

Safeguarding Policy

It is the policy of Crosslight to ensure that every person who takes part in our activities should be able to participate in a safe environment and be protected from harm. The following policy is designed to protect both vulnerable adults and children. Although Crosslight does not work with children directly, it is important to bear in mind any risks to children related to our clients. The following policy refers to all children and vulnerable adults regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion. It is the duty of all trustees, staff & volunteers to follow it.

Definitions

Child - A child is legally defined as anyone under the age of 18.

Vulnerable Adult - Our working definition of those who may be vulnerable is "Any adult, aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of him or herself, or to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation."

In support of our commitment to safeguard children and vulnerable adults we will:

- *Promote a safe environment and culture*
- Recruit trustees, staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks – including DBS checks - are made in line with our Recruitment Policy.
- Respond promptly to any safeguarding concern or allegation
- Share information about vulnerable adult and child safeguarding and good practice with staff and volunteers.
- Provide suitable safeguarding training at joining, and annually thereafter.
- Share information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving those affected appropriately.
- Offer appropriate support to those impacted by safeguarding issues
- Appoint a suitably trained Safeguarding Office and Deputy as well as a Safeguarding trustee champion

Recruitment & training:

To protect our team and service users, all trustees, staff and volunteers must be subject to the full range of pre-joining checks as detailed in our risk-based Recruitment Policy. In summary this includes:

- Attend an interview.
- Completing self-disclosure form.
- 2x references.
- DBS checks for appropriate roles.
- Training - all trustees, staff and volunteers shall be given:
 - an induction at joining which will include details of this policy and the values, ethos, purpose, and structure of Crosslight, as well as how to identify, respond to, and report safeguarding concerns
 - Safeguarding refresher training annually

All team members have a duty:

- To be aware and understand this policy
- To be aware and understand the vulnerability guidelines
- To report suspected acts of mistreatment
- To be alert to what mistreatment means and take seriously what they are told
- To think about what they see and ask if it is acceptable practice
- To work strictly in accordance with our Equality Policy

- To ensure the safety of the person you suspect is being mistreated as well as your own safety
- To contact the emergency services first, e.g. police, ambulance, if in a life-threatening situation
- To be alert to hints, signals and non-verbal communication that could indicate mistreatment, which is being denied or deliberately hidden.

Mistreatment - Definitions and Signs

There are four recognised types of abuse and it is important that all staff and volunteers know what they are and how to recognise them.

Physical Abuse - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent, family member, carer or third party feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, an adult or child whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick person in their care. Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Emotional Abuse - is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the person's emotional development. It may involve making a person feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

Sexual Abuse - involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the person is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children or vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Both men and women can be perpetrators of sexual abuse. This includes people from all different walks of life.

Neglect - is the persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. It may involve a parent, family member, carer or third party failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a person from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a person's basic emotional needs.

Mistreatment may be disclosed when the person tells someone. Mistreatment may also be suspected – on occasions an incident or an injury will give cause for concern but often it is a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns which indicate that a person may be suffering or at risk of suffering harm.

The following may indicate mistreatment;

- 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.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- Injuries which have not received appropriate medical attention.
- A child or vulnerable adult describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/herself.
- A disclosure or allegation made by a child or vulnerable adult.
- Someone else expresses concern about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet/withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
- Inappropriate sexual awareness in a child in particular.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Nervousness/watchfulness.
- Inappropriate relationships with other others.
- Signs of neglect such as under nourishment, untreated illness, inadequate care.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more indicators is not proof that mistreatment is taking place. It is important to remember that there might be other reasons why most of the above are occurring.

Responding to mistreatment concerns

If mistreatment is suspected or disclosed always inform the Safeguarding Officer.

DO

- Listen carefully to what they say
- Stay calm, be sympathetic and try not to show shock
- Be aware of the possibility that medical evidence might be needed
- Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the person as if you believe what they are saying
- Do tell them they are right to tell you and reassure them that they are not to blame
- Do be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why you can't promise confidentiality
- Do tell them what you are doing and when, and keep them up to date with what is happening
- Do take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse – tell the Safeguarding Officer immediately

DON'T

- Don't make promises you can't keep
- Don't interrogate them – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the police and social services who have experience in this
- Don't cast doubt on what the person has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject
- Don't say anything that makes them feel responsible for the abuse
- Don't do nothing – make sure you tell the Safeguarding Officer immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice
- Press the person for more details or ask leading questions
- Promise to keep secrets: explain that the information will be kept confidential with those who need to know
- Contact the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental
- Pass on information to anyone who doesn't have a "need to know"

Reporting Procedures – DO NOT DELAY

It is vitally important that any suspicion or disclosure is recorded factually as soon as possible; this is whether or not the matter is taken further.

- If there is an emergency requiring immediate and urgent action, ring 999 and ask for the police.
- If an immediate response is not required, seek the advice of the Safeguarding Officer who be able to advise on appropriate action. If time does not permit this, or they are unavailable, you have a responsibility to contact social services or the police who will advise. See contact details below.
- In situations where our client is implicated in the abuse of someone else, the client will NOT be informed about the referral to Social Services. If the client is not implicated in the abuse they should be informed of the concerns and Social Services and/or the police should be contacted irrespective of their agreement to this.
- If you suspect abuse or have concerns about the welfare of a child or vulnerable person you have a responsibility to that person to pass your concerns to the Safeguarding Officer. Even if the information you hold seems small, it may be vital in building an overall picture.
- Make a written record of the situation, the action taken and the decisions made. This should be made as soon as possible after the event, using the person's language and recording any questions they have asked. This should include;
 - Date and time of what has occurred and the time the disclosure was made
 - Names of people who were involved
 - What was said or done by whom
 - Any action taken by the group to gather information and refer on
 - Any further action, e.g. suspension of a worker or volunteer
 - Where relevant, reasons why there is no referral to a statutory agency
 - Names of person reporting and to whom reported

It is the policy of Crosslight to refer allegations of mistreatment to social services or the police to investigate. This is why recording all information impartially and accurately is vital as this could be evidence for later use.

If staff or volunteers encounter mistreatment or suspicious situations of concern, for example a person might tell a friend, or a volunteer might notice something, then this needs to be reported confidentially. The first step would be to discuss the concerns with the Safeguarding Officer who will take appropriate action.

If it is thought that returning to their home would put the abused person in immediate danger, advice should be sought from the NSPCC, Social Services or police.

Allegations about staff or volunteers

It can be very difficult to report concerns about a member of staff or volunteer but all staff and volunteers have a duty to do this. Any concerns for the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult arising from suspected mistreatment or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately. Staff and volunteers will be fully supported when reporting concerns that a colleague is or may be abusing a child or vulnerable adult. Allegations of mistreatment against a member of staff or volunteer should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer. If this is not appropriate, or the allegations relate to a staff member, then the Chair of the People Committee should be contacted (see below). Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality for all concerned. Any written records must be kept securely.

Contact details

Safeguarding Officer – Kate Burling
Email: kate.burling@crosslightadvice.org
Work: 020 3540 5603

Deputy Safeguarding Officer-Tanya Lowe, Head of People
E-mail: tanya.lowe@crosslightadvice.org
Work: 020 3540 5634

Safeguarding Trustee (has oversight of this policy) – Jean Moorhouse
Email: jeanmoorhouse6@gmail.com

People Committee, Chair – Rosie Brydon
Email: people.committee@crosslightadvice.org

Other contacts

- Police or Ambulance – for anyone at imminent and immediate risk 999
- NSPCC Child Protection Helpline – for advice on a child welfare issue 0800 800 5000
- Elder Abuse Helpline – for advice on abuse of older people 0808 808 8141
- Social Services - to raise any concerns about a child or adult See table below

Ealing	Hammersmith & Fulham	Hounslow	Kensington & Chelsea	Kent
Adults	Adults	Adults	Adults	Adults
Children	Children	Children	Children	Children
Lambeth	Richmond-upon-Thames	Swindon	Wandsworth	Westminster
Adults	Adults	Adults	Adults	Adults
Children	Children	Children	Children	Children

Further Information

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Crosslight procedures which can be found in the Advice Pro library

- Recruitment Policies for Staff and Volunteers (including Safer Recruitment)
- Identifying and responding to vulnerability
- Responding to clients at risk of suicide

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