



Combined Child, Young Person and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

This policy is to ensure that Common Soil has all the right mechanisms in place to protect and safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Common Soil believes in protecting all individuals' rights to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of Common Soil in working together in promoting children and vulnerable adults' welfare and safeguarding them from abuse and neglect. Employees, management committee members and volunteers should be made aware of how this policy can be accessed.

This policy and related procedures are applicable to the management committee, employees and volunteers of Common Soil. Failure to comply with the policy and related procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

2. Background to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

At Common Soil, we believe that:

- the welfare of children and young people and vulnerable adults is paramount;
- all children, young people and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- staff, management committee and volunteers should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

KEY TERMS AROUND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant

harm. Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

In following these guidelines, Common Soil ensures that it has a Safeguarding policy and procedures consistent with the South West Child Protection Procedures* which is consistent with the Government's procedures outlined within 'Working together to safeguard children 2018' **

At Common Soil, we apply the same principles to safeguarding vulnerable adults as well.

PROCEDURE FOR DBS CHECKS

Only staff, management committee members and volunteers that hold an enhanced DBS certificate will work directly with, or handle sensitive information about, child and vulnerable adult beneficiaries.

3. Recognising the signs of abuse

Children, young people or vulnerable adults may say or do things that let you know something is wrong. It may come in the form of a disclosure, complaint, or an expression of concern. Everyone within the organisation should understand what to do, and where to go to get help, support and advice.

DEFINING ABUSE

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person. Abuse can also include self-neglect. It may be the result of action or inaction by a carer, staff, volunteer or any other person. Abuse might be intentional or unintentional. The important factor is whether the person with care and support needs is harmed or not. Different types of abuse may happen at the same time. It can happen in any setting.

Abuse can take the form of:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child trafficking / Modern slavery - encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
- Criminal exploitation and gangs
- Domestic abuse – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.
- Emotional abuse - including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming

- Neglect – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- Non-recent abuse - *historical abuse does not come under the Care Act 2014. However, action may still need to be taken via liaison with the appropriate agencies such as Children and Young Peoples Services and the police.*
- Online abuse
- Physical abuse – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions
- Sexual abuse - - including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Other forms of abuse include:

Financial or Material Abuse - including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with Wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Self-neglect – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Discriminatory Abuse - including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational Abuse - including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

As a member of staff or management committee member you are not responsible for diagnosing or for investigating abuse. However, you have a responsibility to be alert to signs that all is not well with a child or young person and to know what to do if you suspect abuse or if abuse is disclosed to you. Not all concerns about children, young people or vulnerable adults relate to abuse, there may be other explanations and it is important to keep an open mind. In all circumstances, the welfare of the child/young/vulnerable person is paramount.

4. Training

It is mandatory for all Common Soil staff who work directly with children or vulnerable adults to receive Level 2 training to support them to recognise, respond to, and report abuse. New staff will be offered this training as part of their induction (unless they can show certificate of completion of equivalent training within the last three years).

Level one training will also be offered to Board members and other volunteers. The Safeguarding Lead will keep a spreadsheet record of who has received training and when. Refresher training is required every three years to keep knowledge current.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will receive more advanced training than other staff members.

5. Dealing with concerns

There are several ways in which concerns about abuse may arise at work:

- A person may choose to tell you about abuse elsewhere in their lives, perhaps at home or at school.
- They may tell you about abuse linked to other children, young people and vulnerable adult beneficiaries at Common Soil.
- You may see or hear something that leads you to suspect that abuse is happening. For all the above situations you, as an individual, need to know how to respond and who to tell.

DISCLOSURE: BY A CHILD, YOUNG PERSON OR ADULT

What to do if someone *tells* you about abuse that they are experiencing:

- Allow them to speak without interruption, accepting what is said.
- Do not push for information or ask leading questions. You can ask open-ended questions to get enough information to pass on, e.g. 'Tell me...', 'Explain to me...', 'Describe...'
- Do not promise confidentiality. Tell the person that you *must* pass on this information.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you about this incident.
- Inform them about what you are going to do next unless this would put them at risk.
- Do not overreact by showing panic; keep calm.
- Do not make false promises – such as, 'It will be OK'.
- Do not gossip about this with all staff. Sharing information is on a 'need to know' basis.

Early sharing of information through reporting is the key to providing an effective response where there are emerging concerns. To ensure effective safeguarding arrangements, no one should assume that someone else will do it.

6. Reporting concerns

Reporting Concerns around Children:

Any Common Soil employee, management committee member or volunteer who becomes aware that a child or young person is at risk of being abused must raise the matter immediately with Common Soil's designated safeguarding lead. Disclosures made by a child

or young person to a member of Common Soil staff or volunteer will also be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead of their school, setting or organisation.

Immediate Risk

- **If a child or adult with care and support needs is at immediate risk you should call 999**
- **For an issue concerning a child, you should also call Children and Families Front Door Service at Gloucestershire County Council on 01452 426565 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm).**

Out of office hours

If the issue cannot safely wait until the next working day, please contact the Emergency Duty Team from the Front Door Service on 01452 614194 and provide as much information as possible.

Concerns needing an immediate response should be called in to prevent any delay. This would include:

- When it is felt a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm
- When a child protection investigation is needed (because of physical, sexual and emotional abuse or chronic neglect)

If the concern does not need an immediate response, it can be reported to the Front Door service during working hours.

Reporting Concerns around Vulnerable Adults:

Any Common Soil employee, management committee member or volunteer who becomes aware that a vulnerable adult is, or is at risk of, being abused must raise the matter immediately with Common Soil's designated safeguarding lead. Disclosures made by a vulnerable adult to a member of Common Soil staff or volunteer will also be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead of their support setting, if there is one.

Immediate Risk

- **If an adult with care and support needs is at immediate risk you should call 999.**
- **Safeguarding concerns about a vulnerable adult in Gloucestershire should also be reported to the Council Adult Help Desk at 01452 426868 or emailed to social-care.enq@gloucestershire.gov.uk**

Reporting an allegation made about a member of Common Soil staff or volunteer:

Any allegation against a Common Soil staff member or volunteer who works with children,

young people or vulnerable adults should be reported immediately to the Common Soil designated safeguarding lead.

This also needs to be reported to the Gloucestershire Local Area Designated Officer (LADO).

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/children-young-people-and-families/lado-allegations/>

Fill in an Allegations Management Referral Form, which can be found by following the link above, if you want advice if the behaviour you are reporting meets the LADO criteria or you are unsure. Sometimes behaviours may concern you and make you wonder whether someone is suitable to work with children i.e. there has been a pattern of inappropriate behaviour that has been addressed via disciplinary procedures but the behaviour continues to occur. Please ensure you give as much detail as possible so we are able to make an informed decision on the way forward. Once the Allegations Management Referral Form has been completed, it needs to be returned to amadmin@gloucestershire.gov.uk where it will be read by a LADO, who will then respond with the appropriate advice and information.

When contacting the Allegations Management please be advised that the admin email inbox is monitored from 9: 30 – 4pm Monday to Friday except during periods of annual leave when review and response times will be delayed.

It is the expectation that all referrers are familiar with Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Procedures guidance in respect of allegations against staff or volunteers. These can be accessed at: <https://gloucestershirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/>

Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018, also gives information about Section 11 of the Children Act 2004, which places duties on a range of organisations and individuals in relation to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children must be taken seriously.

Definitions

- A child is anyone under the age of 18.
- An employee (person) is anyone working with children, be it in an employed (all sectors and settings) or voluntary capacity.
- An employer is anyone working with or providing services to children (all sectors and settings).

An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

- behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

Timescales

- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to an employer's attention or that are made directly to the police.

The role of the LADO

The role of the LADO is to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children. They are not responsible for undertaking investigations. They can provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations.

The LADO does not:

- **undertake any investigation;**
- **have direct communication with the person subject of the allegation;**
- **provide advice and support to the person subject of the allegation;**
- **provide HR advice in respect of suspension or dismissal.**

7. Managing safeguarding allegations made against staff or volunteers

Recording:

After reporting (as detailed above), written records of the information, including the child or adult's own words, time, date, and place of the incident, and persons present, should be stored securely.

Action:

The safety of the alleged victim should be prioritised. Further action regarding the staff member or volunteer will be decided following investigation and may involve suspension from their role.

Investigation:

The allegations will be investigated by the safeguarding lead, with support of the management committee and external agencies that are appropriate to engage. This may include:

- **Police:** If the allegation involves a potential criminal offense, the police should be contacted immediately, especially if a child is in immediate danger.
- **LADO:** The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be contacted within one working day for allegations against staff who work with children or adults at risk.

- **Social Services:** Depending on the nature of the allegation, social services may need to be involved to assess the child or adult's needs for protection or support.

Fairness and Transparency:

Investigations should be conducted fairly and transparently, ensuring all parties are treated with respect.

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality should be maintained throughout the process, sharing information only with those who need to know.

Learning and Improvement:

Once resolved, the organisation will review the incident to identify any lessons learned and improve safeguarding practices.

8. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Common Soil expects all employees, volunteers and management committee members to maintain confidentiality. Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection.

However, information should be shared with the Local Authority if a child or vulnerable adult is deemed to be at risk of harm or **contact the police if they are in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed.**

9. Recording and Record Keeping

A written record must be kept about any concern regarding an adult, child or young person with safeguarding needs. This must include details of the person involved, the nature of the concern and the actions taken, decision made and why they were made.

All records must be signed and dated. All records must be securely and confidentially stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

10. Important Contacts

Designated Lead for Safeguarding at Common Soil

Name: Georgina Anstey

Role: Co-ordinator and Secretary

Email address: hello@commonsoil.co.uk

Telephone number: 07968 950304

Police

Emergency – 999

Non-emergency – 101

National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247

<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>

Gloucestershire County Council reporting of concerns

- For an issue concerning a child - Children and Families Front Door Service on 01452 426565 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm).
- For an issue concerning a vulnerable adult - Adult Help Desk at 01452 426868 or emailed to socialcare.enq@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Gloucestershire LADO – allegation about a Common Soil staff member or volunteer

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/children-young-people-and-families/lado-allegations/>

01452 426994

amadmin@gloucestershire.gov.uk

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