

SSAFA SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND DIRECTION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and associated direction is to set out how SSAFA requires every employee, trustee and volunteer to act to protect children and adults from harm. This extends beyond our clients and includes a responsibility to keep our employees, trustees, volunteers and their families safe from harm. This policy provides the principles that guide our approach to safeguarding children and adults.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all trustees, volunteers, employees, sessional workers, agency staff, students and any other individual working or providing services on behalf of SSAFA. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- a. Recruitment Policy
- b. Managing Allegations against employees
- c. Volunteer complaints policy
- d. Whistleblowing
- e. Local Authority or Command policies and procedures.
- f. Social media (within SSAFA's wider IT Policy)
- g. Supervision of H&SC staff
- h. Health & Safety

3. The legal context

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of UK law that seeks to protect children and adults. In this context, the following elements of statute and best practice are pertinent:

- a. The Children Act 1989.
- b. The Children Act 2004
- c. The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- d. Children and Young Persons Act 2008

- e. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013, 2015, (2018)
- f. Mental Capacity Act 2005
- g. The Care Act 2014

And for those working and volunteering in Scotland:

- h. Scottish Government (2014) National Guidance for child protection in Scotland
- i. Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- j. Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007

The Children Act is the foundation on which the protection of children is based. Of paramount importance throughout is the 'welfare of the child'. In essence this means that the need to protect children comes before everything else and this principle needs to be at the forefront of all of our work. This may at times cause problems and raise questions for employees and volunteers. However, the principle remains that the protection of children from abuse overrides all other considerations (including confidentiality).

The Mental Capacity Act and Care Act provides a clear legal framework for how organisations work in partnership with other public services to protect adults at risk, placing Adult Safeguarding on the same statutory footing as children.

Safeguarding adults means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. As an organisation we must demonstrate the aims of adult Safeguarding:

- a. To prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs.
- b. To safeguard individuals in a way that supports them in making choices and having control in how they choose to live their lives.
- c. To promote an outcomes approach in Safeguarding that works for people resulting in the best experience possible.
- d. To raise public awareness so that employees, volunteers and communities as a whole play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect.

If an individual (employee or volunteer) has reasonable cause to suspect an adult or child in their area is suffering or is at risk of abuse and neglect, and has needs which leave them unable to protect themselves, then they must ensure enquiries are made in order to decide what action (if any) should be taken, and by whom (the "duty to enquire").

4. Types of abuse / specific Safeguarding issues

Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention. Neglect, whatever form it takes, can be just as damaging to a child as physical abuse. There are six main types of child abuse:

- a. Physical
- b. Emotional
- c. Sexual
- d. Neglect
- e. Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- f. Radicalisation (Prevent Duty)

Further information can be found at [nspcc.org.uk](https://www.nspcc.org.uk).

In adult abuse, signs of abuse can often be difficult to detect. Below is a list of possible indicators of adult abuse.

- a. Physical abuse
- b. Domestic violence or abuse
- c. Sexual abuse
- d. Psychological or emotional abuse
- e. Financial or material abuse
- f. Modern slavery
- g. Discriminatory abuse
- h. Organisational or institutional abuse
- i. Neglect or acts of omission
- j. Self-neglect

Further information at [scie.org.uk](https://www.scie.org.uk):

5. Responsibilities across SSAFA

All employees and volunteers coming into contact with children and adults at risk have a responsibility to protect them and to provide a safe environment. However, there are key people within SSAFA, Local Authorities and Commands who have specific responsibilities under safeguarding procedures.

In SSAFA responsibilities are defined as follows:

- a. Trustees: With guidance from SSAFA's Safeguarding/H&SC Trustee, they are to set the strategic direction for safeguarding and ensure that sufficient and appropriate resources are in place to implement our approach across both the employee and volunteer network. They are to monitor compliance with this policy and the outcomes of complaint/incident investigations.
- b. Central office:
 - i. Responsibilities of the Controller, delivered through the Director of Health & Social Care (H&SC (as Safeguarding Lead)): leadership, accountability, policy and direction, governance.
 - ii. Responsibilities of Directors of: Volunteer Operations, Client Services and H&SC: leadership, policy compliance, implementation and accountability across their operational areas.
 - iii. Responsibilities of Directors of: People and Organisational Development and Volunteer operations training, safe recruitment and accreditation (including DBS and PVG checking) of employees and volunteers. Development of appropriate people policies.
 - iv. Responsibilities of Director of Finance: resourcing and quality assurance.
 - v. Responsibilities of Director of Fundraising: where relevant¹, policy compliance, implementation and accountability across their operational area.
 - vi. Responsibilities of Director of Marketing & Communications: where relevant, policy compliance, implementation and accountability across their operational area of responsibility.
- c. Volunteer Operations: Local policy and procedures are to be reviewed and refreshed to ensure the implementation of this SSAFA-wide direction. This includes all volunteers and employees.

¹ An example of this could be when a 'vulnerable' beneficiary is used as part of a fundraising or marketing campaign. Other examples are when donors visit specific 'projects' or where corporate volunteers provide mentoring or other similar support.

- d. Client Services: Local policy and procedures are to be reviewed and refreshed to ensure the implementation of this SSAFA-wide direction throughout all areas of client services.
- e. Health & Social Care: Local policy and procedures are to be reviewed and refreshed to ensure the implementation of this SSAFA-wide direction throughout H&SC including local practitioner and administrator level.

6. How SSAFA will meet its obligations

a. Through training

The designated professional safeguarding leads and trustee lead are to undertake Level 4 safeguarding training at least every two years. All other volunteers and employees are to undertake safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role which is regularly updated and in line with SSAFA's mandatory training requirements. All those requiring an enhanced DBS or a PVG check must undertake Safeguarding Level 1 with regular updates.

In addition, all volunteers and employees are to receive safeguarding training updates as required, but at least every three years², to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children and adults effectively. Records of all safeguarding training will be kept for all trustees, volunteers and employees.

SSAFA is to ensure that the professional designated Safeguarding Lead and the Safeguarding Trustee also undertake training in inter-agency working and competency based safeguarding training as appropriate.

In summary:

- i. Every volunteer/employee/new recruit who comes into contact with children or adults at risk of abuse must attend the appropriate level of safeguarding training for their post in the required time scales. As a minimum this is at Level 1.
- ii. All professional medical and social work staff must be in date to the level of safeguarding training deemed commensurate with their professional role and as detailed in their current job description.
- iii. All line managers with staff working with children and adults must have undertaken Level 2 Safeguarding Training³.

² As part of refresher training for volunteers

³ Branch and division secretaries and community volunteer coordinators should attend L2 safeguarding training. This can be sourced free of charge from most Local Authorities.

- iv. All Directors/Trustees must have undertaken Level 3 safeguarding training if they have a safeguarding element to their area of responsibility. Otherwise they should have at least a basic knowledge (i.e. Level 1).

b. Through checking and reporting

- i. All employees and volunteers who come into contact with children and adults at risk of abuse will have the required level of DBS check (PVG in Scotland) for their job / role and this will be renewed in line with organisational requirements.
- ii. Accountable directors will review (and every six months report to Management Board) compliance with policy (DBS/PVG percentages, numbers in date for training etc) and numbers/nature of safeguarding complaints and incidents, allegations against employees or volunteers. Independent audit will periodically check and confirm this data.
- iii. Where SSAFA refers or 'sign posts' to third-party providers/organisations, SSAFA will first ensure that the third-party organisation has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place. Should no such policies and procedures be in place, then that organisation should not be used. Where there is any doubt, this should be initially discussed with SSAFA's Safeguarding Lead.

c. Through risk management

- i. The management of those employees/volunteers out of date for DBS / PVG checks or safeguarding training: The default policy for SSAFA is that all employees or volunteers who may come into contact with children or adults at risk of abuse are to be in date for both DBS / PVG checks and safeguarding training (at the appropriate level). Where, through no fault of their own, an individual's DBS /PVG check has lapsed or they have not been able to access appropriate training in line with our policy, that individual's line manager may elect to continue to employ the individual in their current role pending checks or training⁴. This decision will be based on the line manager's personal knowledge of the individual, and the line manager will then accept the liability for the individual's safeguarding clearance. However, each instance must always be discussed with SSAFA's Safeguarding Lead prior to any definitive decision being taken.
- ii. The management of those employees/volunteers who fail to engage with DBS / PVG checking or safeguarding training: Where an individual fails to engage with the DBS / PVG checking process (for example by failing to produce necessary documentation), the individual's line manager should suspend that individual from patient/service user/client access/contact until the DBS / PVG process has

⁴ In the case of volunteers the branch chairman should make this decision and the Head of Volunteering informed.

been completed. If the individual continues to fail to engage, then, for employees, disciplinary action should be considered. Volunteers should remain suspended from client contact. The same principles apply should an employee or volunteer fail to access training when made available.

- iii. The management of those employees/volunteers whose DBS / PVG check raises concerns: This is an organisational decision and will be based on the nature of the concern raised by the DBS / PVG check. This will be decided by the SSAFA Vetting Panel - if that panel is content that the DBS / PVG anomaly is not relevant to an individual's safeguarding clearance or wider probity, then that individual may be employed on an 'at risk' basis. Otherwise they should be denied access to patients/service users/clients.
- iv. The management of those employees/volunteers who have a complaint/incident pending which is pertinent to safeguarding: This is a SSAFA Vetting Panel decision and will be based on the nature of the concern raised by the complaint/incident. If the Vetting Panel is content that the complaint or incident is not relevant to an individual's safeguarding clearance or wider probity, then that individual may be employed on an 'at risk' basis. Otherwise they should be denied access to patients/service users/clients.

d. Through the investigation and reporting of complaints and incidents

- i. When a complaint is submitted by a client/patient/service user that expresses or suggests any concern relating to how a case has been managed from a safeguarding perspective, then this is to be immediately escalated, via relevant line management, to the Governance and Quality Team in SSAFA central office.
- ii. Similarly, if there is any evidence or concern that relevant safeguarding policies and procedures have not been followed, at whatever level of the organisation, then this must be raised by employees/volunteers as an incident and submitted, via relevant line management, to the Governance and Quality Team in SSAFA central office.
- iii. Such complaints and incidents will then be reviewed and investigated, as appropriate, by the Governance and Quality Team in SSAFA central office. SSAFA's Safeguarding Lead will be notified and kept apprised of progress. They will in turn update the Controller and other relevant directors⁵.
- iv. The findings of any such investigations will then be shared with the Controller and the relevant director. The Controller will then update Council and, where necessary, partner organisations. Learning points from any such investigation will be cascaded across the organisation, and the original complainant or

⁵ This will include the Director of Marketing and Communications when there is any potential for media interest or where SSAFA's reputation is at risk of being compromised.

employee/volunteer who raised the incident will be kept fully informed of the findings and recommendations.

- v. All such safeguarding complaint or incident investigations will be audited by Subject Matter Experts(SMEs) external to SSAFA.

e. Through the appropriate escalation of safeguarding concerns about clients, patients, service users or third parties

Anyone who delivers any outputs or services for SSAFA needs to have a full understanding of how to escalate any concerns they may have regarding the Safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults. The approach to this is set out below, and varies depending of the individual's role within SSAFA as an organisation:

For volunteers:

- i. When a volunteer has a Safeguarding concern, and unless the volunteer is worried that by so doing they may cause the situation to deteriorate, the volunteer should advise the client that they have a concern and that they will be taking advice from SSAFA Social Work / Governance team colleagues.
- ii. If a volunteer has a concern about a child or adult's immediate safety then they should share this with the police or Local Authority in line with local procedures. They should then notify central office as per iii.
- iii. The volunteer is to call central office using the Volunteer Support Single Point Of Contact (VS SPOC) number to record the concern. The SPOC is available between 0900 – 1700 Monday to Friday. If appropriate, volunteers should inform their line manager of their concern and mentor volunteers should inform their Regional Mentoring Coordinator (RMC). All parties consulted as to the concerns must respect SSAFA's rules on confidentiality and in line with GDPR. Failure to do so will result in direct action against those responsible.
- iv. If a volunteer has a safeguarding concern within a prison establishment , the volunteer must inform a member of the Safer Custody Team immediately. Where a volunteer has a safeguarding concern regarding an offender who is on a community sentence, the offender's Supervisor/Offender Manager/ Responsible Officer must be informed immediately. They should then inform the VS SPOC of their concern and the action taken at the earliest opportunity.
- v. Out of hours, the volunteer should call their Local Authority Out of Hours team to report their concern or the NSPCC Helpline. They should then inform the VS SPOC of their concern and the action taken at the earliest opportunity.

- vi. The VS SPOC team member taking the call will record the concern in the safeguarding audit log and may also seek advice from the SSAFA Social work / Governance team (during working hours).
- vii. The volunteer will be advised on next steps (i.e. no action, or to contact the Local Authority or the NSPCC helpline).
- viii. The volunteer should inform the VS SPOC when the advised action has been taken. The VS SPOC team member will then update the safeguarding audit log.
- ix. Once the safeguarding audit log has been completed, this must be sent to the Director of Volunteer Operations and the Governance team for oversight, no matter at what level the issue is resolved.

For employees working in Client Services:

- i. When an employee working in Client Services has a safeguarding concern, unless they are worried that by so doing they may cause the situation to deteriorate, they should advise the client that they have a concern and that they will be taking advice from their line manager and/or the SSAFA Governance team.
- ii. That concern is recorded on the local service's risk register log.
- iii. The employee is to speak to their line manager and either resolves the issue at that point or escalates to the next level of line management until it reaches the Director of Client Services. In parallel, advice should be sought from the Governance team.
- iv. After discussion with above, the employee will be advised on next steps (i.e. no action, or to contact the Local Authority (in case of adults) or the NSPCC helpline (in case of children)).
- v. Following discussion with their line manager and/or the Governance team, the employee is to update the local risk register log of subsequent actions. I.e. either no further action or referral to NSPCC or Local Authority.
- vi. Once the risk register log has been completed, this must be sent to the Director of Client Services and the Governance team for oversight, no matter at what level the issue is resolved.

SSAFA employees out with Health & Social Care or Client Services:

- i. When an employee has a safeguarding concern, unless they are worried that by so doing they may cause the situation to deteriorate, they should advise the

client that they have a concern and that they will be taking advice from their line manager and/or the SSAFA Governance team.

- ii. The employee is to speak to their line manager and either resolves the issue at that point, or escalates to the next level of line management until it reaches their relevant Director. In parallel, advice should be sought from the central office Governance team who will make a record on Care Director.
- iii. After discussion with above, the employee will be advised on next steps (i.e. no action, or to contact Local Authority (in case of adults) or NSPCC helpline (in case of children)). The outcome of this discussion should be reported back to the central office Governance Team.

For employees working in Health & Social Care:

In accordance with local policy and procedures (agreed with MOD), and depending on the location and local Command arrangements, any safeguarding concerns are to be escalated to either line management and/or local social work colleagues, or to the MOD Police.

f. Through the appropriate escalation of safeguarding concerns relating to the behaviours and actions of SSAFA employees/volunteers

- i. Within the volunteer network or in UK based client services - initially to local line management prior to appropriate escalation and advice from SSAFA Safeguarding SMEs.
- ii. Within H&SC - To follow local policy (to local line management in conjunction with social work colleagues).
- iii. All employees and volunteers are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of employee induction/volunteer training.
- iv. There are processes in place for reporting any concerns about an employee or volunteer. Any concerns about the conduct of an employee or volunteer will be referred to the Professional Designated Safeguarding Lead who has sufficient status and authority in SSAFA to manage employment/volunteer procedures. Such cases will then be managed in conjunction with HR (for employees) or Volunteer Operations (for volunteers) and the branch chairman or region representative where appropriate for volunteers. Employee and volunteer matters are confidential and SSAFA operates within statutory guidance around data protection.

g. Through the implementation of 'Safer Recruitment'

SSAFA employs staff who work directly with children and adults at risk of abuse. As such, SSAFA undertakes its recruitment procedures and practices in accordance with current employment legislation and guidance. This is the responsibility of HR. Compliance with regard to Safer Recruitment guidance will be undertaken by the Director of People and Organisational Development.

Some SSAFA volunteers work directly with children and adults at risk of abuse. As such, SSAFA undertakes its volunteer recruitment procedures and practices in accordance with current legislation and guidance. This is the responsibility of Volunteer Operations. Compliance with regard to Safer Recruitment guidance for volunteers will be undertaken by the Director of Volunteer Operations.

All managers are required to follow SSAFA policy for requesting enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Disclose Scotland PVG checks for relevant employees and volunteers.

The requirement for an enhanced DBS or a PVG check will be considered when any job description is reviewed or produced. The Director of People and Organisational Development will approve the decision as to whether an enhanced DBS or a PVG is required or not for each new appointment.

The requirement for an enhanced DBS or a PVG check will be considered when any volunteer role description is reviewed or produced. The Director of Volunteer Operations will approve the decision as to whether an enhanced DBS or a PVG is required or not for each new volunteer role.

SSAFA's Vetting Panel will be convened to review identified convictions.

SSAFA will engage with the Fit and Proper Test for the employment of Directors.

h. Through information sharing and the maintenance of clear, confidential and contemporaneous records within SSAFA or MOD databases

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children and adult at risk of abuse, particularly in the context of safeguarding. An employee or volunteer must never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern (including parents/carers), or promise to keep a secret. In accordance with policies, where there is a child protection or adult at risk of abuse concern, this must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead in the individual's area of work/volunteering and may require further referral to, and subsequent investigation by, appropriate authorities.

Information on safeguarding cases may be shared by the lead with other relevant employees or volunteers. This will be on a 'need to know' basis only and where it is in the child's or adult's best interests to do so.

Records of discussions should be made, shared and destroyed in line with the Data Protection Act and advice can be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead in this regard.

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child or adult, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or adult at risk of abuse being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children or adults at risk of abuse or neglect. If an employee or volunteer has a concern about a child/adult's immediate safety they should share this with the Local Authority or police in line with local procedures. They should ensure that the following is also undertaken.

- i. All safeguarding concerns about a child or adult at risk of abuse must be fully recorded in writing in the individual's case file, in a separate section marked 'Strictly Confidential'.
- ii. In the case of volunteers, all safeguarding concerns must be escalated to the Volunteer Support Advisor (VSA) through the Single Point of Contact (SPOC).
- iii. The VSA will record the contact and seek advice from the designated Safeguarding Lead, and or the Governance and Quality team members.
- iv. The VSA will complete a designated template which will be managed in accordance with confidentiality, consent and GDPR direction.
- v. All safeguarding concerns about a child or adult at risk of abuse must be fully recorded in writing in the individual's case file, in a separate section marked 'Strictly Confidential'.
- vi. Any entry made on a case record should be signed and dated.
- vii. Case records should only contain information relevant to a particular individual/family. The record should clearly state whether the information recorded is fact, third-party information or professional opinion.

- viii. Those supervising employees and volunteers who are involved in safeguarding children/adults work should make regular and frequent checks to ensure that case recording is up to date.
- ix. The Director Volunteer Operations in partnership with the Governance and Quality team will review all recorded safeguarding concerns in the volunteer network that are escalated through SPOC for accuracy and audit every three months.
- x. Case record recordings should be signed off and dated by the line manager every three months.
- xi. Where possible the case recording should be typed. Handwritten notes are often difficult and time consuming to read and should be the exception.
- xii. All safeguarding information relating to a patient, service user or client must be held securely in one place.
- xiii. All records should conform with the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998) and the General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and the Human Rights Act (1998). Information shared within SSAFA must be “on a need to know” basis.
- xiv. Any file may be accessed by a court of law in care and/or criminal proceedings. Employees and volunteers may be called upon to give evidence in court and the importance of clear, accurate and detailed case notes cannot be overemphasised.

i. Through supervision

All professional social work and healthcare staff who are required to undertake professional supervision under the terms of their job descriptions are to ensure that safeguarding issues are discussed and, where necessary, appropriate actions taken, as part of their professional supervision process.

j. Through access to advice and support to employees and volunteers

All employees and volunteers are to know, through training and development of local policies, who their local point of contact is for safeguarding advice should there be a safeguarding concern they feel unable to personally manage.

k. Through whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is ‘making a disclosure in the public interest’ and occurs when an employee or volunteer raises a concern about dangerous or illegal actions of other

employees or volunteers that in turn affects patients/clients/beneficiaries or members of the public.

Employees and volunteers are made aware of the duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of employees or volunteers in line with SSAFA's Whistleblowing policy.

SSAFA wants everyone to feel able to report any safeguarding concerns. However, for employees or volunteers in UK who feel unable to raise these concerns internally, and if the concerns relate to a child, they can call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

For adult concerns employees/volunteers should contact their Local Authority.

For overseas H&SC/volunteers they should contact the local duty social worker.

I. Through assurance

The following is how SSAFA will assure that it is meeting its safeguarding obligations:

- i. Mandatory safeguarding training including levels, frequency and subject matter (adults /children) will be agreed by Learning and Development (L&D), service safeguarding leads and signed off by SSAFA's Safeguarding Lead. An annual report to the Management Board demonstrating compliance will be completed by L&D.
- ii. Levels and frequency of DBS or PVG checks for employees will be agreed by HR and service managers and signed off by SSAFA's Safeguarding Lead for each new job description. Annual report demonstrating compliance to Management Board to be completed by HR.
- iii. Levels and frequency of DBS or PVG checks for volunteers will be agreed by service managers and the Director of Volunteer Operations and signed off by SSAFA's Safeguarding Lead for each new volunteer role. Annual report demonstrating compliance to Management Board to be completed by the Director of Volunteer Operations.
- iv. Annual reporting to SSAFA's Management Board of allegations against employees or volunteers by SSAFA's Safeguarding Lead.

Other information

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Status (draft or approved)	Approved
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Equality impact assessment date	
Policy owner	Director Health & Social Care
Trustee responsible for safeguarding	Mrs Diana Wood