



Adult Safeguarding Policy

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1. Policy statement

In delivering our services safeguarding is always paramount. The Catholic Children's Society (CCS) recognises that our responsibilities are not limited to the protection of adults who need care and support. These responsibilities also include a commitment to ensuring our safeguarding approach is proactive and encompasses positive action to promote wellbeing and prevent harm.

2. The scope and purpose of this policy

This policy applies to all CCS staff, volunteers, and consultants/contractors. It aims to set out clear standards and expectations about our roles and responsibilities to keep people safe. Our key objective is to embed an ethos of positive, proactive and responsive practice.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, as well as our detailed Safeguarding Procedure documents for each area of our work (see <https://www.cathchild.org.uk/policies>). Attention should also be given to the following policies:

- Safer Recruitment
- Whistleblowing
- Complaints
- Disciplinary
- Computer and email policy
- Health and safety

3. Definitions

Children: This policy defines children as between the ages of 0 and 18.

Adult: A person over the age of 18.

Adults who need care and support: This policy will refer to adults who need care and support, this is where a person:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- Is experiencing (or is at risk of) abuse or neglect
- Is unable to protect themselves from either the risk, or experience, of abuse or neglect, as a result of their needs.

Care and support can be defined as a mixture of practical, financial and emotional support for adults who need extra help to manage their lives and be independent. This may include older people, people with a disability or long-term illness, people with mental health problems and carers. Care and support includes assessment of people's needs and provision of services.

Non- recent abuse: An allegation of neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse made by or on behalf of someone who is now 18 years old or over, relating to an incident which took place when the alleged victim was under the age of 18.

4. Our commitment to safeguarding adults

CCS is committed to safeguarding adults. In protecting adults who need care and support CCS will work within the six key principles of the Care Act 2014: Empowerment; Prevention; Proportionate; Protection; Partnerships and Accountability. To this end we will ensure that:

- The safety and welfare of adults is paramount across all aspects of our work.
- We take all concerns about safeguarding seriously.
- Safeguarding is embedded throughout governance, leadership and culture.
- Adults have the right to equal protection from all types of harm whatever their age, ability, gender, race, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.
- Adults are respected, empowered and supported to be safe and their voices help inform and shape activities and practices around safeguarding.
- Actions to protect adults who need care and support engage the person and their wishes, and focus upon outcomes to address their needs.
- All actions will be balanced with the level of risk to the adult.
- Recruitment, induction, training, management and supervision procedures support staff, volunteers and consultants/contractors to implement best practice.
- The statutory and legal framework to keep adults who need care and support safe is complied with.
- Procedures for reporting, recording and monitoring safeguarding concerns are in place, complied with and reviewed regularly.
- We expect high standards from organisations we work with and recognise the importance of working collaboratively to ensure a joined-up approach to safeguarding.
- We will work positively to maintain and develop partnerships with relevant organisations and authorities.

5. Our responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at CCS and all staff, volunteers and consultants/contractors must have a good working knowledge of this policy, together with the safeguarding procedure documents relevant to their area of work. In addition, specific responsibilities for safeguarding sit within various roles as follows:

(i) Trustees

Safeguarding is a key governance priority for trustees. Our trustees will:

- Act within this policy at all times.
- Assess and manage risk.
- Ensure robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place.
- Work with the Senior Management Team (SMT) to monitor and review whether safeguarding policy and procedures are being implemented and are effective.
- Respond appropriately to allegations of abuse and whistleblowing cases.
- Have at least one designated trustee who has specialist knowledge of safeguarding and supports best practice within the organisation.

(ii) Senior Management Team

CCS's Senior Management Team (SMT) includes the CEO, Head of HR and Operations, Head of Finance, Head of School Services and Safeguarding and Head of Partnerships and Communication. They will ensure:

- Regular oversight of safeguarding practice within CCS is maintained.
- Clear and effective safeguarding policy and procedures are in place, are reviewed regularly and are made available to all staff, volunteers, consultants/contractors and service users.
- CCS has effective procedures to manage the reporting, recording and monitoring of safeguarding concerns and actions.
- Sufficient resources are directed to this area of work.
- CCS follows robust safer recruitment procedures.
- All staff and volunteers have access to high quality safeguarding training, at a level and frequency appropriate to their role and responsibilities.
- Safeguarding allegations against staff, volunteers and consultants/contractors are dealt with appropriately.

(iii) Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (SDSL)

The SDSL is the Head of School Services & Safeguarding. This member of staff will:

- Ensure staff working with safeguarding across CCS have adequate management and supervision to enable them to be effective.

- Ensure there is at least one Designated Safeguarding Lead for each service who is adequately trained, managed and supported to be the initial point of contact for staff/volunteers when sharing any concerns and seeking advice and support.
- Advocate for the needs of, and resources for, safeguarding within CCS.
- Check that safeguarding referrals, incident reports and actions taken are securely recorded, reviewed and followed up as necessary.
- Develop guidance and ensure training is available to increase expertise and knowledge around safeguarding within CCS.
- Ensure regular meetings take place with DSLs to maintain clear oversight and understanding of the concerns being managed.
- Report to the SMT (and trustees as required) regarding safeguarding activities, trends and emerging issues.
- Report any significant safeguarding concerns or activity to the CEO immediately and support with managing risk.
- Keep up to date with relevant law, guidance and case examples.
- Proactively engage with other agencies and external experts to ensure that CCS's approach is informed by, and contributes to, best practice within the sector.

(iv) Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

Each service will have one or more DSLs who will:

- Be the main point of contact for the staff they line-manage and provide safeguarding advice and support.
- Ensure all concerns are recorded, monitored and followed up appropriately.
- Immediately highlight any serious concerns or risks to the SDSL.
- Contact the CEO if there are any concerns about the practice of the SDSL.
- Ensure safeguarding referrals are of a high quality and are followed up as required.
- Help disseminate information on any changes to CCS's safeguarding policy and procedures to ensure all staff, volunteers and consultants/contractors are up to date with current policy and practice.
- Signpost teams to relevant resources to promote best practice and support the continuous improvement of safeguarding with their service area and the wider organisation.

(v) Staff and Volunteers

All staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring they know and adhere to CCS's safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Maintaining up to date knowledge of the safeguarding policies and procedures of the settings in which they operate (schools, early years settings etc.).
- Working within their specific professional ethical and competency framework.
- Completing the safeguarding training required for their role.

- Immediately raising any safeguarding concern they identify with the DSL.
- Immediately contacting appropriate services in an emergency situation (police, ambulance, social services etc.).

(vi) Contractors and Consultants

CCS may consult or contract with organisations or independent professionals, such as trainers or clinical supervisors. All consultants or contractors must:

- Ensure they are familiar with and adhere to CCS's safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Contact the relevant DSL if they have any concerns about CCS staff/volunteers or escalate their concerns to the SDSL or CEO as appropriate.

6. Safer recruitment

Please see our Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures for details.

7. Dealing with safeguarding and protecting adults

Staff and volunteers should raise a concern if they believe an adult at risk is suffering or likely to suffer abuse or neglect. In the context of the legislation, specific adult safeguarding duties apply to any adults who need care and support.

There is no single, universally accepted, definition of abuse in relation to adults who need care and support. People in this group are vulnerable to abuse and neglect from carers, family members and institutions, as well as from strangers. Broadly any action, or lack of action, which causes harm or distress can apply. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

Please see further guidance in Appendix B

CCS recognises the right of adults who have mental capacity to make their own choices, irrespective of how unwise the decisions may be considered. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 presumes mental capacity, unless a person's apparent comprehension of a situation gives rise to doubt. The mental capacity of the adult concerned to consent to information being shared is a key element in considering any onward disclosure to another agency.

If a member of staff becomes concerned about their own safety whilst working with an adult, they must inform their line-manager of these concerns. The impact of safeguarding work on staff should be considered and staff supported through line management and supervision.

If the concern has arisen out of work undertaken with parents or staff/volunteers in a school or other organisational context, then consideration must be given as to what information about the adult is shared and with whom. The welfare of any children must always be at the centre of decisions about information sharing.

8. Dealing with safeguarding and protecting children

Where there are serious concerns about the safety of an adult it is generally the case that there will be concerns about their children, any children in their care now, and any children who may have previously been in their care. In these instances, staff should refer to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and follow the relevant procedures for their area of work (see section 10).

9. Non-recent abuse

It is not unusual for people to only disclose experiences of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse and/or neglect when they reach adulthood. There are many reasons for a disclosure not being made at the time, including fear of reprisals, control and manipulation by the perpetrator, feelings of shame and guilt, or fear of not being believed.

Our procedures for dealing with non-recent abuse are the same as any other report of abuse and are set out in the accompanying procedure documents. Following these procedures, and responding immediately, is particularly important as there is a significant likelihood that the person who abused a child in the past will have continued (and may still be) doing so. Criminal prosecution may also still be possible if sufficient evidence can be carefully collated.

10. Safeguarding procedures

All safeguarding concerns, whether in relation to adults or children, should be reported to a CCS DSL on the day the disclosure is made or the concern is noted. The following documents provide detailed guidance on the procedures to follow for each area of our work:

- [Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures: Schools Services \(including Rainbows and Connect-Ed\)](#)
- [Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures: Early Years Provision \(including St Francis Family Centre and St Mark's Stay & Play\)](#)
- [Safeguarding Procedures: Post Adoption & Aftercare Services \(Pathways\)](#)

If the concern is being raised by a member of staff who is not linked to a specific service, or if a DSL is unavailable, the SDSL should be informed immediately. If the SDSL is not available the Deputy SDSL should be contacted. If neither are available the CEO should be informed. All contact numbers and roles are set out in the [Safeguarding Contact Sheet.docx](#)

11. Allegations against staff, volunteers and consultants/contractors

Anyone working, volunteering or consulting/contracting with CCS has a duty to raise any concerns they have about any adult who is working/volunteering with adults who need care and support. These concerns may include instances where the adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has, or may have, harmed an adult who needs care and support.

- Potentially committed a criminal offence against, or related to, an adult who needs care and support.
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to adults who need care and support.

Where a safeguarding concern/allegation (whether current or non-recent) is about a member of CCS staff, or a volunteer, this should be reported to the SDSL. The SDSL may in turn refer this to the Local Authority or any other relevant authority. If the concern or allegation is about the SDSL, staff should contact the CEO.

Recommendations regarding any suspension of a member of staff will be made to CCS at the point of referral to the appropriate authority. Any recommendation to suspend a member of staff will be kept under review.

Where a safeguarding concern/allegation (whether current or non-recent) is raised about any adult working or volunteering with people who need care and support, the DSL or SDSL will refer to the adult safeguarding team in the relevant local authority for advice. Where appropriate, the adult's employer (if not CCS) will be informed of any concerns and the actions recommended by the local authority.

12. Confidentiality and information sharing

All work with adults should be framed with a contract which makes the limits of confidentiality explicitly clear. A duty of confidence arises when sensitive personal information is obtained and/or recorded and it is reasonable for the subject of the information to expect it to be held in confidence. However, the challenges of working within the boundaries of confidentiality should not impede taking appropriate action.

Whenever possible, informed consent should be obtained before information is shared. However, the law does not prevent the sharing of information without consent where it is in the public interest such as emergency or life-threatening situations, or where a serious crime may be prevented.

In general, the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) should always be adhered to, unless alternative legislation takes precedence (e.g. Adoption Agencies Regulations). However, GDPR should not be a barrier to sharing information, rather it provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.

In instances where the person lacks the mental capacity to give informed consent, staff should always bear in mind the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and consider whether sharing information will be in the person's best interest. Staff should also follow guidance set out in the London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures regarding undertaking a Mental Capacity Assessment.

Breaching the confidentiality of an adult can raise ethical questions. Concerns about such issues should be discussed with line-managers so that a decision can be made about a proportionate response to concerns.

Remember, the duty to protect children takes priority over all other considerations when sharing information.

Appendix A: Legal and statutory frameworks

The Care Act 2014

The Care Act aims to ensure the wellbeing of people in need of care and support services:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance>

London Multi Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

This policy and procedures aim to encourage the continuous development of best practice in order to better safeguard adults throughout London:

<https://londonadass.org.uk/safeguarding/review-of-the-pan-london-policy-and-procedures/>

Mental Capacity Act 2005

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 applies to everyone involved in the care, treatment and support of people aged 16 and over living in England and Wales who are unable to make all or some decisions for themselves. The MCA is designed to protect and restore power to those vulnerable people who lack capacity:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/contents>

Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners (2018)

This document provides advice for practitioners who provide services to children on sharing information to help keep children safe:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

Adoption: National Minimum Standards

National Minimum Standards applicable to the provision of adoption services, for adoption agencies and adoption support agencies:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-national-minimum-standards>

Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/2720/contents/made>

Care Standards Act 2000

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/14/contents>

Please see our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for the legal and statutory frameworks relevant to children.

Appendix B: Definitions of abuse and neglect (adult safeguarding)

Physical Abuse: Including hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint.

Sexual abuse: Including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts the adult has not / cannot consent to.

Psychological or emotional abuse: Including threats of harm or abandonment, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation.

Financial or material abuse: Including theft, fraud, exploitation, misuse or misappropriation of property or wills.

Neglect and acts of omission: Including withholding the necessities of life such as medication, food or warmth, ignoring medical or physical care needs.

Discriminatory abuse: Including discrimination on grounds of race, gender and gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Organisational abuse: Including neglect and poor practice by an organisation.

Domestic abuse: Including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members.

Modern slavery: Includes very little or no pay, excessively long and/or unusual working hours, poor physical health, not in control of own money, no financial records or ID documents.

Self-neglect: Includes a wide range of behaviour, such as neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Safeguarding concerns could also include:

- Suicidal ideation or high-risk self-harm.
- Serious mental illness such as psychosis, depression or severe post-natal depression.
- High-risk substance misuse.
- Adults who disclose that they have harmed, or are at risk of harming, either a child or another adult.
- Honour-based violence or forced marriage.
- Any concerns about radicalisation and extremist views or behaviours must be reported as a safeguarding concern in line with Prevent Duty 2015 guidance. Local Prevent Coordinators should be consulted with where necessary.
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
- Forced Marriage.

This is not an exhaustive list but is intended to provide examples of situations where a member of staff would need to consider safeguarding issues in relation to an adult.