

## Safeguarding Policy

### Principles

1. SOFT UK is committed to the safeguarding of all children, young people and adults at risk with whom it has contact.
2. Everyone involved in the care of children, young people and adults at risk has a responsibility for the protection of those individuals from harm.
3. There is a duty placed on public agencies (including voluntary organisations) under the Human Rights Act (1998) to intervene to protect the rights of citizens. Also the Children Act (1989) makes it clear that the welfare of the child is paramount .
4. In order to protect everyone from potential and actual abuse it is necessary for all staff, trustees and volunteers to have an understanding of the issues involved and that appropriate procedures are in place that are shared and understood by all concerned.
5. SOFT UK's safeguarding policy arises from the following principles:
  - The welfare of the child, young person or adult at risk is paramount;
  - Everyone, regardless of age, gender, disability or ethnic origin has a right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation;
  - It is not your responsibility as volunteers, staff or trustees of SOFT UK to decide whether or not abuse is occurring, but it is your responsibility to act on any concerns and do something about it.

### Objectives

6. The key objectives of this policy are:
  - To explain the responsibilities SOFT UK and its staff, volunteers, and trustees have in respect of safeguarding children and adults at risk.
  - To provide staff, volunteers, and trustees with an overview of child and adult safeguarding.
  - To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where a child or adult at risk safeguarding issue arises.

### Definitions

7. A child is a child before their birth (i.e. during pregnancy) and until their 18th birthday.
8. An adult at risk is any adult who needs community care services because of mental or other disability, age or illness and who are, or may be, unable to take care of themselves against harm or exploitation.

### Identifying abuse

9. The term 'abuse' is used to describe various ways that someone can be harmed or mistreated.
10. Abuse can happen anywhere and at any time, but research indicates that the perpetrators of abuse are likely to be known and trusted by the child or young person. For adults at risk evidence suggests that the perpetrators of abuse are often professional carers or other adults at risk.
11. Child abuse can be split into four categories – physical, neglect, sexual and emotional. Abuse if adult at risk can be split into seven categories, the four used for children and three further – financial,

institutional and discriminatory.

12. Possible signs of abuse include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts, or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries, or the explanation of the cause of the injury is ill-fitting.
- A disclosure of abuse, or description of what appears to be an abusive act by a child or adult at risk.
- Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child or adult at risk.
- Unexplained change in behaviour, such as withdrawal or sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of a particular individual, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends.
- Eating disorders, depression, self-harm or suicide attempts.
- Deterioration in health or appearance including loss of weight.
- Unexplained loss of money or material goods (financial abuse)
- Unexplained possession of money or goods such as mobile phones (child sexual exploitation)
- Fear or anxiety

### **What to do if abuse is suspected**

13. The designated safeguarding person for SOFT UK is Jan Fowler, Chair of SOFT UK.

If any volunteer or staff member of SOFT UK has concerns regarding a child or vulnerable adult they have come into contact with as a consequence of their work for SOFT UK, they should immediately contact the SOFT Enquiries line ([enquiries@soft.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@soft.org.uk)) to notify that they have a concern.

This message will be passed to the designated safeguarding person (or another appropriate trustee with safeguarding experience / training, if the designated person is unavailable).

The designated person (or alternative) will decide whether or not to take the matter further. They will feed back to the volunteer, staff or trustee what decision and action has been taken.

The volunteer or staff member should make a log of the concern, by simply writing down the facts of the concern, dating and signing. This log should be forwarded to the designated safeguarding person for SOFT UK.

**The Data Protection Act is not a barrier to information sharing where doing so is necessary to safeguard children or an adult at risk.**

**If there are any concerns about the immediate safety of a child or an adult at risk then the police must be contacted on 999 without delay.**

Policy issue date: September 2015

Policy agreed by the Board of Trustees: 20 September 2015

Review Date: September 2016

# SOFTuk

Support Organisation for Trisomy 13/18

## Procedural Flow Chart

