



Together Our Community (TOC)

Safeguarding Adults Policy

Last updated: May 2026

Applies to: all staff, volunteers, and anyone working on behalf of TOC

Statement of Intent

This policy applies to all staff, including the leadership, paid staff, volunteers and session workers, agency staff, students, or anyone working on behalf of TOC.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect adults who are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse and neglect and who are in receipt of TOC's services.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding adults at risk.

We believe that no one should experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all adults and to keep them safe. We are committed to practicing in a way that protects them.

Definition of Adult Safeguarding

The official definition of "adult safeguarding" is working with adults who have care and support needs, to keep them safe from abuse or neglect.

This Safeguarding Policy applies to anyone over 18 who:

- 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 of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect, because of those care and support needs.

Adults who fulfil these criteria are "adults at risk".

People can have a need for care and support for a variety of reasons. For example, they may have a learning disability, a physical disability, a chronic health condition, or a mental health issue. Such conditions may bring additional vulnerabilities; however, having care and support needs does not mean that people are automatically adults at risk who need safeguarding.

Legal Framework

The Care Act 2014

This policy has been written based on the following law and guidance that seeks to protect adults at risk. TOC upholds the following six key principles of adult safeguarding as enshrined in the Care Act 2014:

Empowerment — People being encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.

"I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens."

Prevention — It is better to take action before harm occurs.

"I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and 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, as I see them, and they will only get involved as much as needed."

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 — Local solutions through services working 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 in my best interest."

Accountability — Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

"I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they."

Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005

The Act protects people who may lack capacity to make decisions for themselves. It sets out how decisions should be made on their behalf and covers all sorts of decisions, from life-changing events to everyday matters. The Act states that:

"A person lacks capacity in relation to a matter if at the material time he is unable to make a decision for himself in relation to the matter because of an impairment of, or disturbance in the functioning of, the mind or brain."

The presumption is that adults have the mental capacity to make informed choices about their safety and how they live their lives. Mental capacity and a person's ability to give informed consent are at the heart of decisions and actions that we take under this safeguarding policy. Every time we encounter a safeguarding issue, we will consider the ability of the adult at risk to make informed choices about the way they want to live and the risks they want to take.

Our Commitment

We will seek to keep adults at risk safe by:

- Valuing, listening to, and respecting them.
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for Adults at Risk and a Deputy DSO.
- Adopting safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Developing and implementing effective e-safety policies and related procedures.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with adults at risk, staff, and volunteers.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know and involving the adult themselves wherever possible.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any such concerns.

- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our young people, staff, and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

Designated Safeguarding Officers

TOC's Designated Safeguarding Officers can be contacted via contact@tocommunity.org.uk.

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO): Hilary Freeborough

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer: Louise Collins

We are committed to reviewing this policy and our safeguarding practice regularly to ensure it reflects current legislation and guidance.

Policies and Procedures

This Safeguarding Policy should be read in conjunction with TOC's other policies and procedures. Those listed below form part of this policy:

- Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Medicines and Health Needs Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- IT and Information Security Policy
- Photography and Image Use Policy

Safer Recruitment, Induction and Training

All paid staff and regular volunteers will as a minimum need to hold a standard Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) certificate. In addition, those expected to have access to unaccompanied young adults, or who might handle sensitive information relating to them, will be required to have an enhanced DBS. Casual or short-term volunteers will be required to follow the standard safeguarding procedures and will only have accompanied access to young adults.

All staff and volunteers will be required to read this Safeguarding Policy. Knowledge will be reviewed to ensure it remains up to date.

All newly appointed staff and regular volunteers will complete an application form. This will include details of previous employment, details of any conviction for criminal offences (including spent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974), agreement for an enhanced DBS check, and permission to contact two referees, including their current or most recent employer.

The potential staff member or volunteer will be interviewed for their suitability by a nominated person. The interview panel must consist of at least one member of staff who has successfully undergone safer recruitment training (to be retaken every five years).

Staff and volunteers will be subject to a probationary period during which time they will be supervised and have regular meetings with their line manager to identify any concerns and training and support needs.

Staff and volunteers will have a period of induction during which they will complete any induction training and familiarise themselves with internal policies.

Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers

All staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with an adult at risk. Wherever possible, work with an adult at risk should be conducted in view of other adults.

Guidance about the code of conduct and safer working practice, including the safe use of mobile phones, media, and offsite activities, will be given to staff and volunteers at induction.

Staff who have concerns about another staff member should immediately inform their line manager or a member of the safeguarding team. If the concern is about their line manager, they should go directly to the safeguarding lead. Any concern about one of the safeguarding officers should be reported to another member of the safeguarding team or escalated to the TOC trustee board.

The safeguarding team will liaise with local authorities, police, and other professionals as appropriate for advice and guidance.

If an allegation is made, the member of staff may be disciplined or suspended as appropriate. Support will be given to the member of staff throughout any process. The member of staff will be kept informed and any investigation will be carried out in a timely manner.

Recording, Storing and Sharing Information

TOC will apply the following principles:

- Ensure that we have named safeguarding staff who have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training and whose training is up to date.
- Appoint Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs).
- Ensure that designated staff will take advice from a safeguarding specialist when managing complex cases.
- Distinguish between fact, hearsay, and opinion in all records. Opinions should be clearly labelled as such.
- In cases of poorly explained serious injuries or where behaviour arouses suspicion, the DSO will consult with the relevant statutory authority or safeguarding advisor.
- Keep written, signed, and dated records detailing any allegation and action taken, as near to the time of disclosure as possible, even when a referral has not been made.
- Keep all records in a secure locked filing cabinet or secure ICT system, and share concerns only in accordance with TOC's Data Protection Policy.
- Retain all records in accordance with TOC's Data Retention Schedule.

Dealing with Disclosures about an Adult at Risk

Anyone in conversation with an adult at risk who discloses abuse will act in accordance with the following guidelines.

Do...

- Treat any allegation seriously. Act towards them as if you believe what they are saying.
- Tell them that they are right to tell you.
- Reassure them that they are not to blame.
- Tell them what you are doing, when and who you will have to tell, and keep them up to date with what is happening.
- Take further action. You may be the only person able to prevent future abuse. Tell your nominated person immediately.
- Make a record of the discussion, including time, place, persons present, and what was said.

Do not...

- Coach or prompt them to say something they weren't going to say.
- Make promises you can't keep.
- Interrogate them. It is not your job to carry out an investigation. This is the role of the police or social workers who have experience and training in this area.
- Cast doubt on what they have told you, interrupt them, or change the subject.
- Say anything that makes them feel responsible for the abuse.
- Take photographs of any injury.

- Do nothing. Make sure you inform a member of the safeguarding team immediately. They will know what action to take.

The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) will take lead responsibility for adult safeguarding. The DSO will have appropriate status and authority within TOC to carry out the duties of the post and will be given the time, funding, training, resources, and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on safeguarding matters.
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or support other staff to do so.
- Contribute to the assessment of adults at risk.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will be expected to:

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority as required.
- Support staff who make referrals to the local authority.
- Make appropriate referrals to the Channel programme where there is concern about radicalisation.
- Make appropriate referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service where a person has been dismissed or left due to risk or harm to an adult at risk.
- Make appropriate referrals to the police where a crime has been committed.
- Liaise with the case manager and designated officer(s) at the local authority over adult safeguarding concerns and any case involving children.
- Liaise with staff on all matters of safety and safeguarding, providing support, advice, and expertise.
- Liaise with relevant agencies when deciding whether to make a referral.

Raising Awareness

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will:

- Ensure that TOC's safeguarding policies are known, understood, and used appropriately.
- Ensure that the safeguarding policy is reviewed regularly and that procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed as required.
- Ensure that the safeguarding policy is made publicly available.
- Liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer to ensure that staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest safeguarding guidance.

Definitions of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint, and inappropriate physical sanctions.

Domestic Violence

Includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse and "honour-based" violence.

Sexual Abuse

Includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure, and sexual assault.

Psychological Abuse

Includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation, and unreasonable or unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Financial or Material Abuse

Includes 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, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

Modern Slavery

Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive, and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude, and inhumane treatment.

Discriminatory Abuse

Includes types of harassment or insults based on someone's race, gender or gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, or religion.

Organisational Abuse

Includes neglect and poor care in an institution or care setting such as a hospital or care home, or where an organisation repeatedly fails to provide an appropriate and professional level of care to vulnerable people.

Neglect and Acts of Omission

This includes ignoring medical, emotional, or physical needs, failure to provide access to services, or not providing adequate nutrition, hydration, heating, clothing, or stimulation.

Self-Neglect

This covers a wide range of behaviour reflecting that someone is not caring for their own personal hygiene, health, or surroundings. It includes behaviour such as hoarding.

What to Do if You Have a Concern About an Adult

If you have a concern about an adult at risk, you must act on it. Do not keep the concern to yourself.

- If the concern is an immediate emergency or you believe someone is in danger, call 999.
- In all other cases, contact the DSO or Deputy DSO as soon as possible: contact@tocommunity.org.uk.
- If the concern is about the DSO or Deputy DSO, contact a member of the TOC Board of Trustees.
- You can also contact West Sussex Adult Safeguarding Partnership: 01243 642121 (or the relevant local authority if the adult lives elsewhere).
- If you are unsure whether to raise a concern, speak to the DSO. It is always better to raise a concern and be wrong than to stay silent.

Contact

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact: contact@tocommunity.org.uk