POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF SAFEGUARDING

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Board
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1.Introduction

About Us

Stockport Advocacy is a Community Benefit Society that provides information and advocacy services across the Stockport Metropolitan Borough. We offer direct and local support via professionals and volunteers. We enable our clients' voices to be heard, speaking for them when they cannot speak for themselves and supporting them when they can. Advocacy is about supporting, enabling, and empowering people to express their views and concerns and access information and services where needed. Our core values are Relationships, Justice, Accessibility, Equity, and Local.

2.Purpose of this policy

Stockport Advocacy is committed to protecting the rights of adults, children and young people to live a safe, healthy and enjoyable life, free from any form of a abuse or neglect and is committed to working with all stakeholders to achieve this. As such this policy will cover areas relevant to both adults and children and young people at risk. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that people who use our service are safe and not left at risk, it provides clarity for staff to feel confident in understanding different forms of abuse and when to report allegations of abuse or suspected abuse.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the SA safeguarding practice guidance documents which outlines clear procedures for staff to feel confident in understanding different forms of abuse and to know how to report allegations of abuse or suspected abuse.

Stockport Advocacy will ensure that procedures are followed in line with Local Authority and NHS partners multi agency reporting requirements.

This policy applies to everyone working on behalf of Stockport Advocacy, including employees, agency workers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, social work students, and trustees. It covers suspicions of abuse perpetrated by someone in an institution outside Stockport Advocacy, someone working on behalf of Stockport Advocacy, and those who use the service and their carer's. This policy applies whether or not individuals are using our services.

This policy works in line with the principles:

- that the welfare of the child is paramount
- all staff paid/unpaid working for Stockport Advocacy have a responsibility to report concerns to an appropriate safeguarding lead
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- safeguarding procedures will fully embrace the principles of equality and diversity

- of "making safeguarding personal." In the protection of adults of risk. This means we centre the views and wishes of people at risk of harm in supporting their safety while being aware of our responsibilities towards all adults at risk.

3.Scope of Policy

Ensuring that everyone working on behalf of The Advocacy Project will:

- be alert to the possibility of abuse, neglect, radicalisation and coercion
- know when to share information with other practitioners and what action to take to support early identification of abuse
- report suspicions of abuse to the agreed partner agency
- be trained and supported to follow this Policy
- have recruitment checks, including the relevant DBS checks. Have an up-to-date DBS certificate and any disclosures will be managed appropriately according to the DBS Employment and Engagement of Ex-Offenders Policy
- staff and volunteers will be provided with appropriate training to enable them to identify and recognise all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- be transparent in sharing our policies
- regularly review and update policies in line with changing legislation and practice
- ensure that arrangements are in place so that personal or sensitive information is recorded and stored securely

4.Guiding legislation

This policy has been developed based on guidance, statutory requirements and the law to protect adults, children and young people at risk. The following legislation underpin the policies and procedures throughout this document.

Subject to royal assent the Mental Health Act , Crime and policing bill will need to be added to both children and adults and the children's wellbeing and schools bill to children. All expected autumn 2025.

Adults

The Mental health act 1984

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents

The Protections of Freedom Act 2012
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 https:

//www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents

The Equality Act 2015 **https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents**

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/contents • The Care Act 2014 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents

Modern Slavery Act **https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted**

Data Protection Act **https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents**

Female Genital Mutilation Act https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/31/contents • https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/50/contents

Children and young people

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--

The Children Act 2004 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents

The Protection of Children Act 1999
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/14/contents

4.Policy Practice Guidance

Definition of a child at risk:

A child – is defined as a person who is aged under 18, and includes an unborn child.

The Children's Act 1989 defines a child at risk as a child who:

may be suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. Significant harm is defined within the Children Act 1989 as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect that is serious enough to have a lasting effect on the child's health and development. The threshold of significant harm can also be reached if the child is witnessing harm, such as domestic violence within the family home.

Definition of an Adult at Risk

The Care Act 2014 defines an Adult at Risk as a person aged 18 years or over who: as a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

The following categories of abuse are not exhaustive but are relevant to adults, children and young people.

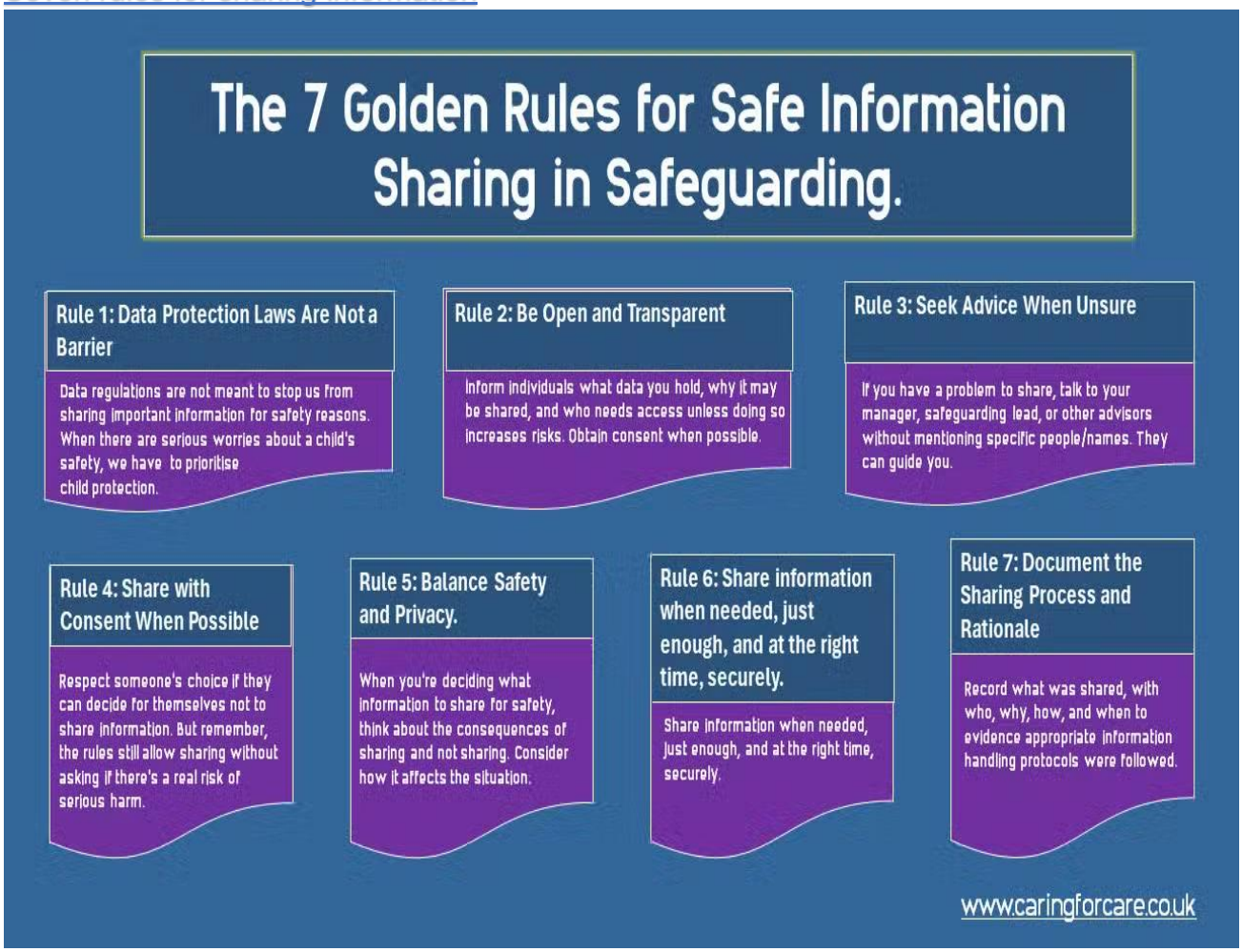
- physical abuse
- domestic violence
- sexual abuse
- psychological abuse
- financial or material abuse
- modern slavery
- discriminatory abuse
- organisational abuse
- neglect or acts of omission
- self-neglect
- In addition, we need to be aware of criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, radicalisation, coercive and controlling behaviour, forced marriage, abuse through social media or online activities, female genital mutilation (FGM), cuckooing, and mate crime.

In the case of Adults, staff will work in line with "making safeguarding personal principles", which promotes the views of the person being central to decision making. Advocates should normally only disclose information about the person with their consent. However, in some safeguarding situations, you may need to report without their consent and within certain criteria this is Legal and ethical. See practice guidance for details.

Where possible, explore with the person why they don't want to report the concern to the Local Authority. Explain to them what will happen and offer to support them throughout the process. If they still don't consent to raising the concern with the local authority, you must report the concern to your designated safeguarding lead and a decision will be made on whether to progress raising an alert with the local authority.

In line with the Mental Capacity Act, an adult is assumed to have mental capacity to make informed choices about their own safety and how they lead their lives however in some instances the issue of mental capacity to make a decision to consent to reporting a safeguarding concern may need to be considered, as outlined in procedural guidance.

Seven rules for sharing information



5.Record keeping

Stockport Advocacy uses Salesforce to record client information including those relating to safeguarding concerns. Staff are trained in recording on this system, to ensure that records are accurate, factual and concise. Managers have access to review records and to record management decisions within the system. All records are retained as per Stockport Advocacy's Data and Retention and Destruction Policy.

6.Whistleblowing

Whistleblowers are protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The Act protects public, private and voluntary sector workers from victimisation in employment following a disclosure which fits into certain criteria, (see Whistleblowing Policy).

You would always be expected to try and address a safeguarding issue through the normal channels of reporting to your line manager, in the first instance. If this is not satisfactory then you should report to the Chief Executive. If this is not successful or there is a reason why you cannot do this then you should refer to Stockport Advocacies Whistleblowing policy.

7.Implementation of this Policy

All Board Officers will receive a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures at induction and be asked to confirm their understanding of it. All staff will be supplied with supporting documents which will outline safeguarding procedures.

8.Training in Safeguarding Practices and Procedures

Safeguarding training will be provided as part of the induction program for new employees, registered volunteers, placement students and the Board of Officers. In addition, managers must provide staff with an adequate support framework and ensure that appropriate training is provided to ensure they act in accordance with this Policy.

9.Monitoring and Evaluation

This Policy will be reviewed every two years and approved by the Board of Officers. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, contractual arrangements, good practice, or an identified failing in its effectiveness.

10.Related Policies, Documents and legislation

Related policies
Stockport Advocacy practice guidance

- Data and Digital Protection Policy and Procedures (2024)
- Managing Positive DBS Disclosure Policy and Procedures (2024)
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedures (2024)
- Non-Instructed Advocacy Policy and Procedures (2024)