

SALT SOUTH WEST SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly young people, at risk adults and adults who receive support, from any harm that may be caused due to their encountering SALT South West. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or volunteers.
- The design and implementation of SALT South West's programs and activities encompasses the commitments made by SALT South West and informs staff/volunteers and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.

(<https://www.england.nhs.uk/safeguarding/about/>)

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including young people and at-risk adults, from potential harm that may arise from encountering our staff/volunteers or programs.

SALT South West believes that everyone we encounter, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation in accordance with *Equality Act 2010*. SALT South West will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff/volunteers or associated personnel.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding: adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. These key areas of safeguarding may have different policies and procedures associated with them, including if we feel that a child or young person is at risk in connection with the adult survivor to whom we are delivering therapy.

SALT South West commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

RESPONSIBILITIES

SALT South West will:

- Ensure all staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy.
- Design and undertake all programs and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their contact with SALT South West. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our service is gathered and communicated.
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing, and deploying staff/volunteers and associated personnel. Staff at SALT will be subject to DBS Checks at Standard or enhanced levels depending on their work in the organisation.
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organisation.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

SALT South West staff/volunteers and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18.
- Sexually abuse or exploit children/young people. (*Child Sexual Exploitation set out in section 51 Sexual Offences Act 2003*)
- Subject a child/young person to physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, or neglect.
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking (*Human Trafficking Act 2018*)

Adult safeguarding & protection from sexual exploitation

SALT South West/volunteers staff and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at risk/vulnerable adults.
- Subject an at-risk/ vulnerable adult to physical, emotional, psychological abuse, or neglect.

To include

- Exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to service users.
- Engage in any sexual relationships with service users since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. (*Vulnerable Groups Act 2006*).

Additionally, SALT South West staff/volunteers and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by any SALT South West staff/volunteer member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff member.

Enabling reports

SALT South West will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and those we work with.

Any staff reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistleblowing channels will be protected by SALT South West Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (*Whistleblowing*) Policy.

SALT South West will also accept complaints from external sources such as significant others in relation to service users, professionals, and members of official bodies.

How to report a safeguarding concern

Staff members/volunteers who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to their Safeguarding Team Leads or Supervisors. If the staff member or volunteer does not feel comfortable reporting to their Safeguarding Team Leads or supervisors (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to any other appropriate Committee member.

Responses

SALT South West will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations (see Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns in Associated Policies - whistleblowing).

SALT South West will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy.

SALT South West will offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff/volunteers or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need-to-know basis only and should always be kept secure.

Associated Policies

Code of Conduct

Anti Bullying and Harassment policy

Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (*Whistle blower*) policy

Complaints Policy

Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns

Procedures for safeguarding in staff recruitment

Glossary of terms

Child

A person below the age of 18 years.

Harm

Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights.

Psychological harm

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement, isolation, and the misuse of power.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults, and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

This definition draws from our values and principles and shapes our culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our service staff/volunteers and committee. It requires proactively identifying, prevention, and guarding

against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable, and transparent systems for response, reporting, and learning when risks materialize. Those systems must be survivor-centered and also protect those accused until proven guilty.

Safeguarding puts affected persons at the center of all we do.

Sexual abuse

The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual exploitation

The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

Survivor

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience, and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

At risk adult

Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

To be reviewed January 2025

SALT South West October 2023

