



## SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS

### POLICY & PROCEDURE

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## **1.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

AudioActive and its employees understand our responsibilities and are committed to keeping young adults safe from harm.

We recognise that for many of the young adults we work with, harm can come from different places including their homes, streets, peers, colleges, work or society. Many young adults face an increasing risk from the environment they are surrounded by, and we are committed to assessing, attending, engaging and advocating for these young adults wherever they are most at risk of harm, in whatever form. We are committed to working with young adults wherever they are and whatever risks they face.

Safeguarding vulnerable adults means protecting their right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect, working together to support young adults to make decisions about the risks they face in their own lives and protecting those who lack the mental capacity to make those decisions.

We comply with our duty to act appropriately to allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse wherever they happen. We believe that embedding and promoting a contextual safeguarding culture across the organisation and with our partners, is everyone's responsibility. This policy sets out how this happens.

In this policy we outline the overarching principles that guide us in our safeguarding practice with young adults, as well as details about our commitments and responsibilities to protecting those known to us, from harm.

We provide clear guidelines on our safer working practice, information on recognising forms of abuse and clear guidelines regarding what to do when dealing with safeguarding concerns or incidents.

We will endeavour to promote a culture of professional curiosity and to ensure that staff are well trained to have the confidence to challenge and tackle sensitive issues and cultural differences.

## **2.0 SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS**

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of AudioActive, including senior managers, board of trustees, paid full time and part time staff, bank staff, sessional staff, freelance contracted staff, agency staff as well as volunteers and students on placement with us.

This policy refers to 'young adults' as well as 'vulnerable adults' who we consider to be over 18 years of age. Under the Care Act (2014), specific adult safeguarding duties apply to adults (18 years or over) who have care and support needs (regardless of whether their care and support needs are being met) and are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect and are unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs.

There is some crossover with the Safeguarding Children policy in that The Children Act (2004) also includes young people over 18 years of age who are Care Leavers (s23c to 24d) and 18-25 year olds with learning difficulties and receiving services under the Learning & Skills Act (2000) s13. The DSL decides whether to follow children's or adults safeguarding procedures, based on care history, open cases with Children's Services or Adult Social Care and recent case closure.

The categories of abuse were extended by the Care Act, more information can be found in Appendix 1, for the purposes of this policy types of abuse generally fall into four categories:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Categories of abuse can also be grouped as 'intra-familial' (within the family) or 'extra-familial' (contextual safeguarding). Young adults can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including, exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as

county lines, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation, and influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

‘Contextual Safeguarding’, as coined by Dr Carlene Firmin, helps us recognise the impact of intersectional identities and experiences of young adults within extra-familial contexts, and the interplay between them with varying weight of influence on their decisions. Enabling us to contribute to assessment and intervention by targeting the contexts in which abuse occurs, helping reduce risk and harm through the welfare lens, opposed to crime reduction or community safety. For more information, see:

[The legal and policy framework for Contextual Safeguarding approaches \(2020\)](#)

Staff should be aware that some types of young people are at greater risk of experiencing abuse, for example young adults with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who may identify as LGBTQ+ and also young adults from black and minority ethnic groups. We will consider all prejudice (including homophobia and racism) as safeguarding issues and aim to create environments where young adults feel able to speak out and discuss such matters in a safe and healthy environment.

### **3.0 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

This policy has been written alongside with Sussex & Surrey MultiAgency Procedures for Safeguarding Adults, and the legal framework includes the following acts and guidance:

- Care Act (2014) and Statutory Guidance (updated March 2016)
- Health & Social Care Act (2015)
- Children and Young Persons Act (2008 and 2014)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Family Law Act (1996)
- Work and Families Act (2006)
- Data Protection Act (2018)

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992)
- Human Rights Act (1998 & 2000)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Children Act (1989 and s11 2004)
- Housing Act (1996)
- Registered Homes Act (1984)
- Carers (Recognition and Services Act (1995)
- Theft Act (1968)
- Fraud Act (2006)
- Criminal Justice Act (2003)
- Crime and Disorder Act (1998)
- Police and criminal Evidence Act (1984)
- The Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act (2004 and amendments 2012)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Offences Against the Person Act (1861)
- Public Health Act (1936 and 1991)
- National Assistance Act (1948)
- Health Services and Public Health Act (1977)
- National Health Service Act (1977)
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970)
- Disabled Persons Act (1986)
- National Health Service and Community Care Act (1990)
- Mental Health Acts (1983 & 2007)
- Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- Care standards Act (2000)
- Leaving Care Act (2000)
- Corporate Homicide Act (2007)
- Protection from Harassment Act (1997)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998)
- Education Act (2002 and 2011)
- Munro Report (2011)
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (Liberty Protection Safeguards – MCA

Amendment Bill 2018)

- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)
- Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act (2009)
- Prevent Strategy (2011)
- Protections and Freedoms Act (2012)
- Modern Slavery Act (2015)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act (2014)

‘Revised Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in Education’ (2019), plus April 2020 ‘Coronavirus Outbreak’

- The Charity Commission Strategy for Dealing with Safeguarding Issues in Charities (2017)
- The Charity Commission (2017) Safeguarding and Protecting people for Charities and Trustees
- NCVO Charity Law Summary
- The pan-Sussex Safeguarding Threshold Guidance (2022):  
<https://www.bhsab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/02/Sussex-Safeguarding-Adults-Thresholds-Guidance-Print-Version.pdf>
- [DfE KCSIE Updates September 2023](#) and see [Annex F Summary of updates](#)
- [Filtering & Monitoring standards for schools](#)

## 4.0 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

This policy statement should be read alongside AudioActive’s organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents, including:

- Induction, training, supervision and support
- Lone working policy
- Local MISPER procedures for missing persons
- Violent Incident procedure
- Behaviour Management procedure
- Risk Management policy
- Information Management policy

- GDPR
- Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing policy and procedure
- Personal Relationships Policy & Procedure
- Health and safety policy

## **5.0 OUR COMMITMENT**

To build a safe culture where all staff and vulnerable adults, treat each other with respect, feel listened to and valued and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Embed safeguarding into all areas of the business including safer recruitment processes; safe working practice, risk assessing, managing information, monitoring online activity, meeting health and safety standards and staff learning and development.

Stop abuse or neglect of young adults wherever possible, working with local partners to help assess and intervene extra-familial risk, attending multi agency meetings and contextual safeguarding groups and to recognise, respond, report, record and refer concerns of abuse or risk.

Keep up to date with new good practice, to promote the wellbeing of young adults and to raise awareness of safeguarding issues, recognising that some have additional needs relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Work collaboratively, in partnership with young adults and their families, carers and other agencies, and also to work with alleged perpetrators, considering contextual issues on their safety and welfare.

Investigate thoroughly any allegations made against staff members suspected of causing abuse or neglect and to take action to prevent this occurring in the future.

Record, store, and use information confidentially and securely, in line with GDPR.

Have a clear, thorough and up to date policy and procedure, with a competent DSL, DSO, DDSL and TSL in place so that staff understand their responsibilities.

Inform young adults that where a person is in danger, a child is at risk or an unreported serious crime has been committed, then a decision may be taken to pass information to another agency, Adult Social Care, without consent.

Effectively manage staff through induction, regular supervision, support, training and quality assurance so that all staff behave professionally and follow procedures competently.

Be clear with services users about information sharing: Seek permission from the adult before sharing information with other agencies, inform vulnerable adults that where others are, or will be put at risk, if nothing is done or an unreported serious crime has been committed or the adult lacks capacity to understand the associated risks or the adult has capacity but cannot make a decision freely, that a decision may be taken to pass information to an appropriate agency without consent.

## **6.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **6.1 Roles**

All AudioActive staff regardless of their role have a responsibility for the welfare of young adults who engage in any AudioActive activities, however, there are also more specific roles who have specified duties in relation to safeguarding those young adults that are considered vulnerable.

The 'Safeguarding Team' oversees Safeguarding across the organisation. The team are all responsible for storing safeguarding concerns centrally, for information and oversight.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** - Has ultimate responsibility for operational safeguarding processes and procedures.

**Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** - Supports the DSL in their role, to ensure that safeguarding processes and procedures are followed.

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)** - Can be delegated to either in the absence of the DSL or if the DSL is unavailable.

**Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** - Overall responsibility for the organisation and for safeguarding in general.

**Trustee Safeguarding Lead (TSL)** - Responsible for ensuring organisational compliance to legislation and external regulators.

## **6.2 Responsibilities**

### **The DSL will:**

- Be trained in Safer Recruitment, support recruiting managers to be trained also and to ensure that recruitment processes follow Safer Recruitment guidelines.
- Oversee the Disclosure and Barring System and ensure that all new staff working with vulnerable adults or with access to sensitive data has a DBS check prior to starting work.
- Make decisions in conjunction with the CEO as to new staff suitability to the role based on previous convictions, in line with relevant legislation.
- Ensure the effective management of a Single Central Record which holds all safeguarding related information about staff including DBS checks, references, training undertaken, policy signing, and any safeguarding concerns held on file. Ideally this is held on one spreadsheet rather than in multiple places in a folder or on a drive. Operational management of the SCR can be delegated to another senior member of staff.
- Ensure that all staff read this policy, understand their responsibilities in the

policy and receive training in how to implement this policy during their induction and work in accordance with this policy throughout their work with AudioActive.

- Oversee staff learning and development around safeguarding; ensure that safeguarding training is completed and refreshed regularly and that any actions needed as identified in training are followed up so all learning needs are met. This includes online safety and specifically Filtering and Monitoring.
- Ensure that online safety is treated with the utmost importance within the organisation, which includes ensuring that staff know how to keep children safe while working online, liaising with related IT staff and other relevant professionals, managing incidents (e.g. cyber bullying), updating and delivering training, and reviewing and carrying out annual audits and reporting to the Board of Trustees. This is particularly important in the area of Filtering and Monitoring, as is the ongoing checking and reporting of this.
- Be accessible to staff to discuss concerns about young adults we work with.
- Gather information from reporting staff and offer support managing the situation; they will involve the staff views in the decision-making process about action to take. They will consider the pan-Sussex Safeguarding Threshold Guidance to consider thresholds.
- Ensure the voice of the vulnerable adult is listened to and feeds into decisions where appropriate in all safeguarding concerns, where delay isn't likely to cause additional harm.
- Ensure that safeguarding concerns are recorded and referred to Adult Social Care or allocated social workers and cases are followed up and issues addressed.
- Oversee all safeguarding cases, in particular cases involving members of staff.
- Reinforce the need for good practice around confidentiality and ensure that staff adhere to this; it is at the time that a person reports abuse that the risks of increasing intensity of abuse are greatest.
- Ensure that staff working with vulnerable adults who have experienced or are experiencing abuse, are well supported: receiving regular supervision and RPS.
- Ensure whistleblowers are supported and afforded protection, if necessary, under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (see Whistleblowing Policy).
- Liaise with other relevant professionals (e.g. DSO's/DSL's from other services)

and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to work in accordance with local policy and procedure and to share information as appropriate.

- Attend appropriate multi-agency conferences, contextual safeguarding groups, and other meetings to ensure joined-up working with partner organisations.
- Maintain clear records and a log, and report regularly to Trustees any safeguarding concerns raised, ongoing cases, investigations, policy amendments and training needs.
- Review this procedure annually and work with the CEO and TSL to sign it off.
- Ensure that amendments to this policy are clearly communicated to staff, that it is made available to all staff and to service users as appropriate.
- Attend 6-weekly clinical supervision sessions with a professional safeguarding lead to ensure that they can manage their safeguarding responsibilities and implement the safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Nominate a Deputy DSL to assume their responsibilities before any period of absence from work and notify staff of this in advance.

#### **The DSO will:**

- Take on tasks delegated to them by the DSL to ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed and that the essence of the policy is put into practice.
- Be a second point of contact for staff who need advice and guidance about any concerns they have and to be able to offer support in taking the appropriate action.

#### **The DDSL will:**

- Be the first point of contact for staff with safeguarding concerns when the DSL is absent, which will include making decisions about what should be reported and recorded and any actions that need to be taken in place of the DSL.
- Manage urgent safeguarding issues that come up while the DSL is not at work, any non-urgent safeguarding matters can be left until the DSL returns to work.
- The exception to this is where the DSL is absent for a long time due to sickness, or in cases where the DSL is being recruited to. In these cases, the DDSL will hold

the fort on a more permanent basis and will need to take on some responsibilities to ensure that all safeguarding functions across the organisation are managed.

**The CEO will:**

- Drive the strategic direction of AudioActive's safeguarding activity and to develop a culture of safeguarding and consistent good practice.
- Ensure that they have undertaken the DSL training to ensure quality of safeguarding at a strategic and operational level.
- Ensure that there is always a nominated DSL; that they are well informed, well trained, competent and have the necessary resources to fulfil the requirements of the role.
- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that the Safeguarding team stays abreast of developments in the field and the safeguarding culture is embedded and maintained.
- To take over the role of DDSL when the DSL is not available.
- Be available to staff where they are unable to contact the DSL and support is needed urgently or where it is not appropriate for them to contact the DSL because concerns relate to them.
- See also responsibilities for staff (below).

**The TSL will:**

- Take responsibility for the Charity Commission and Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) being informed following investigations of members of staff, and provide additional support to the DSL as required when managing these scenarios.
- Have an annual Safeguarding review meeting with the DSL to ensure that they are familiar with the safeguarding practices, review any cases they have been involved in, and to ensure that any and all related actions are followed up.
- Be available to staff where they are unable to contact the DSL or the CEO and support is needed urgently or where it is not appropriate for them to contact the DSL or CEO because concerns relate to them.

- Be the Lead Trustee for online safety, specifically for Filtering and Monitoring to support the organisation to take its responsibilities seriously, that an annual audit of online safety is complete (to include Filtering and Monitoring).
- See also responsibilities for staff (below).

### **Staff will:**

- Read the policy during their first week of employment and contact the DSL to say that they have understood it. This is their opportunity to ask questions.
- Staff will read any updates and amendments to the policy in order that they stay up to date with organisational procedure.
- Undertake safeguarding training regularly to ensure that they know how to recognise the need for safeguarding and report their concerns to the correct people. This includes Online Safety training and training in Filtering and Monitoring.
- Undertake a range of related training that will help them ensure the safety of young adults, the minimum for all staff is Level 1, which also includes Trustees.
- Ensure that they are articulate to young adults they work with, what the child should do if they are concerned about their safety or the safety of other young adults.
- Always act if they witness a safeguarding incident in a way that is professional, and act to maintain their own safety and the safety of others around them who might need help.
- Support young adults to ensure their online safety while working within the organisation, this includes the specific Filtering arrangement, how to intervene in and report any incidents of inappropriate use or behaviour
- Always report safeguarding concerns to their line manager, the DSL or another member of the safeguarding team where the DSL is not available or appropriate. This must occur on the same working day that the concern arises.

### **6.3 Contact details for our safeguarding team**

**Our DSL is Michelle Hunter (07395 188892) [michelle@audioactive.org.uk](mailto:michelle@audioactive.org.uk)**

**Our DSO is Jo Bates (07847 182 594) [jo@audioactive.org.uk](mailto:jo@audioactive.org.uk)**

**Our CEO (and DDSL) is Adam Joolia [adam@audioactive.org.uk](mailto:adam@audioactive.org.uk)**

**Our TSL is Jasmine Marshall Fraser [jasmine@audioactive.org.uk](mailto:jasmine@audioactive.org.uk)**

## **7.0 ESTABLISHING SAFER WORKING PRACTICES**

### **7.1 Safer Recruitment**

AudioActive is committed to implementing safer recruitment practices for all staff. We will ensure that the DSL is safer recruitment trained so they have a good understanding of our statutory responsibilities.

We will endeavour to have all recruiting managers trained in safer recruitment; there will always be someone who is trained on the recruitment team to ensure we can deter, identify and reject individuals who pose a risk of harm to young adults.

We will ensure that our commitment to safeguarding is clearly apparent in all recruitment materials and we will make explicit the various checks that are in place. This includes notifying all shortlisted candidates that a basic online check will be conducted, extensive checks on social media are not expected to be part of this.

We will adopt an organised approach to recruitment processes so that there is adequate time to make the necessary checks before appointing new staff (e.g. checking original ID, questioning gaps in service, on-line searches, calling referees to talk through anomalies).

We will work towards involving young adults (especially those with histories of being looked after, in care or care leavers) in recruitment of new staff including, for example

feeding into questions asked and being on an interview panel.

All staff applying to work directly with vulnerable adults or with access to confidential files will be interviewed by at least two staff, preferably a member of the Safeguarding Team, we will obtain two satisfactory references and complete a DBS check.

The organisation will work within the current legal framework for referring staff and volunteers to the DBS who have harmed or pose a risk to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. For conditions of this referral please click [here](#).

When a new Trustee Safeguarding Lead is recruited, they are involved in a safeguarding meeting, and subsequently quarterly meetings and an annual review to ensure that they can familiarise themselves with current practice and challenge the DSL around any discrepancies or anomalies.

## **7.2 Disclosure Barring Service (DBS)**

No-one shall work with young adults within, or on behalf, of AudioActive who have been convicted of or has received a formal police caution concerning an offence against children as listed in the First Schedule of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933; or, who has been convicted of or has received a formal police caution concerning sexual offences against children, young people or young adults.

All staff who work directly with young adults under the auspices of AudioActive or who have access to confidential information about children, young people and young adults will require an enhanced check through the DBS.

Recruiting managers must take all reasonable steps, including obtaining disclosures from the DBS, to ensure that persons who have been convicted or have received a formal police caution concerning sexual offences against children, young people or young adults shall not undertake work under the auspices of AudioActive.

### **7.3 Single Central Record**

AudioActive will record all relevant safeguarding information for purposes of checking and vetting of all potential staff (paid and voluntary) on a Single Central Record, stored in one place, preferably on a spreadsheet rather than a variety of files and folders.

The SCR will include staff personal details (full name, DOB, address), their role, professional qualifications, ID seen, references, DBS checks, proof of right to work. It might also be helpful to list training needed and dates the training was undertaken.

The SCR must record which member of staff has made the check alongside the date the check was made.

Leavers can be stored in a separate 'archived' spreadsheet to avoid an unnecessarily long list of staff.

### **7.4 Staff Learning and Development**

AudioActive staff will have a minimum probationary period of three months during which time their ability to and experience of safeguarding vulnerable adults will be discussed, learning and development needs will be discussed in this period and a plan put in place to meet these needs.

During induction, all staff will familiarise themselves with safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance, and they will complete basic training that includes how to recognise and respond to the signs of abuse and neglect, on-line safeguarding, additional vulnerabilities of young adults with special educational needs and disabilities and consideration of the impact of a family's cultural identity.

During induction all staff will familiarise themselves with the legal definitions of looked after children and care leavers, what care orders, parental responsibilities and consent mean, the role of the corporate parent, the longer-term impact of abuse and neglect, the increased vulnerability and relevant policies and procedures for this group.

Staff training will include separate Online Safety training and training in Filtering and Monitoring where this is appropriate; for example for any senior staff with a safeguarding responsibility, a responsibility for filtering and or monitoring, any staff working with children online or those overseeing work with children online.

Staff will have regular supervision thereafter, during which time these conversations will continue, to ensure that support is offered and training needs are identified and met.

Staff will be adequately trained for the roles they undertake on behalf of AudioActive, and Safeguarding training specifically will be tailored to their role and need and repeated regularly.

Staff training will include generic safeguarding training at the level appropriate to their role and also specific training in for example Trauma Informed Practice and around professional curiosity, an awareness of cultural differences and online safety.

The DSL must ensure that any actions of developments needed as identified in staff training sessions will be followed up to ensure that all staff's learning needs are met.

Staff will undertake regular group Reflective Practice Supervision (RPS) so that they have opportunities to reflect on the issues they come across in their work and to ensure that any difficulties are processed effectively and professionally.

The DSL will have 6-weekly clinical supervision with a leading safeguarding professional. The named clinical supervisor is James Haughton, CEO of Future Voices.

The DSL will have 6-monthly meetings and an annual review with the TSL to ensure that there is support available for the DSL and accountability across the organisation.

## **7.5 Managing Confidential Information**

AudioActive is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information around safeguarding should be shared only with those who need to know.

Where our staff work in partnership with other organisations, and young adults we work with make a disclosure, our DSL will liaise directly with the DSL in the partner organisation to ensure that information is shared on a need to know basis and in the interests of safeguarding.

All allegations/concerns should be held securely. Any hard copies of information will be immediately shredded or secured in a locked filing cabinet in the relevant offices and accessible only to the DSL and CEO.

In line with General Data Protection Guidelines and the Data Protection Act (2018), all safeguarding files will be kept for 35 years after which they will be securely destroyed.

## **7.6 Managing Risk**

AudioActive takes a proactive and thorough approach to risk management; we risk-assess people before working with them, premises before using them and projects before starting them. Risk assessments highlight the risks, which we reduce and monitor through risk management plans. In addition to formal risk assessments, we also dynamically risk assess situations to ensure the safety of staff and young adults. See Risk Management policy for more information.

We facilitate groups of young adults where there is always a risk of disruptive, challenging, aggressive or violent behaviour. Staff will try to obtain as much information about participants before we start working with them, and will be trained in de-escalation techniques in order to manage such situations. Staff will not use restraint in any situation.

We manage projects in properties that have areas that are accessed by the public, and creating these spaces is a fundamental part of our development strategy. Whilst staff cannot control the behaviour of the public, young adults in our care are never left unsupervised in public spaces and these spaces require close supervision.

Vulnerable adults using our projects can access technologies that present various risks, particularly regarding online activity. Staff aim to supervise all work online and have access to On-line Safety Guidance to help them safeguard young adults against

abuse.

When working with young adults who are care leavers, staff should pay close attention to when to liaise with the relevant statutory professionals because these young adults have rights and duties that are specific to their circumstances.

## **7.7 Managing Dangerous Situations / Use of Restraint**

Our staff have guidelines about behaviour management and managing violent incidents, see the relevant procedures. Our staff should not need to restrain children and young adults.

In exceptional circumstances, such as stopping a young adult from seriously injuring themselves or another, contact may be required. The principle must be the minimum amount of force for the shortest possible time.

Staff must not use 'excessive force' in any circumstances and would be subject to disciplinary procedures if that were found to be the case. In some circumstances, where staff feel comfortable and competent to do so, they can help diffuse potentially or actually violent situations using the physical space around them and their own physical presence to help manoeuvre people out of danger, but they should not do so by physically restraining anyone, and they do so at their own risk.

Any dangerous situation and/or situations where the use of physical contact has been necessary to protect someone's immediate safety, must be reported to the staff member's line manager and DSL as soon as it is safe to do so. Consideration must be given to informing the child's parents/carers and key professionals about the situation.

A de-brief in respect of the situation must be held within 24 hours, with consideration given to what steps can be taken to prevent a recurrence of such an incident and to determine if there is broader learning that needs to be shared amongst colleagues.

## 7.8 Online Safety

Young adults using AudioActive services, access technologies that present various risks, particularly regarding online activity and our responsibility is to ensure that they do so safely. We also have a responsibility to ensure that the online activity of our staff enables and enforces the safeguarding of young adults.

The DSL will ensure that online safety is treated with the utmost importance, which includes ensuring that staff know how to keep young adults safe while working online, that they are aware of the organisation's filtering restrictions for online activity, liaising with related professionals including IT staff, managing incidents (e.g. cyber bullying), updating and delivering training, and reporting to the Board of Trustees.

Our main point of reference for online safety best practice are the Government's [Cyber Security Standards for Schools and Colleges](#) and the [NSPCC](#) - although this is aimed at children, it is a helpful resource for all young people, including young adults who may be vulnerable in some way or who have additional needs.

When considering the online risk to young adults working with us, we identify four main categories of risk:

- **Content**

Being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content e.g. pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation and extremism.

- **Contact**

Being subjected to harmful on-line interactions with others, e.g. peer pressure, commercial advertising, and adults posing as children, young people or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

- **Conduct**

Personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or cause harm e.g. making, sending and receiving explicit images, (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and

- **Commerce**

Risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing or financial scams.

While staff members are present to supervise online work undertaken by young adults using our services, it is important to recognise that we cannot monitor every aspect of their online engagement. Our aim is to create a supportive environment where staff are available to guide and oversee digital activities within our sessions. However, we also encourage ongoing conversations about online safety and empower young adults to make safe and informed decisions beyond our supervision.

Staff will be aware of the organisation's filtering mechanisms and will have understood the new filtering standards which can be found in Section 3., to ensure they know what is blocked, why and how this can help keep children safe online. Staff will manually monitor internet activities during sessions.

Staff will talk to young adults about online safety at appropriate moments during their work with us, in a way that is age appropriate and suitable for their level of cognitive ability. Both age and cognitive ability will influence the language staff use and what will be talked about. Staff will be sensitive to the fact that as young people get older, their needs and behaviours change, particularly through the teenage years, when they are more prone to risk-taking, mood swings and whether or not they will even talk to staff about things they may find embarrassed or even be ashamed about.

Staff can work together to plan specific sessions that will help focus conversations with young adults around safer use of technologies, for example, each year there is a safer internet day, where staff can use this as an opportunity to broach the subject with young adults.

Where staff become aware of any worrying circumstances that have occurred online, they should speak to the DSL or the DSO immediately, and they should not discuss the situation with anyone else. And depending on the situation, the DSL will ensure that the relevant action is taken.

Issues may include nude images of children or young people, gaming abuse, hate content, inappropriate adverts or videos, terror content, or the issue may involve infractions by staff or service users misusing equipment.

Photos will only be taken of young adults where necessary to document work being done or for project promotion purposes, this will only ever be done with the young adults' consent. This will only ever be used for the purpose that was agreed and intended and these will be stored securely. Any exception to this will be discussed and agreed in advance with the DSL or DSO who will ensure that young adults are safeguarded at all times.

Young adults use many different social media platforms, sites and apps including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and Twitter, some for social networking and staying connected to friends and family, they can be used for gaming, making things and developing their interests. The risks include oversharing (e.g. personal information or their location) that puts them at risk, talking to people they don't know or who are older, sending or receiving inappropriate content, unrealistic notions of body image or obsessing about likes and followers. Staff must ensure that to mitigate some of these risks; review location and privacy settings, understand age ratings and features, and to talk to young adults about the impact of social media on themselves, their health, their families and their communities.

Where service users are found to be misusing the organisation's equipment for use deemed inappropriate, the action taken will depend upon and be proportionate to the circumstances.

Where staff misuse the organisation's equipment, internet or via a personal device, they could be subject to disciplinary procedures. Action taken will depend upon and be proportionate to the circumstances. We will consider whether the incident involved

illegal activity or content, in these cases, the DSL will report the matter to the police.

Staff recognise that safeguarding issues can arise if data is compromised or lost. Our Data Protection and Information Management Policies outline how we keep data safe.

## **8.0 DEALING WITH SAFEGUARDING INCIDENTS**

### **8.1 Recognising Young Adults as Vulnerable**

An adult at risk of harm: is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- Personal characteristics which may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain, and/or
- Life circumstances which may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

Adult in need of protection: is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- Personal characteristics AND/OR
- Life circumstances AND
- Who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; AND
- Where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed

### **8.2 Principles of Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults**

There are six key principles outlined in The Care Act (2014) under the Making

Safeguarding Personal approach which should inform how we work with young adults when there are safeguarding concerns and reasons they may be considered vulnerable. These include:

**Empowerment** – People are supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent. “I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and this directly informs what happens.”

**Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs. “I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is. I know how to recognise the signs, and I know what I can do to seek help.”

**Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. “I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest and they will only get involved as much as is necessary.”

**Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need. “I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want.”

**Partnership** – Services offer local solutions through working closely with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. “I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me.”

**Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding. “I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.”

### **8.3 Witnessing Safeguarding Incidents and Disclosures**

AudioActive will ensure that staff have guidance on how to deal effectively with safeguarding incidents or disclosures (for specific pointers see Appendix 2 Guidance

on handling incidents and disclosures) and that they understand how to report these (the flow diagram in Appendix 3 provides a quick reference point for staff to follow).

**Incidents** – Where AudioActive staff witness safeguarding incidents, they will conduct themselves calmly and professionally and work with the vulnerable adult to maintain their safety and the safety of those around them, for example to call emergency services. Staff will refrain from tampering with anything that might be taken as evidence. Staff will always report emergencies to the emergency services and Adult Social Care and internally to the DSL preferably, or someone in the Safeguarding team.

**Disclosures** – Where AudioActive staff witness safeguarding disclosures, they will adopt a supportive and reassuring approach to ensure the young adult feels like they have done the right thing in coming forward. Staff will reassure the vulnerable adult so that they know that the disclosure will be taken seriously, and be discussed with the DSL or perhaps another person in the Safeguarding team as well as Adult Social Care if it is deemed appropriate.

Where vulnerable adults are concerned, there are a lot of different factors to take into consideration when working out exactly what action needs to be taken. It is vital that staff are familiar with this so that they can be incorporated into the urgent response in a time sensitive situation. These are outlined below in 8.5.

Once the DSL is aware of the situation, they should always try to seek the views of the young adult about what they would like to happen as a result of the concern. This will help to inform what actions are taken.

Staff must be aware that some young adults will be suffering some kind of abuse or neglect or know of another child suffering in this way, but may not feel ready to report it. Staff should use their professional curiosity to consider what might be going on and to report any concerns even without an actual disclosure.

A young adult may be witnessing domestic violence, and they may or may not understand the long-term negative impact upon them as professionals might. Staff should use their professional curiosity to explore the situation, while being sensitive that

the young adult may not even consider violence at home as “domestic violence”.

## **8.4 Reporting Concerns**

In addition to speaking directly with a trusted staff member or accessing support through NSPCC or the local authorities safeguarding team, young adults are encouraged to report any concerns directly to our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) via [safeguarding@audioactive.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@audioactive.org.uk). This information will also be included in the welcome letter for easy access. We want young adults to feel heard and supported, and we are committed to ensuring multiple, safe pathways for raising concerns.

AudioActive staff will always report to their line manager any and all safeguarding issues they come into contact with as part of their role. In cases where staff are unclear what action should be taken, their manager will work through this with them. Either person can report to the DSL if it is decided necessary. If the manager is not clear, the DSL should be contacted immediately.

In cases where staff are unable to get hold of their manager and the situation cannot wait for their manager to get back to them, staff must contact the DSL immediately. Staff may also go straight to the DSL. The DSL will always be available to discuss safeguarding matters with staff.

Staff must record their concerns on a [Record of Concern Form](#), even if concerns are raised verbally in the first instance. These are stored on the shared drive or you can ask your line manager or the DSL. [Forms can be found here](#).

The information recorded should be factual, not based on opinions. Record what the person tells you, what you have seen and any witnesses if appropriate. Use the terminology that they use; do not tone down colourful language or change words for more professional terminology. Forms should be written in the third person, using initials to identify individuals including one's self. Reports must be completed by the person reporting the concern and done within 12 hours. Information will be kept secure and will comply with General Data Protection Regulations.

A report must be made to the Local Authority when there is a safeguarding concern for a young adult. This is when a person has a reasonable cause to believe that a young adult has a need for care and support and they may be experiencing, or are at risk of abuse or neglect and, they are unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs. The only exception to this is where an immediate referral would increase the young adult's risk of abuse or neglect. In these circumstances staff must seek guidance from the DSL or someone else in the Safeguarding Team.

The DSL may need to consult the pan-Sussex Safeguarding Threshold Guidance for help determining whether or not particular cases meet the threshold for Adult Social Care, otherwise, it might be more appropriate to look to other local agencies who can help.

There may be some cases where staff are unsure if what they have witnessed warrants a referral to Adult Social Care or even a discussion with their manager or DSL. Things to consider that should encourage you to discuss it with someone:

- You may not be the only person to notice or experience abuse or neglect.
- There could be lots of people with 'low-level' concerns about the same thing but if staff have not passed the information on it cannot be addressed.
- Even if it has not affected you, or someone you know directly, it could be affecting someone else who may not be able, or in a position, to say something about it.
- Abuse and neglect do not just appear from nowhere; sharing concerns before something becomes abuse or neglect can prevent it, do not think you are making a fuss about nothing.

The DSL will decide who needs to be informed following a safeguarding concern, it may be that the Care Quality Commission needs to be informed as well as the Police and Adult Social Care.

Young adults who disclose that they have been privately fostered could be more vulnerable than others to abuse and neglect because this activity is not regulated by the local authority. Staff should report such disclosures to the local authority where

there are any concerns.

Staff should take action where any vulnerable young adults do not attend the sessions they were due to attend. Staff should consider contacting a parent or carer and they may seek guidance from the DSL or DSO or their manager. The concern should be escalated if the young adult is believed to be at risk, the police should be called.

## **8.5 Conversation with the Adult before Reporting**

**The Making Safeguarding Personal Approach** – Ensures that adults have their right to make decisions about their own lives. As a general principle, no action should be taken for, or on behalf of, any adult without first obtaining their consent. Adults who may be at risk of, or who are, experiencing abuse and neglect, may feel disempowered, and acting without involving them or seeking their consent will often disempower them further.

**Empowering vulnerable adults** – Involves a proactive approach to seeking consent and maximising the person's involvement in decisions about their care, safety and protection, and this includes decisions regarding whether to raise a safeguarding concern.

**How to have this conversation** – This should be organised in a safe and confidential place and as soon as possible unless this would put them, or others at risk. The practitioner should gauge the young adult's views on whether they see the issue as cause for concern, what they want to happen, their thoughts on what they think should happen, any action they may want to take themselves and also about the parameters of their consent.

**Who and when should have the conversation** – Where possible and safe to do so, the person contacting the local authority with the safeguarding concern would have had a conversation with the adult. The person who has this conversation with the vulnerable adult may be the member of staff who dealt with the incident or disclosure. This conversation may immediately follow an incident or occur at the same time as a

disclosure, in which case the guidelines in Appendix 2 should also be followed. Alternatively, this conversation may take place following a disclosure or allegation and it may be the DSL who has this conversation.

**Mental capacity** – All interventions with the vulnerable adult must take into account the mental capacity of the adult to make informed choices and specifically the adult's ability to understand the implications of their situation and to take action themselves (or with support) to prevent abuse and to participate to the fullest extent possible in decision-making about safeguarding interventions.

**Balancing individual choice and risk** – An adult's right to make choices about their own safety has to be balanced with the rights of others to be safe. Information must only be shared on a 'need to know basis' when it is in the interests of the adult. If it is not possible to have obtained informed consent and other adults are at risk of abuse or neglect, it may be necessary to override the requirement to share information. The DSL will have to assess whether providing the information will be necessary and consider the risk of not sharing the information.

**Sharing information without the adult's consent** – In these situations the adult must always be advised about what information will be shared, with whom and the reasons for this and advised that their views and wishes will be respected as far as possible by the local authority or other agencies in relation to any response they may have a duty to make. They must be provided with information regarding what happens when a local authority is advised of a safeguarding concern.

**Risk management** – It is not possible, nor arguably desirable, to eliminate risk. Empowerment in safeguarding involves risk management that is based on understanding the autonomy of the adult and how they view the risks they face. There may be risks the adult welcomes because they enhance their quality of life, risks the adult is prepared to tolerate and risks they want to eliminate.

**Reasons to override consent** – If the adult has capacity to make an informed decision that they do not want the information to be shared, and there is no indication that they may be experiencing undue influence, then the adult's wishes will be respected.

However there are circumstances in which an adult's consent may be overridden, including:

- If the adult is at significant risk of serious harm.
- If there is a risk to others.
- If a criminal offence has taken place.
- Where action is needed in the public interest, such as where a member of staff is in a position of trust.

## **8.6 Adults who lack capacity to make relevant decisions**

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 was designed to protect and restore power to vulnerable people who lack capacity. Where an adult is unable to make a specific decision for themselves, the Act sets out a clear process that must be followed before a decision can be made on the adult's behalf. Where an adult is found to lack capacity to make a specific decision any action taken must be taken in their best interests. Professionals need to understand and always work in-line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

If the adult lacks capacity to make decisions about the incident and their ability to maintain their safety and does not want a safeguarding concern raised, and/or other action taken, professionals have a duty to act in their best interests in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Adults who are thought to lack capacity to make a specific decision need to be provided with all practicable support to enable them to make their own decision before it can be concluded that they lack capacity regarding the decision and a best interests process is entered into. This may be achieved in a variety of ways such as the help of a family member or friend (as long as they are not the person thought to be the cause of risk), an advocate or Independent Mental Capacity Advocate, an interpreter or other communication assistance or aids.

Where a crime may have been committed, there should always be a conversation with the adult regarding whether they wish the police to be involved. If the adult does not want the police to be involved, this does not override a practitioner's responsibility to share information regarding a potential or actual offence with them. Such situations

should be approached sensitively. The adult should be advised that the police will be contacted, and assured that the police will be informed that the adult does not wish to pursue this matter or speak to the police. It is for the police to determine if it is necessary for them to speak to the adult, or if there is action they need to take.

## **8.7 Reporting Information for Young Adults**

Young adults may suspect potential or actual abuse of someone using our services, whether this be involving a member of staff or a parent or carer or someone else, AudioActive want young adults to feel able to raise it with a member of staff.

Staff will tell young adults when they first start working with them what to do if they are worried about their own safety or the safety of another child. Wherever possible this should be followed up with written information such as is laid out in this section.

The young adult should speak to any staff member as soon as they are able to, even if there is no proof of anything happening. This might be easier with a person they trust already. The member of staff will hear what the concerns are and help work out what action should be taken and if anyone needs help keeping safe.

The member of staff will follow standard reporting procedures. Who they tell will depend on whether action needs to be taken immediately, and who is the most appropriate person to tell.

## **8.8 Allegations regarding colleagues from other organisations**

AudioActive staff will discuss allegations that are made against or concerns that arise about colleagues in partner agencies, directly with their manager or the DSL. They will otherwise keep this confidential. The staff member's manager will discuss this with our DSL who will contact the organisation's DSL. Our DSL will leave the case for the other organisation's DSL to manage and only receive information back on a need-to-know basis.

## **8.9 Managing an Allegation Made Against a Member of Staff**

All concerns or allegations raised about staff will be treated with sensitivity and seriousness and staff are strongly advised to report any incident involving them that could give rise to concern, including the potential for misinterpretation by others.

Circumstances in which staff may 'blow the whistle' or directly report safeguarding concerns against colleagues include:

- Behaviour or conduct in their personal life that might indicate unsuitability to work with young adults (e.g. domestic abuse or assault against another adult).
- Behaviour that has harmed or may have harmed a child, young person or young adult.
- Inappropriate or professionally unboundaried relations with young adults.
- Possibly committed a crime against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

This relates to all staff and anyone in a position of trust, including those who:

- Work directly with young adults.
- Work in a setting where young adults regard them as safe and trustworthy.
- Have access to sensitive information regarding young adults
- Are senior managers or trustees who have responsibility for appointing people to work with young adults

In the instance of an allegation being made against any staff, the person should not discuss the issue with any other staff members; they must make immediate contact with and disclose concerns directly to our DSL who will handle the matter fairly, consistently and promptly. This also applies to any low-level concerns, even when there is no evidence to support concerns.

If the member of staff does not feel comfortable speaking to the DSL about the concern, or because their concern relates to the DSL, the staff member can contact either the CEO, Adam Joolia

The TSL will take responsibility for both the Charity Commission and Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) being informed, providing additional support to the DSL as required.

### **8.10 Sharing information with parents/carers with a statutory duty of care**

The parent/carers of vulnerable adults, with statutory duty of care must be contacted where allegations have been made. The DSL/CEO will liaise with the Adult Social Care team, the Police and the LADO to ensure this is done safely and sensitively and only when appropriate.

Senior staff contact service users parents/carers/families with parental responsibility to gain consent from them regarding the collection of their child's information.

### **8.11 Supporting Staff Following a Safeguarding Incident or Disclosure**

AudioActive recognises how distressing it can be following an observation or disclosure of abuse. In the first instance staff should speak with their immediate line manager who may be able to offer support internally, however, in some instances either external or more therapeutic support may be required. Additionally, staff should utilise RPS to reflect on stressful work.

### **8.12 Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR)**

Serious Case Reviews are now called SAR, they are now a statutory duty under the Care Act for Safeguarding Adult Boards (SABs) to undertake when a vulnerable adult dies because of known or suspected abuse or neglect and there is a concern that there was something partner agencies could have done to prevent it, or they are still alive but have suffered extreme abuse or neglect.

The purpose is to establish whether there were lessons to learn, review the effectiveness of procedures, inform inter-agency practice, improve practice and highlight good practice. AudioActive staff can request a SAR through the local adult

safeguarding board. The Sussex Safeguarding Adults Review Protocol outlines procedures for making a referral.

## **APPENDIX 1. CATEGORIES OF ABUSE**

Abuse by definition is any act, or failure to act, which results in a significant breach of a person's human rights. At AudioActive we work with young adults with multiple complex needs, living in care, on the fringes of 'gang' involvement, substance misuse and unstable homes. We observe and hear disclosures of abuse or risk of harm in our groups, outreach, 12ls and school projects. Many of these disclosures or observations constitute our legal duty to report based under the traditional four categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

### **Physical Abuse Including:**

- Assault
- Hitting
- Slapping
- Pushing
- Misuse of medication
- Restraint
- Inappropriate physical sanctions

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern for a child or young person:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury;
- Several different explanations provided for an injury;
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment;

- Parents / carers who are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Parents who are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment;
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (e.g. bruising, cuts), fabricated, induced illness;
- Family use of different doctor surgeries, Minor Injury Units, or A&E departments;
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.

### **Domestic Violence Including:**

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional abuse
- Honour-based violence

### **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
- Sexual assault
- Sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the individual is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetration or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. Non-penetrative acts may also include non-contact activities, such as involving looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child or

vulnerable adult in preparation for abuse (including via the Internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can children.

Sexual exploitation can take many forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for needs such as affection, accommodation, and/or gifts, to serious organised crime and trafficking. The perpetrator always holds some degree of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops.

### **Psychological Abuse Including:**

- Emotional abuse
- Threats of harm or abandonment
- Deprivation of contact
- Humiliation
- Blaming
- Controlling
- Intimidation
- Coercion
- Harassment
- Verbal abuse
- Cyber bullying
- Isolation
- Unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks

Psychological or Emotional abuse involves the persistent emotional maltreatment such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the individuals' emotional development. It may involve conveying that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the individuals the opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing the individual to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of an individual.

**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.
- The misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- Change in living conditions.
- Lack of heating, clothing or food.
- Inability to pay bills/unexplained shortage of money.
- Unexplained withdrawals from an account.
- Unexplained loss/misplacement of financial documents.
- The recent addition of authorised signers on a client or donor's signature card.
- Sudden or unexpected changes in a will or other financial documents.

The Care Act 2014 describes 'financial abuse' as a type of abuse which includes having money or other property stolen, being defrauded, being put under pressure in relation to money or other property and having money or other property misused. While this is clear, financial abuse takes many forms. It's a type of abuse that can start subtle and is often hard to detect. When defining financial abuse, we know there are many elements at play. It is true that financial abuse often involves or is associated with:

- Someone taking or misusing someone else's money or belongings for their own gain.
- Harming, depriving or disadvantaging the victim.
- Controlling someone's purchases or access to money.
- Often associated with other forms of abuse.
- Doesn't always involve a crime like theft or fraud

**Modern Slavery Encompasses:**

- Slavery
- Human trafficking
- Forced labour and domestic servitude

- Traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment

### **Discriminatory Abuse Including Forms of:**

- Harassment
- Slurs or similar treatment, because of
  - Race
  - Gender and gender identity
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Sexual orientation
  - 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 due to the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

### **Neglect and Acts of Omission Include:**

- 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.

### **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.
- A decision on whether a response is required under safeguarding will depend

on the adult's ability to protect themselves by controlling their own behaviour. There may come a point when they are no longer able to do this, without external support

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and affect one person or more. Professionals and others should look beyond single incidents or individuals to identify patterns of harm. Repeated instances of poor care may be an indication of more serious problems and of what we now describe as organisational abuse. In order to see these patterns, it is important that information is recorded and appropriately shared. Patterns of abuse vary and include:

- Serial abuse, where the perpetrator seeks out and 'grooms' individuals. Sexual abuse sometimes falls into this pattern as do some forms of financial abuse.
- Long-term abuse, in the context of ongoing family relationships e.g. domestic violence between spouses or generations or persistent psychological abuse.
- Opportunistic abuse, e.g. theft occurring because money or jewellery has been left lying around

### **Contextual Safeguarding**

In addition to these traditional definitions of safeguarding, 'Contextual Safeguarding' expands the objectives of safeguarding systems in recognition that young people and young adults are vulnerable to abuse beyond their front doors. It places an emphasis and duty on our responsibility to also recognise the wider-environment when we consider what constitutes abuse. This may include:

- Peer on peer and relationship abuse
- Criminal exploitation
- Sexual exploitation
- Online abuse
- Missing episodes
- 'Gang' involvement
- Radicalisation
- Safeguarding risks in public spaces
- Trafficking
- Modern slavery

Many of these risk areas and abuse forms though often outside of AudioActive projects or locations, may be a theme of common knowledge to a group of its young people, such as a park that young females often go to drink and hang out with older males, or a house in the community often used as a space to smoke drugs. This knowledge as a result may also be known to staff or volunteers and constitutes contextual safeguarding' concerns that should follow the usual reporting mechanisms as outlined in this procedure.

### **Safeguarding and Mental Health**

It is also the case that more and more mental health problems and disorders are being seen in young people today. Staff may be presented with an immediate safeguarding concern for a young adult's mental health and resultant physical wellbeing. For example, symptoms of psychosis, increased severity in self-harm, or disclosed suicidal ideation or attempt. All of which are recognised signs and symptoms of harm/abuse and require immediate reporting. Where suicidal ideation or severe self-harm is apparent and deemed to be an immediate threat to life, emergency services should be called immediately, in line with any other form of harm or abuse that is life-threatening. The DSL should be informed verbally as soon as possible and followed up on writing on the Concern Form.

### **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a persons' basic physical and/or psychological needs, is likely to result in serious issues later in life. A person in a position of responsibility may ignore the young adult's medical, emotional or physical care needs, failing to provide access to appropriate health care and support, educational services or withholding the necessities of life, such as medication.

### **Radicalisation**

AudioActive also has a duty under the Prevent Duty 2015 to have "due regard to the need to prevent young adults from being drawn into terrorism". Normal safeguarding reporting procedures should be used by staff that suspect any form of radicalisation and subsequently reported by the DSL to the Local Authority – whether to Adult Social Care or Children's Services and/or the police. The Prevent Agenda helps to stop people becoming involved in or supporting violent extremism or terrorism through

mentoring programmes such 'Channel'. For further information go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

AudioActive has a duty to report Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) a form of abuse that constitutes significant harm. It is not an issue of personal preference; it is illegal, it is extremely harmful, and constitutes a form of violence against women and girls.

[Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information](#)

### **So-called 'Honour-Based Violence'**

An umbrella term used to describe practices used to control and punish the behaviour of a person in a family/group, to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs in the name of 'honour'. Although predominantly associated with women and girls, males can also be victims. Violence and abuse may occur when it is felt that an individual's behaviour has broken the 'honour code', bringing disgrace to their family. Perpetrators will feel they need to restore their loss of face and standing in their community. There is often an element of approval and social acceptance from other family members and community. It is now unlawful to marry under the age of 18.

### **Trafficking**

Trafficking young adults is when they are tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Young adults can be trafficked for:

- Sexual exploitation
- Benefit fraud
- Forced marriage
- Domestic slavery like cleaning, cooking and childcare
- Forced labour in factories or agriculture
- Committing crimes, like begging, theft, working on cannabis farms or moving drugs.

Trafficked people experience many types of abuse and neglect. Traffickers use physical, sexual, and emotional abuse to control, they are likely to be physically/emotionally neglected and sexually exploited.

### **County Lines**

County Lines is the police term for urban gangs exploiting young adults into moving drugs from a hub, normally a large city, into other markets – suburban areas and market and coastal towns – using dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines”. This can involve young adults being trafficked away from their home area, staying in accommodation and selling and manufacturing drugs.

## **APPENDIX 2. GUIDANCE FOR HANDLING SAFEGUARDING SITUATIONS**

### **If you witness abuse, or abuse has just taken place you should:**

- Get involved only to maintain your safety and that of others needing help.
- Discuss with the young adult contacting emergency services where needed.
- You may have to decide if they are able to make this decision themselves (section 8).
- Call the Police If you need to protect a vulnerable adult, or if a crime has taken place.
- Call an ambulance if someone is injured or is in need of medical attention.
- Consider what can be done to keep yourself and others safe until help arrives
- Not tamper with or destroy anything which might be taken as evidence
- Explain to the vulnerable adult how they will be involved and kept informed.
- Call the DSL immediately (or someone else in the Safeguarding Team)
- Record what happened and actions straight after (on a safeguarding form).
- Contact your manager asap to notify them as to what has happened.
- Consider whether you need on-going or subsequent support in the aftermath.

### **If you Receive a Disclosure or Allegation, you should:**

- Listen respectfully to what the person is saying, stay calm, don't show shock/disbelief.
- Reassure them they will be taken seriously, they have done the right thing telling .
- Use open questions to find out what happened e.g. 'tell me, can you describe, explain'
- Not begin to investigate, or ask detailed, leading or probing questions
- Not promise to keep the things they are telling you a secret
- Reassure them that any abuse that happened to them was not their fault
- Ascertain if this is historical or if there is an immediate threat of significant harm

- Explore options, make sure they know there are people whose job it is to help
- If immediate threat of harm, tell them you will call the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Call the DSL immediately (or someone else in the Safeguarding Team if need be)
- If the disclosure was historical or they are no longer at risk of harm, tell them you will tell your manager and complete a form that will be sent to the DSL.
- Consider [Pan-Sussex Safeguarding Threshold Guidance](#); what other agencies can do
- Tell them the names of the people you will contact if this is possible
- Encourage them to report the matter to the police if a crime is suspected
- Explain what will happen next, and how they will be kept informed and supported
- Record the disclosure on a Concern Form as soon as possible
- Consider whether or not you need any on-going or subsequent support
- Send the DSL the completed Concern Form within 12 hours

## APPENDIX 3. CONTACT DETAILS

### Our Safeguarding Team:

**Our DSL is Michelle Hunter (07928 816 007) [michelle@audioactive.org.uk](mailto:michelle@audioactive.org.uk)**

**Our DSO is Jo Bates (07847 182 594) [jo@audioactive.org.uk](mailto:jo@audioactive.org.uk)**

**Our CEO (and DDSL) is Adam Joolia (07857 945 018) [adam@audioactive.org.uk](mailto:adam@audioactive.org.uk)**

**Our TSL is Jasmine Marshall Fraser (07815 205 746) [jasmine@audioactive.org.uk](mailto:jasmine@audioactive.org.uk)**

It is usually best for staff to contact their line manager, if there is time to do so, just to bring the issue to their attention. In terms of the Safeguarding Team, Staff should always start by contacting the DSL. Unless it is not appropriate to contact them (e.g. the concern is about them or staff feel they are not meeting their responsibilities) in which case, staff should contact the CEO. Unless it is not appropriate to contact them, in which case staff should contact the TSL.

### Local Authority Adult Social Care teams

#### Brighton and Hove City Council

You can use the [online reporting form](#)

You can call Access Point on 01273 295 555

You can email [hascsafeguardinghub@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:hascsafeguardinghub@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Or seek advice and support [Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Adults Board website](#)

### **West Sussex County Council**

You can use the [online reporting form](#)

OR Call Adults Services 01243 642 121 or for emergencies out of hours 033 022 27007

Or you can email [adults.carepoint@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:adults.carepoint@westsussex.gov.uk)

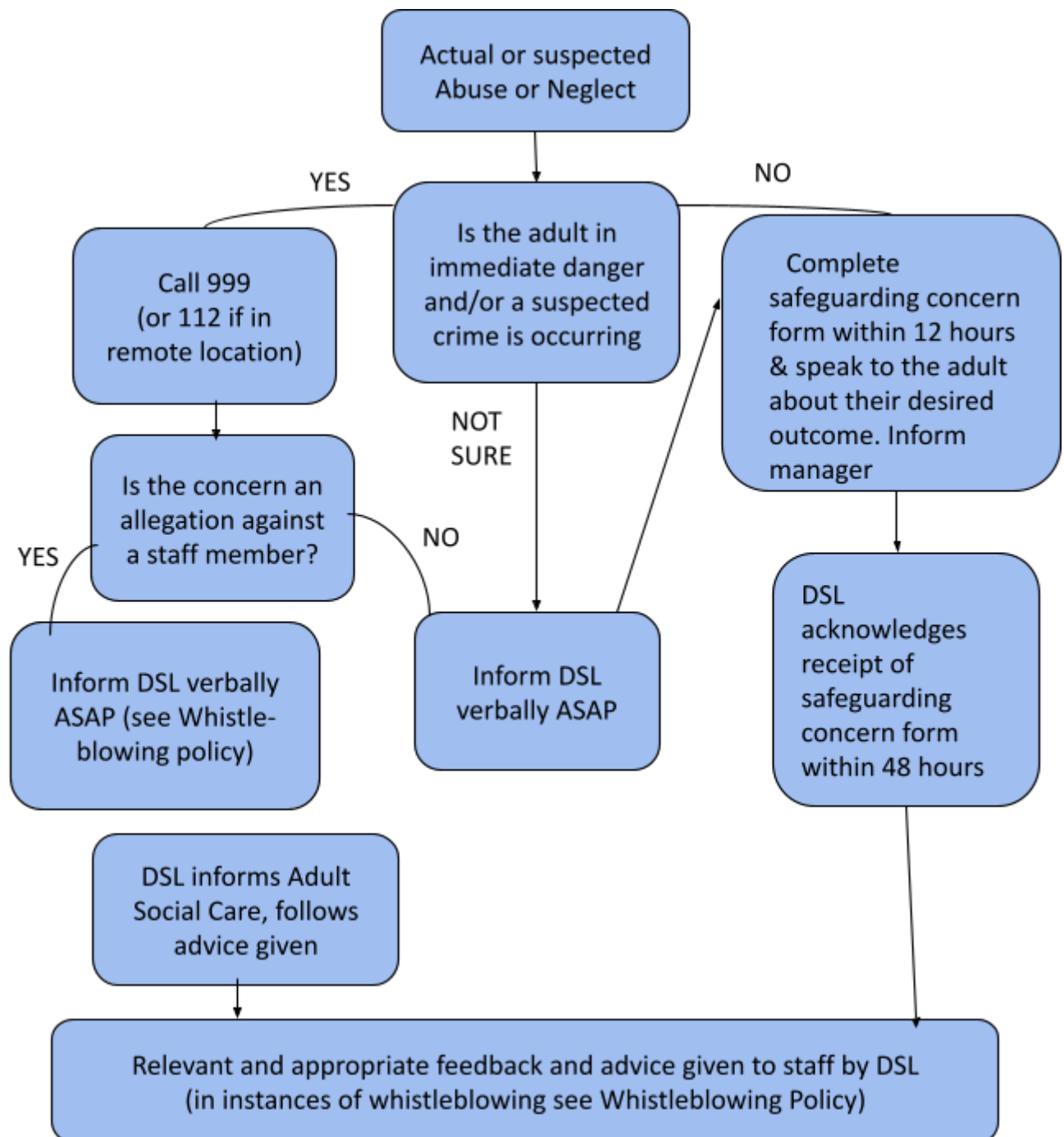
### **East Sussex County Council**

You can use the [online report form](#)

You can contact Health and Social Care Connect on 0345 60 80 191

Or you can email [HSCC@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:HSCC@eastsussex.gov.uk)

## **APPENDIX 4. REPORTING CONCERNS FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS FLOWCHART**



## **APPENDIX 5. WHAT HAPPENS FOLLOWING A REFERRAL**

When the Local Authority / Adult Social Care receives a safeguarding concern they will check to see if they already have any other information that would help determine how best to support the adult and address any immediate risks.

This will also take account of the adult's wishes and what they want to happen, as far as this is known. Under Section 42 of the Care Act, the safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether the local authority is meeting those needs),
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect,
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

These are referred to as the 'three key tests'. If these tests are met the Local Authority has a legal duty to make enquiries or cause others to do so. If the presenting information is unclear, fact-finding should be undertaken to support decision making and determine if the key tests are met. Enquiries will always be undertaken using the six principles outlined in the Care Act and using a Making Safeguarding Personal approach.

In undertaking an enquiry the local authority will seek relevant information, including talking with the adult who may be at risk and to the person who raised the concern. The local authority will consult with the adult unless there is a significant reason not to do this, for example if talking to them at this point might put them at further risk. Concerns that do not meet the threshold for the Section 42 duty to make enquiries may be resolved through other actions, for example an assessment of care and support needs, or passing information onto another service or agency.

The person who raised the safeguarding concern should always be informed by the local authority that it has been received and where appropriate notified as to the outcome of how the concern is being progressed. Adult Social Care can be contacted directly for further information on specific safeguarding concerns, in accordance with information sharing protocols.

## **APPENDIX 6. ACCESSIBILITY OF COURTS AND TRIBUNALS FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS**

The HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) released an updated Vulnerability Action Plan in April 2024, outlining steps to make court and tribunal services more accessible to vulnerable individuals. Key initiatives include:

- **Support Measures:** Implementing special measures such as remote links for giving evidence and the use of screens in court to support vulnerable users.
- **Reasonable Adjustments:** Providing accommodations for users with disabilities, including alternative formats for information and assistance with forms.
- **Intermediary Services:** Offering communication support through intermediaries for those who need it during court proceedings.
- **Accessibility Improvements:** Investing in the physical accessibility of court buildings and ensuring that services are designed with the needs of vulnerable users in mind.

These efforts reflect a commitment to ensuring that vulnerable individuals can access justice safely and with confidence.

Any staff supporting adults through court cases or tribunals should read guidance relevant to their situation and liaise with their relevant workers where appropriate.

For more information:

- [Online Safety Act: explainer - GOV.UK](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 - Legislation.gov.uk](#)
- [HMCTS Vulnerability Action Plan April 2024 update - GOV.](#)