



## Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure

Love, Amelia has a safeguarding lead who is the responsible person for reporting abuse and neglect to the appropriate agency.

In addition, a member of our trustee board has the responsibility of overseeing safeguarding of our charity, including reporting of concerns to the Charity Commission for England and Wales, and making decisions on safeguarding matters involving our staff and volunteers, or children and adults at risk.

- Steph Capewell, Chief Executive, is Safeguarding Lead for Love, Amelia. Steph can be reached on 07394878432 or via email to [steph@loveamelia.org.uk](mailto:steph@loveamelia.org.uk).
- Jen Archbold, trustee, is board of trustees safeguarding lead.

Love, Amelia acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance, and complies with best practice.

This policy applies to all paid staff and volunteers at Love, Amelia, including the board of trustees. This policy also applies to anyone who is working on behalf of Love, Amelia.

The policy aims to ensure that all aspects of Love, Amelia's activities are conducted in a manner that prioritises the safety and welfare of adults at risk. Love, Amelia believes that every person, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background, has the right to equal protection from abuse and neglect. We acknowledge that some adults are especially vulnerable, due to disability, communication needs, impact of previous experiences and trauma, level of dependency and other challenges. This principle guides all our interactions and activities, ensuring that every person involved with Love, Amelia receives equal safeguarding protection and has the opportunity to participate safely and fully in our activities.

### Our responsibilities

Love, Amelia operates in an environment where safeguarding adults at risk is a shared responsibility. While there are no mandatory regulations in the UK specifically requiring staff

and volunteers to report concerns of abuse directly to authorities, the importance of vigilance and a proactive response is underscored by the expectations set out in legislation and national guidance.

The Care Act 2014 imposes duties on local authorities to safeguard adults at risk. Although these duties do not directly apply to our charity, they remain relevant as Love, Amelia may receive funding or be contracted to deliver services on behalf of local authorities. It is essential that we understand and support these statutory duties in our interactions with all individuals who come into contact with our services.

In accordance with Regulatory and Risk Framework, the Charity Commission for England and Wales can hold trustees to account check that trustees followed their guidance and the law. The Charity Commission can look at how trustees have acted to protect beneficiaries, staff, volunteers and anyone else who comes into contact with Love, Amelia.

In alignment with our commitment to safeguarding adults, Love, Amelia adopts the following responsibilities, which reflect our proactive approach to preventing and responding to abuse or neglect:

Stopping abuse or neglect where possible: We will act swiftly to stop any abuse or neglect we become aware of, where possible. We will use all available resources and cooperate with local authorities and other agencies.

Preventing harm and reducing risk: We will implement preventative measures to minimise the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs.

Empowering choices: Safeguard adults in a manner that respects their right to make decisions and maintain control over how they live their lives, ensuring any intervention respects their autonomy while safeguarding their well-being.

Enhancing quality of life: We will focus our interventions on improving the life conditions of the adults concerned, supporting their health, dignity, and independence.

Raising awareness: We will engage in and promote public awareness campaigns that educate the community and professionals about recognising, preventing, and responding effectively to abuse and neglect. This effort includes collaboration with community groups and other stakeholders.

Information and support: We will provide clear, understandable information and support about the different types of abuse, ways to stay safe, and the procedures to follow to raise concerns about the safety or well-being of an adult.

Reporting of abuse or neglect: We will report concerns where necessary with the appropriate authorities.

## Definition of Safeguarding and Adult Abuse.

Safeguarding involves embedding practices throughout the organization that are designed to prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect. This proactive approach ensures that protective measures are integrated into every aspect of our operations, supporting the safety and well-being of adults with whom we interact. Safeguarding is not only about preventing abuse and neglect but also about promoting the well-being of adults, ensuring they have the support, care, and intervention necessary to live safely and securely.

The Care Act 2014 guidance defines adult safeguarding as:

*‘Protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.’*

Abuse and neglect can occur across all socio-economic groups, genders, and cultures, and is not confined to any specific demographic or location. It can happen anywhere: in an adult’s own home, in public spaces, within healthcare settings such as hospitals and GP practices. The potential perpetrators of harm are diverse and can include strangers, friends, neighbours, family members, or individuals in positions of power and trust, such as caregivers or professional service providers. Importantly, self-neglect is also a significant form of harm, where the individual themselves may be the source of risk due to various factors including mental health issues, disability, or life circumstances.

Abuse can take a number of forms. The Care Act 2014 identifies ten types of abuse, these are:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Discriminatory Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Modern Slavery
- Organisational or Institutional Abuse
- Self-neglect
- Psychological and Emotional abuse
- Neglect and Acts of Omission
- Financial or Material Abuse

Additional information on signs and symptoms of abuse can be found on the [SCIE website](#)

## Definition of an Adult at Risk.

We recognise that many policies and organisations refer to 'adults at risk' or 'vulnerable adults'. This policy adopts the definition of adult at risk as outlined in the Care Act 2014.

In accordance with the Care Act 2014, Love, Amelia recognises some adults are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect and are considered to be an adult at risk.

An Adult at Risk is defined as a person who:

*'..has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.'* (Care Act 2014, Section 42)

Adults considered at risk **may** include, but are not limited to, individuals who are:

- Elderly or frail,
- Experiencing mental ill-health,
- Living with physical or sensory disabilities,
- Living with a learning disabilities,
- Experiencing from severe physical illnesses,
- Living with addiction, such as drugs or alcohol,
- Experiencing homelessness.

## Safeguarding Principles

Love, Amelia will adhere to the six safeguarding principles set out by the Care Act 2014. These principles not only guide our actions but we acknowledge they are used by local authorities and other statutory bodies in their safeguarding efforts.

1. Empowerment: People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent
2. Prevention: It is better to take action before harm occurs.
3. Proportionality: The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
4. Protection: Support and representation for those in greatest need.
5. Partnership: Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
6. Accountability: Accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice.

## Confidentiality

Love, Amelia is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of those who access our services. We recognise the importance of the trust placed in us by individuals seeking our support. However, our commitment to confidentiality does not supersede our responsibility to protect adults at risk from abuse.

In alignment with the principle of empowerment, we prioritise involving the individuals concerned in decisions affecting their safety and well-being. Whenever possible, we explore the thoughts and wishes of the person we're concerned about and seek their permission before reporting a safeguarding concern. This approach ensures that our actions are informed by their preferences and respects their autonomy.

However, there are situations where maintaining confidentiality may not be possible or advisable. This includes circumstances where:

- The person is in serious and immediate danger, and there is no time to seek their permission.
- It is not possible to obtain permission, or the person is unable to give permission, such as in cases where the alleged or suspected abuser is present.
- Seeking permission could potentially increase the risk of harm to the person concerned.

In these cases, the well-being and safety of the adult, or others who may also be at risk, take precedence over the principle of confidentiality. Our safeguarding procedures detail the steps for making a data disclosure and raising a safeguarding concern in such situations, ensuring that all actions are taken in compliance with legal and ethical standards.

## Mental Capacity and Safeguarding

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 is central to decisions and actions in safeguarding adults. Love, Amelia will apply the five principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 when supporting adults at risk. The principles are:

### Principle 1: A presumption of capacity.

Every adult has the right to make his or her own decisions and must be assumed to have capacity to do so unless it is proved otherwise. This means that you cannot assume that someone cannot make a decision for themselves just because they have a particular medical condition or disability.

### Principle 2: Individuals being supported to make their own decisions.

A person must be given all practicable help before anyone treats them as not being able to make their own decisions. This means you should make every effort to encourage and support people to make the decision for themselves. If lack of capacity is established, it is still important that you involve the person as far as possible in making decisions.

### Principle 3: Unwise decisions

People have the right not to be treated as lacking capacity merely because they make a decision that others deem 'unwise'. Everyone has their own values, beliefs and preferences which may not be the same as those of other people.

### Principle 4: Best interests

Anything done for or on behalf of a person who lacks mental capacity must be done in their best interests.

### Principle 5: Less restrictive option

Someone making a decision or acting on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must consider whether it is possible to decide or act in a way that would interfere less with the person's rights and freedoms of action, or whether there is a need to decide or act at all. Any intervention should be weighed up in the particular circumstances of the case.

More information about the Mental Capacity Act can be found on [SCIE website](#).

The person is determined as unable to make the relevant decision in relation to safeguarding concerns if they are unable to:

1. understand information given to them
2. retain that information long enough to be able to make the decision
3. weigh up the information available to make the decision
4. communicate their decision – this could be by talking, using sign language or even simple muscle movements such as blinking an eye or squeezing a hand.

## **Screening of staff and volunteers**

Love, Amelia upholds a strict screening process for all staff, volunteers, and trustees to ensure the safety of the adults we serve. This involves conducting Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all eligible individuals. Depending on the level of interaction with vulnerable groups, we require either a standard or enhanced DBS check, and in cases where roles do not qualify for these levels, we may opt for a basic check to cover any unspent convictions.

Alongside DBS checks, we also require references for each candidate to further verify their suitability for working with adults at risk. No one is allowed to start their role until the results from both DBS checks and references have been satisfactorily reviewed. Specifically, any applicant with an unspent conviction for a sexual offence against a adult at risk is automatically disqualified from employment, volunteering, or being appointed to the board of trustees. Other convictions are considered on an individual basis, taking into account the nature of the offence, the relevance to the role, the time elapsed since the offence, and any other relevant circumstances.

## **Supervision and training**

To uphold our commitment to safeguarding, Love, Amelia provides comprehensive induction training for all new staff and volunteers. This training ensures they are well-versed in good safeguarding practices, aligned with our service's core values and the importance of confidentiality. Additionally, we conduct regular supervision to monitor and support our staff and volunteers, assessing their ongoing training needs to ensure their knowledge remains current and effective.

Love, Amelia offers various training opportunities in safeguarding, which include internal policy awareness sessions, briefing sessions conducted by local authorities or other relevant bodies, and participation in training programs offered through partner agencies. This multi-faceted approach to training enables our team to stay informed on best practices and legislative changes, ensuring that they are equipped to provide a safe and supportive environment for all adults we engage with.

## **Reporting staff, volunteers, and trustees**

We take any safeguarding concerns regarding our staff, volunteers, and trustees very seriously. Should a situation arise where a member of our team is moved or dismissed due to actions or inactions arising from safeguarding concerns, we will inform the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and adhere to their guidance for such cases.

If it is alleged that a team member has behaved in a way that has harmed or might harm an adult at risk, committed a possible criminal offence against an adult at risk, or behaved in a manner suggesting they may pose a risk of harm to an adult at risk, or be unsuitable to work with adults at risk, we will inform the local authority the Charity Commission for England and Wales. This ensures that all potential risks are managed according to legal requirements and best practices in safeguarding.

## **Safeguarding Adults Procedure**

### **Serious and imminent risk**

If a staff member, trustee, or volunteer believe an adult is in serious and imminent risk, or where there is threat to life, contact 999 immediately. Remain calm and advise the operator of the emergency.

Once 999 has been called and the immediate danger has been addressed, the staff member, trustee or volunteer involved must inform the Safeguarding Lead at Love, Amelia of the incident and the actions taken.

If the Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, the Board Safeguarding Lead should be contacted immediately.

The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that a 'Safeguarding Concerns

Recording Form' (found in Appendix 1 of this policy) is completed, detailing the nature of the incident and any interventions made. This document must be stored securely in accordance with the Love, Amelia Data Protection Policy, ensuring the confidentiality and safety of all information related to the incident.

## **Reporting a concern**

There are instances where abuse might be suspected even though an adult at risk has not explicitly disclosed being abused. Adults at risk may not report abuse for various reasons (e.g. they might not recognise the abusive behaviour, they could be scared or believe they won't be believed, or barriers such as, language differences, or physical or mental disabilities may prevent them from communicating their experience).

Love, Amelia have a professional and moral obligation to act on any observed or suspected signs of abuse. Safeguarding concerns can be raised at any time and this procedure should be followed in all instances. Where the risk does not warrant an immediate call to 999 (or where a risk remains once the emergency has been dealt with), the following guidelines should be followed to ensure appropriate and sensitive handling of the situation:

Identify the issue: The safeguarding issue may be the result of a direct allegation of abuse made by a child or an adult, an allegation by a third party, a staff member or volunteer seeing or hearing something that prompts a concern.

Listen carefully: Give the person your full attention and do not display shock or disbelief. Allow them to share their story in their own time and way, without pressing them for more information than they are willing to give.

Reassure the person: Let them know they did the right thing by telling you, affirm that it's not their fault, and assure them of their safety.

Avoid making promises: Avoid promising the person that you will keep the information confidential. Explain gently that you need to tell someone who can help. Avoid making promises about outcomes, such as promising that things will be resolved quickly or that everything will be okay. Focus on assuring the adult that they have done the right thing in telling someone.

Do not investigate: Ask only enough questions to understand the context; do not probe or investigate—that is the role of trained professionals.

Do not confront the alleged abuser: It is critical not to confront the person who is suspected of abuse. This could lead to further harm to the person, jeopardise any potential enquiry, and put you at risk.

Do not discuss the matter widely: Only share the information with people who absolutely need to know, such as the designated safeguarding lead and emergency services. Avoid



discussing the situation in an open setting or with individuals who do not have a safeguarding role.

Understand consent: If there are concerns about an adult at risk, it may not always be appropriate to obtain consent from them to report the concern. This is particularly important if there are concerns that seeking consent could put the person in more danger.

## **Contacting the Safeguarding Lead**

When you contact the Safeguarding Lead it would be helpful for them if you were able to advise them of the following:

### Identifying Information:

- Name, date of birth, and contact details of the person at risk, if known.
- Address and local authority area where the person resides.
- Name, date of birth, and contact details of the alleged / suspected perpetrator
- Name and contact details of representative, if applicable.

### Specific Concerns:

- Detail the specific concerns regarding the person at risk.
- Note any additional needs or disabilities the person may have, and if applicable, similar information about anyone responsible for their care.
- Indicate the first language of the person at risk and, if relevant, their responsible person.
- Mention any current or past involvement with social services or any other professional agency.

### Details of the Incident:

- Date and time of the observation or disclosure.
- Location and nature of the disclosure or observation.
- Identify who raised the concern and their relationship to the person at risk.
- Describe what was seen or heard that raised concerns.
- Identify any other witnesses who were present at the time.

### Assessment of Risk:

- Provide your perspective on the likelihood of the risk materialising.
- Assess the potential impact if the concern does materialise.

it is crucial that staff, trustees, or volunteers contact the Safeguarding Lead without delay, even if not all above information is not available. The urgency of reporting takes precedence, and lack of complete information should not delay communication.

The information generally requested forms the basis of the 'Safeguarding Concerns Recording Form' (Appendix 1). This form is designed to capture critical details that are instrumental in assessing and addressing the concern effectively. Where possible staff,

trustees, or volunteers should use this form to record their thoughts and concerns. However, if the formal recording form is not accessible at the moment a concern arises, it is imperative that staff, trustees, or volunteers make written notes detailing their observations and concerns as accurately as possible. These notes are vital for conveying the nature of the concern to the Safeguarding Lead and ensuring that no crucial details are overlooked or forgotten. Handwritten notes should be kept securely on file in accordance with our data protection and confidentiality policies.

### **Action of the Safeguarding Lead**

The responsibility to determine whether a reported safeguarding concern meets the necessary threshold for further action rests with the Safeguarding Lead. In their absence, this decision will be made by the Board Safeguarding Lead, or, if neither is available, by the most senior member of the team. The following steps and considerations guide the decision-making process:

Assessment of Information: The Safeguarding Lead will carefully consider all information provided by the individual raising the concern, focusing on the specific reasons for their worries.

Person-Centred Decision Making: Central to all decisions is the adult. The Safeguarding Lead will ensure they put the best interests of the adult at the heart of their decision making.

Handling Internal Concerns: If the concern involves a staff member, trustee or volunteer, the Safeguarding Lead may consider suspending the individual pending a thorough investigation to ensure objectivity and safety.

Confidentiality: The Safeguarding Lead will decide if it is appropriate to breach confidentiality and report the concern.

Decision Making: Following the initial assessment the Safeguarding Lead evaluates all available information and a decision is then made on whether to formally report the concern.

Documentation: The outcome of this decision, whether the concern is escalated or not, must be documented meticulously on the Safeguarding Concerns Recording Form.

Record Keeping: A centralised record of all safeguarding concerns is maintained by the Safeguarding Lead to ensure transparency and accountability.

### **CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK**

Sunderland City Council Adult Safeguarding Team

0191 5618934 or 0191 5618936 (Monday to Thursday 8.30am - 5:15pm, Friday 8.30am - 4.45pm)

0191 520 5552 (Out of Hours, including Saturday and Sunday)

South Tyneside Council Adult Safeguarding Team

0191 424 6000 (Monday to Thursday 8.30am - 5pm, Friday - 8.30am to 4.30pm)

0191 456 2093 (Out of Hours, including Saturday and Sunday)

Durham County Council Adult Services

03000 267979 (24hour service)

Newcastle City Council Adult Services

0191 278 8377 (Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm)

0191 278 8156 (Out of Hours, including Saturday and Sunday)

Gateshead Council Adult Services

0191 433 7033 (24 hour service)

North Tyneside Council Adult Services

0191 643 2777 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

0330 333 7475 (Out of Hours, including Saturday and Sunday)

If the concern relates to a care home or hospital, please get in touch with the Care Quality Commission on 03000616161

**In an emergency always call 999**

## Access to support

Love, Amelia recognising the emotional impact that identifying safeguarding concerns can have on individuals, and ensures that staff members, trustees, and volunteers are supported throughout the process. It is crucial that those who report safeguarding issues do not feel personally responsible for the outcomes of any actions taken. The Safeguarding Lead is tasked with ensuring that emotional support is readily available. Upon a safeguarding report being filed, the Safeguarding Lead will inform their line manager about the situation. This enables the line manager to provide necessary emotional support to the reporting individual. This approach helps maintain a supportive environment, ensuring that everyone involved is adequately supported and that the focus remains on the wellbeing of those affected by safeguarding concerns.