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1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy is informed by all relevant UK safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, ensuring compliance with the latest legal requirements for protecting adults and children at risk.

Strouden Park Community Association (SPCA) is committed to safeguarding practices that help ensure the safety of adults and young people at risk while taking part in our Centre's group activities and in the wider community.

This policy helps everyone involved in our Centre to:

- a. Be aware of our legal responsibilities.
- b. Understand the safeguarding risks in **SPCA**.
- c. Know what to do if they have a concern about the well-being or welfare of any adult or young person at risk who comes into our Centre.

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers, and Centre users and serves as a framework to support them in their roles.

2. Code of Conduct

When working with vulnerable adults and young people, we are acting in a position of trust.

We recognise that keeping our groups safe is everyone's responsibility, and we expect our members, volunteers, staff, and trustees to behave in accordance with the following values and all relevant safeguarding legislation, including the Care Act 2014, the Children Act 1989 and 2004, and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

All adults and young people at risk have an equal right to protection from abuse and to be kept safe from harm, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

We recognise that some adults and young people are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs, or other issues.

We listen to and respect everyone within our Centre.

We use language that is appropriate for age and ability, and not offensive or discriminatory.

We encourage a culture of honesty, where everyone feels comfortable pointing out attitudes or behaviours they do not like.

We know it isn't always easy to be vocal about concerns – whether for ourselves or others.

All Safeguarding concerns will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately through the proper channels.

This means that when working with adults and young people at risk, we will never:

- Promise to keep secrets – safeguarding relies on sharing concerns appropriately with other people (agencies).
- Allow suspicions or allegations relating to Safeguarding concerns to go unreported.
- Act in a way that is threatening, abusive or bullying.
- Jump to conclusions about others without confirming facts.
- Enter a sexual or intimate relationship with adults, young people, and young people at risk.

3. Legislation

SPCA recognises that the local authority has the primary legal duty to safeguard adults and young people at risk, and we are committed to working with the local authority and our local Safeguarding team.

This policy, and the practices within it, are based on the relevant legislation and government guidance, including: The Care Act 2014; and The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (which protects people's right to make their own decisions in any situation where they are able to do so).

We base our practices on the principles laid out in the Care Act 2014, i.e.:

- Empowerment – people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and to give informed consent.
- Prevention – It is better to act before harm occurs.
- Proportionality – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- Protection – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- Partnership – Local solutions through services working with their communities.
- Communities have a role in preventing, detecting, and reporting neglect and abuse.
- Accountability – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

4. Definitions

An adult at risk refers to someone over 18 who, according to paragraph 14.2 of the Care Act 2014:

- Has care and support needs.
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- Is unable, due to their care and support needs, to protect themselves from abuse or neglect or its risks.

Even if someone has care and support needs but is not currently receiving help from health or care services, they may still be considered an adult at risk.

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or people. It can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

Any or all of the following types of abuse may be perpetrated as a result of deliberate intent, negligence, omission, or ignorance. Often, the perpetrator of abuse is known to the adult and young people and may be in a position of trust and power.

There are several forms of abuse, which physical or behavioural signs may indicate:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional/Psychological/Mental
- Neglect and acts of omission.
- Financial or material abuse
- Discriminatory
- Organisational/institutional
- Self-neglect
- Domestic abuse (including coercive control)
- Modern slavery

5. Recognising Safeguarding Concerns

Many signs and indicators may suggest someone is experiencing abuse or neglect. There may be other explanations too, but SPCA will not ignore any of these signs if they are apparent.

An adult or young person may confide (disclose) to a trustee, member of staff or volunteer, or other member of SPCA that they are experiencing abuse, inside or outside the activities of the group. Or someone else may notice signs in a particular individual.

The signs we will look out for include:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries
- Belongings or money are going missing from the person's belongings.
- The person no longer attends or enjoys Strouden Park Community Centre's activities or responds to contact from other members of the group.
- A change in confidence or behaviour of a person, e.g. if they are withdrawn and quiet around a particular person or people, when usually they are outgoing and confident.
- A change in the appearance of the person, e.g. losing or gaining weight, deterioration in personal hygiene or way of dressing.
- Someone else (e.g., a parent, carer, or family member) is always speaking for the person and preventing them from making their own choices.
- The person showing fear of, or not wanting to be around, a particular individual or group of people.

6. Procedures

SPCA has a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) whose contact details are in section 10.

SPCA recognises that it can be difficult for many reasons to speak up if you think someone is being abused or neglected.

However, we expect our staff, volunteers, and trustees to act on any concerns. Our designated safeguarding lead will support both the person raising the concerns and the person being abused.

If anyone in the group notices signs of abuse or neglect in another person, they should report these concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.

If someone discloses to anyone in the group that they are being abused, the response should be as follows.

1. Always make sure the person speaking up feels they are being listened to and supported
2. Don't promise to keep information confidential between you and them
3. Tell the designated safeguarding lead about the concerns (unless the safeguarding lead is implicated in causing the harm or perpetrating the abuse. In this situation, information should be shared with a trusted committee member/Trustee, who will be responsible for taking further action, rather than the safeguarding lead.
4. Ask for the person's consent to share the information. If they refuse and you are still worried that they or someone else is at immediate risk of harm, you cannot wait for this consent. You must share this information with the safeguarding lead.
5. Write a clear statement of what you have been told, seen, or heard using the Safeguarding report form.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is responsible for taking further action once concerns have been raised with them.

Throughout the process, the designated safeguarding lead will record all information they receive, the actions they take, and the reasons for those actions.

The procedures they will follow are:

6.1 Initial assessment

As soon as information is shared with the designated safeguarding lead, they will make an initial assessment of the concern. They will, if possible, speak with the person reporting the concern and gather as much information as possible.

Key questions to ask:

- What type of concern has been reported? Different actions are required depending on what type of concern it is (see below)
- What action has already been taken?
- Is anyone else in the organisation affected by this situation (e.g. other staff, volunteers, or those you work with)?
- Are there any attitudes or emotions that you may have to be aware of?
- How might this concern affect what the organisation delivers in the short term?
- Who else might need to be informed?
- What other actions need to be taken now?

6.2 Immediate actions depending on the type of concern that has been raised.

(a) Emergency incidents:

- This is when there's a life-threatening situation where there's imminent danger and harm to an adult, young person, or child.
- Immediately contact the emergency services if they haven't been called already.
- Make sure the current situation is safe.
- Establish how others are coping – do they need any immediate support?
- Inform the senior people in the group.

(b) Protection concerns:

- This is when an adult or young person who you believe is unable to protect themselves is at current risk of, or has experienced, abuse or harm.
- If the person is in immediate danger, call the Police.
- If they're not in immediate danger, you must contact the local authority safeguarding team within 24 hours and make a referral (contact details are in section 10).

Be guided by the safeguarding team or the Police on any further actions required of you.

(c) Allegations concerning staff or volunteers:

This is when someone has alleged that staff or volunteers from your organisation have harmed or abused a vulnerable adult or young person at risk.

Contact the following as soon as possible, within 24 hours. Be guided by them on any further actions required of you.

If the child or adult lives in BCP:

- **Suspected child abuse or neglect:** Contact BCP [First Response Hub – 01202 123334](#) (Mon–Thurs 08:30–17:15, Fri 08:30–16:45), email: childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
- Out of hours: [01202 738256](tel:01202738256), email: ChildrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
- **Suspected adult abuse or neglect:** Email asc.contactcentre@bcpcouncil.gov.uk, Tel [01202 123654](tel:01202123654), Dorset Police: 101, Out of hours: [0300 1239895](tel:03001239895).

(d) Welfare concerns:

This is when no one has been harmed, but a person shows signs of need. It's when you have concerns for their health, well-being, or safety if they don't get help.

Within 7 days, you, or someone in your organisation, should speak with the person. When appropriate, you should also speak with their family or carer. You must explain your concerns and make sure they have the support they need.

Depending on the conversation, the safeguarding lead may then also:

- Help the person or their family access services or provide the information they need to do so themselves.
- Speak to another professional who is already working with the person or family, such as a social worker, about their needs.

(e) Concerns about other organisations:

This is a situation where the safeguarding concern is about another organisation, their staff, volunteers, or the people they work with.

As soon as possible, within 24 hours, contact the designated safeguarding lead of the organisation in question and pass on your concerns if this has not already happened.

In some circumstances, you may decide to follow up with the organisation to confirm they have acted on the issue.

If at any point you think the organisation has not acted and someone is at risk, you should contact the local safeguarding team yourself.

(f) Responding to historic or non-recent concerns:

You may become aware of, or be told about, a concern from an adult or young person relating to an incident that took place in the past, including when they were a child.

Historical allegations of abuse should be taken as seriously as contemporary allegations.

Remember that it's never too late to report abuse. An individual can make a formal complaint to the Police about non-recent abuse, ideally in the geographic area in which the abuse is reported to have taken place.

Establish whether the person alleged to have caused the harm works with children, adults, or young people at risk. Try to find out their recent or current whereabouts and any contact they have with children, adults, or young people at risk. A referral to social services should be made, with the consent of the person who experienced the abuse, if possible.

Consider the consent the person has given for sharing information. How, when and to whom they share this information should usually be with their consent.

Signpost the person who experienced the abuse to relevant support groups that can help them.

(g) Supporting those who share a concern with you:

Your primary concern should be the best interests of the person who is at risk of harm.

However, the person sharing this concern with you may also be distressed by the situation, even if they are reporting on behalf of someone else. Everyone can respond to worries about another differently. If someone has previously experienced trauma, they can find it especially upsetting.

- Thank them for bringing this concern to your attention and for fulfilling their key responsibility.
- Explain that you will now take responsibility for leading the management of this concern and any contact with statutory agencies.
- Highlight that there may be limited updates you have or can provide on the situation; that does not mean it was not important for them to share their concern.
- Remind them of the importance of confidentiality and not sharing this information further.
- Ensure they have your contact details in case they think of anything else they have not yet shared that they believe may be relevant.
- Discuss with them what additional support they may require. Consider contacting them later to check in on how they are doing.

7. Keeping records

SPCA understands the importance of documenting any safeguarding issues and will keep records in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Care Act 2014, and the Children Act 1989.

We will record information, even if the concerns have not been shared with the Police or the local authority safeguarding team.

These records are extremely sensitive and will be kept in a locked cabinet or drawer (if hard copy) and/or password-protected and stored on a computer protected against hacking and viruses (if electronic).

It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure that the following information is recorded about every safeguarding concern:

- The date and time of the incident/disclosure/concern
- The date and time of the report
- The name and role of the person to whom the concern was initially reported, and their contact details.
- The name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details.
- The names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses.
- The name and any other relevant information about the adult and young people who are the subject of the concern (including information about their care and support needs)
- What was said or done and by whom
- Any action taken to investigate the matter.
- Any further action taken (such as a referral being made)
- The reasons why the organisation decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant)

Each record will be signed and dated by the person making the report.

8. Confidentiality, consent, and information sharing

Timely information sharing is key to keeping people safe and responding appropriately to concerns about their welfare.

In general, Strouden Park Community Association expects all Trustees, members, volunteers, and staff to maintain confidentiality and to act in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

We will share information within the group (e.g., with other staff or volunteers) when necessary to address safeguarding concerns or maintain continuity of support. We will share information with other organisations to keep a person safe.

Whenever confidential information is shared, we will follow the principles below. We will:

- Have a clear and legitimate purpose.
- Keep clear records of why we chose to share the information.
- Ensure we are not putting the person at risk by sharing information.
- Be as factual as possible.
- Seek consent. If the adult or young person refuses consent, we may share information only if:
 - We think they are at serious risk of harm or abuse, including harming themselves;
 - Information indicates that a serious crime has been or is going to be committed;
 - We think the person lacks the mental capacity to decide for themselves, and we believe it would be in the individual's best interests.

We are required by law, e.g. if we suspect FGM, forced marriage, or a terrorist threat. The same safeguarding process for reporting concerns must be used.

9. Recruiting and training volunteers

SPCA trustees, staff, and volunteers who work with or come into contact with adults and young people at risk will be given an induction covering the Centre's safeguarding policy and procedures.

They will receive training on our code of conduct, understanding abuse and harm, identifying signs of abuse, and responding appropriately to concerns and disclosures.

All staff and volunteers will know who the designated safeguarding lead is and that they should go to them with any concerns.

The designated safeguarding lead will be offered further training to ensure they are clear about their role and what action to take in response to different concerns.

We will apply for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all staff and volunteers for whom we are legally required to do so.

10. Online Safety

Strouden Park Community Association recognises that safeguarding extends to online environments, including social media, email, messaging platforms, and virtual group activities.

We are committed to ensuring that adults and young people at risk are protected from harm when engaging with our Centre online.

Key principles:

- All staff, volunteers, and trustees must maintain professional boundaries when communicating online with adults and young people at risk.
- Personal information about Centre users must not be shared online without explicit consent and a clear safeguarding purpose.
- Any online bullying, harassment, or inappropriate behaviour must be reported to the designated safeguarding lead and will be dealt with in accordance with our safeguarding procedures.
- Group leaders and volunteers should ensure that online activities are age-appropriate and accessible, and that privacy settings are used to protect participants.
- Parents and carers should be informed about online activities involving young people, and their consent should be obtained where appropriate.
- The Centre will provide guidance and training on online safety to all staff and volunteers.
- Responding to online concerns:
 - Any safeguarding concerns arising from online interactions or activities should be reported and managed in line with the procedures outlined in this policy.
 - If a person is at immediate risk of harm online, contact the designated safeguarding lead and, if necessary, the relevant authorities.

11. Photography and Media Consent Practices

Strouden Park Community Association is committed to ensuring the safety and privacy of all adults and young people at risk when capturing and sharing photographs or media.

Before any images or recordings are taken during Centre activities, explicit written consent must be obtained from the individual, or from their parent or carer if they are under 18 or lack capacity.

Consent forms will clearly explain how images may be used, stored, and shared, and individuals have the right to withdraw consent at any time.

Staff, volunteers, and group leaders must ensure that photography and media are used only for appropriate purposes and that images are not shared on public platforms or social media without prior consent.

No personal information will be attached to images without further explicit permission.

Any concerns regarding photography or media use should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead and managed in accordance with this policy.

12. Hirer Requirements

The Community Centre Manager, acting on behalf of the Trustees, will ensure that every individual hiring the Centre has signed an agreement outlining the terms and conditions of hire.

Any hirer who organises activities at the Centre involving children or vulnerable adults—apart from private parties for friends and family—must provide a Safeguarding Policy with relevant DBS documents, or confirm their understanding and compliance with the Centre's safeguarding procedures if asked.

13. Review frequency:

- At least annually: Both the safeguarding policy and the risk assessment should be formally reviewed at least once a year.
- After incidents: The policy and risk assessment must be reviewed immediately following any serious safeguarding incident.
- When circumstances change: Policies and risk assessments will be reviewed when there are changes to legislation, new guidance, new activities, or new groups of people are involved.

14. Key contacts

Strouden Park Community Association Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy:

Lead:

Name: Rebecca Fulwood

Contact details: beccadance_85@yahoo.co.uk

Mobile: 07793 087978

Deputy:

Name: Karen Godber

Contact details: karengodber1503@gmail.com

Mobile: 07708 669444

If you need any further information, advice, or guidance regarding this policy, please get in touch with Rebecca Fulwood, a Trustee or Staff Member.

Date Policy Adopted by the Board

Signed by the Chair on behalf of the Trustees.

Rebecca Fulwood – Chair of Trustees

Next Review Date
