to sharing information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe - the legislation provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.

The Data Protection legislation does place greater significance on organisations being transparent and accountable in relation to their use of data and therefore you should consider the following to ensure you are acting in accordance with best practice:

- Be open and honest – where appropriate it is important to keep all relevant parties informed of information sharing plans, processes and boundaries.
- Seek advice - from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information
- concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
- Share with consent where appropriate – seek consent from the individual before sharing their information where possible. However, consent may not be appropriate if informing the individual would place a child/adult or others at risk and under the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, which includes where safety may be at risk. If the concern is about a child, then parents must be informed at the soonest possible time, as long as informing the parents does not put the child at risk or further risk of harm.
- Consider safety and well-being – include considerations of support needs for all involved, including for those about whom information is being shared, any risks of sharing the information and how these would be managed.
- Keep a record – recording is important at every stage – including recording how and why decisions were made about information sharing. All records should be signed and dated.

Below is a flowchart to help you make informed decisions on when and how to share information.



If there are concerns that a child is in need, suffering or likely to suffer harm, then follow the relevant procedures without delay. Seek advice if unsure what to do at any stage and ensure that the outcome of the discussion is recorded.

**Consent must be unambiguous, freely given and can be withdrawn at any point.*

22. Record-keeping

According to Data Protection principles, records containing personal information should be:

- adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purpose(s) for which they are held
- accurate and up to date
- only kept for as long as is necessary (Information Commissioner's Office, 2019).

The introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018 does not change the way safeguarding records should be stored and retained.

Sovereign Minds must:

- know the reason why it's keeping records about children and/or adults (for example, because they relate to safeguarding concerns)
- assess how long it needs to keep the records for
- have a plan for how and when the records will be destroyed
- keep personal information secure.

Sovereign Minds will:

- compile and label files carefully
- keep files containing sensitive or confidential data secure and allow access on a 'need to know' basis
- keep a log so you can see who has accessed the confidential files, when, and the titles of the files they have used.

If Sovereign Minds is creating records about the young people and/or adults who take part in its activities, it will make sure they understand what records we hold, why we need to hold them and who we might share their information with.

If Sovereign Minds is keeping records for safeguarding reasons, we don't necessarily need to get consent from the adults and/or children concerned.

Storage of safeguarding records

Whether Sovereign Minds' safeguarding records are recorded electronically or paper-based, they will be kept confidential and stored securely.

Electronic files will be password protected and stored on computers with protection against hackers and viruses.

- Information about safeguarding concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate safeguarding file for each child. The safeguarding file will be started as soon as you become aware of any concerns.
- Safeguarding files will be kept separate from other records.
- If Sovereign Minds needs to share records, these will be kept confidential. There will be use of passwords and encryption when sharing electronic files.

- If volunteers use their personal computers to make and store records, there will be clear agreement to ensure the records are being stored securely.

Retention periods: safeguarding records

Safeguarding records should be kept until the child is 25 (this is seven years after they reach the school leaving age) (Information and Records Management Society (IRMS), 2016).

There may be exceptions in some cases, when records can be kept for longer periods of time. For example, if:

- the records provide information about a child's personal history, which they might want to access at a later date
- the records have been maintained for the purposes of research
- the information in the records is relevant to legal action that has been started but not finished
- the records have been archived for historical purposes (for example if the records are relevant to legal proceedings involving Sovereign Minds).

Where there are legal proceedings, Sovereign Minds will seek legal advice about how long to retain its records.

Some records are subject to statutory requirements and have a specific retention period. This includes records relating to:

- children who have been 'looked after' by the local authority
- adopted children
- registered foster carers
- residential children's homes.

When records are being kept for longer than the recommended period, files must be clearly marked with the reasons for the extension period.

- Record keeping is an important element of safeguarding. Whenever a complaint or allegation of abuse is made, staff must keep clear and accurate records using a Concern Form.
- Records should be, factual, accurate, concise, ethical, and relevant.
- All recording of written information should be legible and discussions with other professionals and agencies should be recorded chronologically.
- There will be a safeguarding section/folder for each child/young person which will hold any concerns/safeguarding documentation for that individual.
- Where records are held as a paper version this is to be kept in a secure location (i.e. locked cabinet). If kept electronically, access is to be restricted to the DSL and deputies only. In either case this should be kept in a secure location.

23. Training

All staff/volunteers will receive information regarding Safeguarding. As part of their induction all staff are required to read this policy and confirm that they understand their role in safeguarding and protecting young people when a Sovereign Minds event takes place.

All staff will complete mandatory training regarding safeguarding. The DSL will ensure all staff receive annual face to face safeguarding workshops. This can be undertaken in such forums as staff meetings etc. and recorded on file. In addition to this safeguarding workshop are provided both by internal trainers and by external companies as required.

24. Confidentiality

Information relating to individual Safeguarding cases is confidential, although some information can be shared with relevant staff this should be done only on a 'need to know' basis.

In certain circumstances it will be necessary to exchange or disclose personal information with other agencies. This must be done in accordance with relevant legislation e.g. Data Protection/Confidentiality and all relevant legislation including the Data Protection Act 1998.

When sharing safeguarding information regarding an individual, staff will consider the following:

- Information should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis when it is in the best interests of the individual.
- Informed consent should be obtained but, if this is not possible and other people are at risk of abuse or neglect, it may be necessary to override the requirement.
- Distinguish fact from opinion.
- Ensure you are giving the right information about the right person.
- Ensure you are sharing information securely

Inform the person that the information has been shared if they were not already aware of this and if it would not create or increase risk of harm to them/others.

The following wording is to be added to any covering letter where we are sharing documentation

"The material contained in this letter and its enclosures are confidential to Sovereign Minds and the persons named within the documentation. The documentation is delivered only in accordance with a perceived legal obligation to make the documentation available and upon the strict understanding that the recipient and all members of the recipient's staff will undertake to preserve confidentiality and not in any way share the documentation or any details of the information therein contained with any other party. Any person receiving this information who breaches these obligations of confidentiality will be held strictly responsible and will be expected to indemnify Sovereign Minds and any persons named

within the documentation against any losses that may arise as a result of misuse of this material”.

25. Complaints and Monitoring

All complaints arising from the operation of this policy will be considered under the complaints procedure, with reference to our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) .

26. Staff & Volunteer (both ‘Staff’) Code Of Conduct

Staff must always ensure that they conduct themselves in a professional manner towards learners, colleagues and others.

Staff are expected at all times to:

- Carry out their duties with integrity, care, and diligence.
- Treat others with courtesy and respect.
- Complete and remain up to date with all mandatory training.
- Not to use inappropriate or offensive language or behaviour such as of an aggressive or sexual nature.
- Promote and protect the good reputation of Sovereign Minds
- Be punctual to and make best use of working time.
- Comply with reasonable requirements or instructions given by Sovereign Minds management.
- Preserve the confidentiality of all Sovereign Minds information attained by them in the course of their work and avoid dealing with the media on any Sovereign Minds issue unless specifically authorised.
- Familiarise themselves with and adhere to Sovereign Minds policies and procedures.
- Comply with the Safeguarding and Prevent policies and procedures and remember:
 - Staff should demonstrate exemplary behaviour and be open and transparent when working with students in order to protect students from abuse and to protect themselves from false allegations.
 - Any incidents or behaviour which give rise to concern should be discussed immediately with the DSL.
 - Any allegations or suspicions that a student is being abused should be reported immediately to the DSL.
 - Not to leave students unattended in a learning situation.
 - All colleagues should know the name of the Designated Safeguarding Leads at Sovereign Minds. They are outlined in this policy.

Relationships between Staff and Students

Staff should ensure that their relationship with students is appropriate to the student group. Care must be taken to ensure that attitudes, demeanour, language or conduct could not be construed as inappropriate. Although it is recognised that some students will need more help/support it is important that staff do not favour any particular student, as favouritism might be construed as being part of a ‘grooming process’ which is an offence.

Staff must not give gifts/rewards to students unless the gift/reward is part of an open competition where all learners have been involved and have been made aware of the arrangements.

Anyone who feels that their relationship with a particular student is developing into one that would be deemed inappropriate should discuss the matter with the DSL immediately.

Students under the age of 18

Personal relationships, of any duration, with students under the age of 18 are strictly forbidden. Any such relationships will be dealt with under the Sovereign Minds Disciplinary policy and any relevant external agencies will be informed as required.

Students over the age of 18

Close personal relationships between staff and students, of any duration, are discouraged by Sovereign Minds in recognition of difficulties that could arise. Staff should not enter into a personal relationship, of any duration, with an individual whilst undertaking their role for Sovereign Minds. If relationships, of any duration, already exist or develop outside of Sovereign Minds with a student of 18 years or more the following procedure should be followed:

- It is the responsibility of the member of staff to inform the DSL if they are in a close personal relationship with a student. This applies to all members of staff regardless of whether they have a direct teaching relationship with the student. This arrangement applies to relationships that existed prior to employment or enrolment and to relationships that started away from Sovereign Minds premises either prior or during employment or enrolment.
- A member of staff who is in a pre-existing close personal relationship with a student over the age of 18 should ensure that their personal relationship is conducted entirely off Sovereign Minds premises.
- In the event that other members of staff need to know about this relationship, information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and handled sensitively.
- The member of staff concerned will be informed.

If a learner declares a relationship with a member of staff, Sovereign Minds will follow the same procedures.

Relationships with Learners who are Vulnerable Adults

Close personal relationships with learners who are vulnerable adults are prohibited. Any member of staff who enters into such a relationship may be subject to disciplinary procedures; this may constitute gross misconduct and an investigation into safeguarding under the relevant policies and procedures will be carried out.

Social Contact

Social contact with students, other than that which has been organised by Sovereign Minds should be positively avoided. It is recognised that there may be occasions when social contact may be unavoidable and in such circumstances staff should, at all times, be mindful that their relationship with the student is appropriate and professional.

Staff must not give their personal details to students e.g., home/mobile numbers, home email addresses or personal social media accounts.

Sovereign Minds encourages the positive use of social media as part of the educational process. Social media is used by many people, particularly students to communicate with their peers and the public. Students may wish to form personal relationships with staff, however, to ensure professional boundaries are maintained; staff must not accept and/or invite the following individuals to be “friends” on personal social media accounts or other online services:

- Students, including vulnerable students who are adults or children. • Ex-students under the age of 18, and
- Parents/Carers.

Physical Contact / Intervention

As a general principle, staff should not have unnecessary physical contact with students. There may be rare occasions when a student needs comfort or reassurance which may include physical comforting. In such circumstances it is necessary for staff to make sure that any comforting gestures are deemed as acceptable to the student. Staff need to be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the student. Physical intervention can be defined as “the reasonable application of the minimum necessary force to overpower a student with the intention of preventing them from harming themselves or others, or from causing serious damage to property.”

Staff should only use physical intervention where absolutely necessary. It should be used primarily for the benefit of the person/s and, though immediate, should be a considered response. In such circumstance staff should use the minimum force necessary. Where staff have been involved in incidents of physical intervention a written record of the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported.

Some members of staff, for example, those who teach on Sports Studies courses, will on occasion have to initiate physical contact with students in order to support the student in safely completing a task or to demonstrate the use of equipment. This should be done for the minimum amount of time required and with the student’s agreement.

One to One Situations

It is recognised that there will be occasions when staff are required to work in one-to-one situations with students. In such circumstances staff may be more vulnerable to allegations. To safeguard against any allegations staff should:

- Consider the needs and circumstances of the student involved.
- Avoid meeting students in remote/secluded areas of Sovereign Minds premises.
- Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one-to-one situations.
- Ahead of the meeting taking place inform colleagues and assess whether it is appropriate to have a colleague either present or close by.
- If a student becomes distressed or angry, report it to a senior colleague.
- Staff are not permitted to meet with students away from the Sovereign Minds sites.

Transporting Students

Staff should not transport students in their own private vehicles and other transport should be arranged e.g., Sovereign Minds minibus or taxi. In the case of an extreme emergency and where no other options are immediately available then an exception may be made, and a second member of staff should accompany on the journey.

In the exceptional circumstance where staff are required to transport students, they must only do so if they have previously confirmed adequate personal car insurance.

Confidentiality

Staff often have access to confidential information of a highly sensitive nature about staff, third parties, students and /or their families. Such confidential information should only be discussed or shared on a need-to-know basis and where the individual's identity does not need to be disclosed such information should be used anonymously.

Where a member of staff suspects that a student is being abused, they have a duty to pass such information on to the designated safeguarding officer without delay. If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, they should seek guidance from a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

Dress and Appearance

Staff are expected to demonstrate good standards of personal hygiene and appearance. All staff are expected to present a professional image and to present one that reflects sensitivity to customer perceptions.

Clothing should not be provocative or cause offence to those with whom they have contact. Clothing which resembles beach wear is not acceptable; neither are clothes that display inappropriate slogans or images, reveal underwear or inappropriate bare flesh, or are dirty, holed or fraying.

Should you be unsure as to whether your clothing is appropriate for the situation in which you work, please discuss this with your line manager who will be able to discuss and provide advice and guidance.

Misuse of alcohol and drugs

You cannot be at any Sovereign Minds events or on any Sovereign Minds premises when under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Smoking is not permitted during any Sovereign Minds events, even during breaks, or on any Sovereign Minds premises.

Conduct outside work

Unlawful, anti-social or other conduct by employees which may be deemed to be inappropriate for the member of staff's position or may jeopardise Sovereign Minds' reputation or position may be managed through disciplinary procedures and staff are required to report any warning, caution, or conviction against them for a criminal offence to a manager.

Staff are required to notify the DSL if they are currently subject to any criminal investigations or pending prosecutions by the police and/or subject to any fitness to practise investigations or proceedings by a regulatory, governing or licensing body in any country.

27. Safer Recruitment Policy

Safer recruitment practice means giving due consideration to safeguarding arrangements at every step of the recruitment process.

Information for Candidates

The job should include the following:

- Sovereign Minds' statement of commitment to Safeguarding, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Reference to the requirement for the successful applicant to undertake additional compliance requirements, such as a criminal record check where applicable
- Specific details of the job: contract length, reporting manager and job purpose etc
- Overall objectives of the role in the wider Foundation landscape
- Role specific responsibilities
- Knowledge, Skills, Attributes, and Person Specifications
- Application details, including closing date and interview date

Application Form

The use of an application form is considered best practice, and mandatory for roles which fall within regulated activity. The application form will capture a common set of core data which may include as appropriate:

- Identifying details of the application including current and former names, current address and National Insurance number
- A statement of any academic and/or vocational qualifications with details of awarding body and date of award
- A full history in chronological (from earliest to latest) order since leaving secondary education, including any periods of any post-secondary education/training and part-time and voluntary work as well as full-time employment, with start dates, explanations for periods not in employment or education/training and reasons for leaving employment
- Details of referees (this cannot be family members, including spouses or friends of less than 10 years)
- A statement of the skills and abilities and competencies/experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post and how they meet the person specification
- An explanation if the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Requested candidate information about any previous – including, where appropriate, spent – convictions, cautions, reprimands, warnings or bind-overs.

- Warner safeguarding questions

Shortlisting

The same selection panel should both shortlist and interview the candidate. At least one member of the panel should have undertaken safer recruitment and selection training.

All application forms should be scrutinised to ensure where appropriate:

- The information is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies
- Gaps in employment/training or a history of repeated changes of employment are identified, so that these can be explored further at interview
- There will be a specific question at interview to raise any concerns highlighted from the checks above will be questioned in the interview

References

We will seek to obtain satisfactory references for candidates where appropriate for the role.

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.

We **cannot** accept references provided by family members. If you are unable to provide suitable references you must speak with the recruitment team who will liaise with the safeguarding team.

Where an applicant is not currently working with children or adults at risk, but has done so in the past, it is important that a reference is also obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children in addition to the current or most recent employer.

A copy of the job description and person specification should be included with all reference requests.

On receipt of the reference, the information within should be scrutinised to ensure that it aligns with the information given by the candidate.

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

Due to the child-centric nature of the charity, all staff will be asked to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service Check. The check level of this will be dependent on the person's role.

If you have not lived permanently in the United Kingdom for more than 5 years, you will be required to obtain an overseas police check from the relevant countries.

Criminal Record

Applicants will be asked about any previous convictions, cautions, reprimands, including those that are considered 'spent' as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amended 2013).

Sovereign Minds must make a judgement about suitability, considering only those offences which may be relevant to the post in question. In deciding the relevance, the following should be considered:

- The nature of the appointment
- The nature of the offence
- The age at which the offence took place
- The frequency of the offence

Anyone who is barred from work with children or adult at risk is committing an offence if they apply for, offer to do, accept or do any work constituting Regulated Activity (see the DBS information [here](#).)

Where an internal staff member applies for and is successful in obtaining a role which requires a differing Disclosure and Barring Service check, this check will be undertaken in line with the role requirements.

28. Whistleblowing

Sovereign Minds prides itself on having an open and honest culture, and is committed to the highest possible standards of probity and accountability. We recognise that, from time to time, situations will arise where staff become aware of poor practice that can affect the well-being of the users of our services, our staff and the long-term reputation of the organisation. In line with that commitment, we encourage anyone with serious concerns about any aspects of the organisation's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

Confidentiality will be maintained as far as is legally possible.

No one who raises a genuine concern about poor practice will be put at risk of losing their job, or suffering any form of retribution as a result of doing so. Harassment or victimisation of Whistleblowers will not be tolerated.

Staff are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within the organisation, and they should be encouraged to speak up and not feel that it would be disloyal.

This policy is intended to make it clear that concerns can be raised without fear of reprisals. It is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the school, irrespective of seniority, rank or status, rather than overlooking a problem or reporting the matter externally.

The Whistle Blowing Policy is not a substitute for the organisation's other policies. There are separate complaints policies/procedures for service users/pupils, and their relatives.

Eligibility

All people who work at the organisation, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, are covered in this policy.

Legal Framework

The Public Interest Disclosure Act, commonly called the “Whistleblowers Act”, came into force on 2 July 1999. The Act encourages people to raise concerns about malpractice in the workplace by providing protection for workers who disclose information that might otherwise be regarded as confidential and was strengthened by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.

The Act provides protection from dismissal, or action short of dismissal, and makes void any term in a contract of employment which would prevent the employee from making a protected disclosure (so called “gagging clauses”), providing that the disclosure is a “qualifying disclosure” and it is made in the public interest and is a genuinely held belief that the information is true.

A qualifying disclosure is defined as “any disclosure of information” which, “in the reasonable belief” of the worker making the disclosure, tends to show:

- a criminal offence has been, is being, or is about to be committed;
- the employer is failing to comply with his legal obligations;
- a miscarriage of justice has happened or is likely to happen;
- an individual’s health and safety is being jeopardised;
- the environment is being, or is likely to be damaged;
- information falling into any of the above categories has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

The belief does not need to be correct and the whistle blower does not need to provide evidence; an investigation may subsequently find that they were wrong, however the staff member only needs to show that they held the belief and that it was a reasonable belief in the circumstances at the time of disclosure.

The ‘public’ in the public interest can be a subset of the wider population and so can be interpreted as all of the people employed by an employer.

The disclosure is protected if it is made to the correct authority. This will be either internally to their manager at the school (or another person who they reasonably believe to be solely or mainly responsible for the relevant failure) or externally to a ‘prescribed person’. These are certain statutory bodies - or people within them - who have the authority to receive disclosures relevant to the role of that particular body. A list of these bodies can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2>

Raising a Whistleblowing Concern

Staff will report any suspicions covered by this policy to the DSL, except where the disclosure may involve them, in which case the DDSL should be informed. They should be

prepared to explain the reasons for their suspicion, but they do not have to be able to prove them. The intention of these procedures is that wherever possible any staff concerns should be raised locally at least in the first instance.

The person receiving the concern should reassure the staff member that the matter will be treated in confidence, and initiate an investigation. The investigation will be escalated up the management structure to an appropriate level.

Should the investigation uncover a criminal offence then the police will be involved as soon as this is known. If the concern is about a safeguarding matter the safeguarding policy should be referred to and the section detailing allegations against staff/volunteers should be followed. If the investigation shows that misconduct is likely to have occurred, then the matter will be dealt with appropriately.

Should it be found that any staff member has raised a spurious or malicious concern through this procedure, or that a staff member 'goes public' with a claim when it was unreasonable to do so, and they were pursuing a personal grudge against the school then their actions will be regarded as misconduct which will be dealt with through the appropriate channels.

If requested, within 5 working days of a concern being received, the person raising the concern will be written to by the person in the organisation who received it. The letter will acknowledge that the concern has been received and provide information on who is dealing with the matter and who to contact if there are any questions. If feedback is requested by someone who wishes to remain anonymous then they will need to put in place a mechanism to do this; e.g. an anonymised email address or a pre-arranged telephone call.

So that the staff member who raised the concern can be sure that the matter has been properly addressed, they will be given feedback on how their concern has been handled and the outcome of any investigation. However, the organisation may not be able to fully disclose full details owing to confidentiality in relation to other people involved or owing to legal constraints. This situation would be explained to the staff member.

Whistleblowing to an external source without first going through the internal procedure is inadvisable without compelling reasons. If the matter is taken outside of the organisation individuals should be mindful of breaches to data protection law.

Independent advice

If at any stage in the procedure, staff members are unsure about what to do and would like independent advice, they may like to discuss their concerns with someone at Public Concerns at Work (PCaW). PCaW is an independent charity staffed by lawyers that offer confidential free legal and practical advice on how people can raise concerns about malpractice at work. They can also give advice on whom else staff members may contact and about what legal protection may be available. PCaW's legal helpline can be contacted on 020 7404 6609 or by emailing helpline@pcaw.co.uk . Their website is; <http://www.pcaw.co.uk>

Professional associations, trade unions and the Citizens Advice Bureau can also offer advice concerning raising concerns.

The NSPCC operate a whistleblowing helpline for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicatedhelplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

Government advice about Whistleblowing can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing/what-is-a-whistleblower>

Protection and Support for Whistleblowers

Any person who blows the whistle is protected from harassment or bullying by the organisation or anyone on behalf of the organisation (this includes co-workers or contractors). Anyone in the organisation (or their representative) who subjects a whistle blower to 'detriment' will be subjected to the disciplinary process.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the staff member's identity is kept confidential if they so wish. However, it must be appreciated that an investigation process may reveal the source of the information. The organisation may need the Whistleblower to give evidence at disciplinary or criminal proceedings. If it becomes necessary to reveal the staff member's identity in order to pursue the investigation, this will be discussed with them at the earliest stage. In such circumstances it may affect the organisation's ability to continue the investigation if s/he does not agree to be identified.

If an allegation is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the Whistleblower. If, however, it is found that she/he has made maliciously false allegations, disciplinary action will be taken against her/him.

The organisation hopes that all staff members will feel able to put their name to the allegation, as concerns expressed anonymously are more difficult to investigate. If staff members raise a concern anonymously, their identity may be deduced. If, contrary to this policy they then suffer reprisals, it may be difficult to show that this was the result of raising a concern.

29. Further guidance / information

Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. For example NSPCC offers information on its website www.nspcc.org.uk/preventingabuse/. Our home/school/college can also access broad government guidance on the issues listed here via the GOV.UK website: young person sexual exploitation (CSE); bullying including cyber bullying; domestic violence; drugs; fabricated or induced illness; faith abuse; female genital mutilation (FGM); forced marriage; gangs and youth violence; gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG);

mental health; private fostering; radicalisation; sexting; teenage relationship abuse; trafficking.

END.

30. Appendix 1

Self-Declaration Form for Working with Children and Adults at Risk

CONFIDENTIAL

Full Name:	
Any surname previously known by:	
Address:	Postcode:
Telephone number(s):	
Date of Birth:	
Part 1	
To be completed by the individual named above	
Name of organisation where you will be carrying out your role:	
Have you ever been known to any Children or Adult Services department or Police as being a risk or potential risk to children or adults?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(if Yes, please provide information below)</i>
Have you been the subject of any disciplinary investigation and/or sanction by any organisation due to concerns about your behaviour towards children or adults?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(if Yes, please provide information below)</i>
Do you have any unspent criminal cautions or convictions?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(if Yes, please provide information below)</i>
Please provide any relevant information:	
Part 2	
Confirmation of Declaration (tick box below)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I confirm that I have read and understand the Sovereign Minds Safeguarding Policy. I am also committed to the Safeguarding policies of Sovereign Minds and I accept my responsibility to care for those whom I come into contact with. I can confirm that there is no reason why I should not have unsupervised access to children, young people or adults whilst working or volunteering in this role.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I agree to undertake and provide evidence of satisfactory completion of any safeguarding training that is required of me in order to undertake my role.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I agree that the information provided here may be processed in connection with recruitment purposes and I understand that an offer of employment/ voluntary role may be withdrawn or disciplinary action may be taken if information is not disclosed by me and subsequently comes to the attention of HWICT or Sovereign Minds

<input type="checkbox"/>	In accordance with HWICT and/or the club/organisation's procedures, if required, I agree to provide or undertake a valid Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate and consent to HWICT/Sovereign Minds clarifying any information provided on the disclosure with the agencies providing it.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I agree to inform HWICT/Sovereign Minds Designated Safeguarding Lead within 24 hours if I am subsequently investigated by any agency or organisation in relation to concerns about my behaviour towards children, young people or adults.

31. Appendix 2

Safeguarding Incident or Concern Form

This form is designed to report any safeguarding incidents or concerns. It should be completed by the worker who has been disclosed to, who witnessed the incident, was most directly involved or who provided first aid if relevant. Once completed it must be submitted as per the organisation's reporting protocols.

REFERENCE NUMBER

Name & role of person completing this form:

Programme name:

Date form is completed:

Details of child, young person or adult at risk:

Name:	Address:
Contact number:	Gender:
Date of birth:	Any further information that may be useful to consider:

Parents/carers details:

Name:	Address:
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Contact number:	Email address:
Have parents/carers been notified of the incident?: Yes / No	If yes, please provide details:

Details of reportee:

Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else?	Reporting my own concerns <input type="checkbox"/>
	Responding to someone else's concerns <input type="checkbox"/>

If responding to someone else's concerns, please provide their details below:

Name:
Relationship to child, young person or adult at risk:
Email address:
Contact number:

Incident Details:

Date/ Time:	Group name (if applicable):
Location of incident:	
<p>Description of the incident or concern: (continue on separate sheet if necessary & include reference number):</p> <p><i>(Include relevant information such as what happened and how it happened, description of any injuries sustained, behaviour witnessed and whether the information provided is being recorded as fact, opinion or hearsay)</i></p>	

Details of any previous concerns, incidents or relevant safeguarding records:

Child, young person or adult at risk account of the incident or concern: *(use their own words)*

Witness account of incident or concern: *(include further accounts on separate sheets as necessary. Include reference number on each accompanying account)*

Details of any witnesses:

Name(s): <i>(Consider anonymising where this will not negatively impact the ability to take immediate response actions)</i>	Relationship to child, young person or adult at risk:	Contact details:
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Details of any persons involved in the incident or alleged to have caused the incident, injury or presenting risk:		
Name(s): <i>(Consider anonymising where this will not negatively impact the ability to take immediate response actions)</i>	Relationship to child, young person or adult at risk:	Contact details:

Outcome of incident & immediate actions taken: (tick box where relevant)		
Ambulance required? <input type="checkbox"/> Name of hospital / medical facility attended if applicable:	First aid treatment provided: and by whom	Medication given:
Police/fire/rescue services attended? <input type="checkbox"/> Notes:		
Any resulting change of plans or disruption to the programme, if applicable:	Disciplinary procedures enacted:	Were any immediate changes to risk management procedures made?
Signed By Author:	Name:	Date:

Reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) section: (to be completed by DSL)

Date & time DSL notified of incident/concern:

Date & time this form passed on to DSL (if different from above):

DSL comments: (*actions taken / impact on rest of programme / external agency involvement / initial lessons learned / follow-up actions required*):

<p>External agency referral:</p>			
<p>Social services notified? <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Date & time of referral:</p> <p>Name of contact person:</p> <p>Contact number / email:</p> <p>Agreed action or advice given:</p>	<p>Police Notified? <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Date & time of referral:</p> <p>Name of contact person:</p> <p>Contact number / email:</p> <p>Agreed action or advice given</p>	<p>LADO notified? <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Date & time of referral:</p> <p>Name of contact person:</p> <p>Contact number / email:</p> <p>Agreed action or advice given</p>	<p>Other referral made? <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Agency:</p> <p>Date & time of referral:</p> <p>Name of contact person:</p> <p>Contact number / email:</p> <p>Agreed action or advice given:</p>

Signed By DSL:	Name:	Date:
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For Office Use Only:

Follow-up action required:		
Action:	Due date:	Whom responsible: