



Street Paws – Safeguarding Policy

Lead responsibility:	Street Paws Chair Person
Approved by:	Street Paws Trustees
Operational from:	January 2018
Review due:	January 2019
Legal framework:	Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 The Care Act (2014) Human Rights Act 1998 Data Protection Act 1998

As an organisation, we recognise our statutory, moral and ethical duty to ensure the safety and protection of an adult at risk of abuse or neglect, whether that be a client, a staff member or volunteer.

Safeguarding means “*protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect*” (Care Quality Commission).

Street Paws has a nominated safeguarding lead who is responsible for ensuring that Street Paws complies with safeguarding legislation and this policy. Fiona Willis, trustee, fulfils the role of safeguarding lead.

The nature of our client group is often transient and we do not follow a formal referral and assessment process. We also do not know clients' personal details as often people are either known by their street name or first name only. The organisation does hold personal information on volunteers and staff in line with the Data Protection Act.

1. Legal Definitions and Requirements

The Care Act (2014) has introduced a legal obligation for each local authority to have a Safeguarding Adults Board. It is now a legal requirement that agencies and professionals work together around safeguarding issues. Safeguarding Adults Boards oversee multi-agency work aimed at protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults.

The Police also play a vital role in Safeguarding Adults with cases involving alleged criminal acts. It becomes the responsibility of the police to investigate allegations of crime by preserving and gathering evidence. Where a crime is identified, the police will be the lead agency and they will direct investigations in line with legal and other procedural protocols.

1.1 Definitions of 'an adult at risk'

In safeguarding terms an adult at risk is defined as a person 18 and over who:

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

Homelessness in itself does not make people vulnerable. However, circumstances such as homelessness may exacerbate other conditions and impact negatively upon individual's ability to care for and protect themselves. These may include, but are not limited to, physical or mental health issue, drug or alcohol addiction, or social or emotional problems.

1.2 Abuse

All local authorities have a duty to protect vulnerable people from abuse. Types of abuse can include:

- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Self-neglect
- Modern slavery
- Domestic violence
- Financial or material abuse
- Neglect
- Discriminatory abuse
- Institutionalised abuse

2. What to do when you think an adult is 'at risk'

If you think an adult is at risk, you should firstly inform the regional Co-ordinator, Chair Person or other trustee in confidence. A discussion will then take place and a decision can then be made about whether concerns about the person should be passed on to a responsible person/agency or managed internally.

If the Chair Person is the first person to be informed then they will alert the designated safeguarding lead.

Where-ever possible, always try and get consent to share information, from the individual involved. Document the concern, decision and what action was taken in a report which will be kept in the Chair Person's locked cabinet.

Regional co-ordinators should be cognisant of their local authority area Safeguarding Board policies and procedures and be ready to work with the Chair Person to notify the relevant board/team of any safeguarding concerns, providing all information as required.

You can also alert the police immediately, if there is a concern that a crime has been committed alongside raising a safeguarding alert.

3. Sharing information & confidentiality relating to Safeguarding

In the event of a safeguarding concern being brought to the attention of any member of the Board of Trustees, it is essential that all information pertaining to the safeguarding concern is kept confidential. It is the responsibility of the safeguarding lead to retain all information

collected in the course of investigating a safeguarding concern. This information must be kept securely, if held electronically or in a locked system if held manually.

If the safeguarding lead decides it is appropriate to share information obtained in the course of investigating a safeguarding concern with external parties (such as the Local Authorities Safeguarding Teams, or Police), the Chair Person must keep a record of what is shared, with whom and for what purpose. Further information may need to be disclosed to external parties (e.g. Police etc.) to support their investigations into the concern raised.

Where data is shared it should be done so, where possible, with informed consent. Ensure all efforts have been made to inform the person that you are raising a safeguarding alert to Adult Social Care and gain their consent. The Care Act (2014) states that the referrer should discuss the concern with the person if they have capacity and agree together what steps to take - unless to do so would jeopardise their safety. In such an eventuality a record must be kept of the rationale for sharing without consent.

4. Review

The safeguarding lead and Chair Person will review this policy every year or when an update has been made to national Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults working guidelines, whichever process is sooner.