

Charity Number: 1156427

Somerford ARC Community Centre

Safeguarding Children and young people Policy

Created: June 2022



General Statement of Policy

For the purposes of this policy, a child or young person is defined as anyone under the age of 18. This policy aims to ensure that all children attending Somerford ARC Community Centre are safeguarded and supported, particularly those at risk of harm or abuse. It outlines procedures for recognising, reporting, and responding to potential abuse, underscoring the Centre's commitment to maintaining a safe, caring environment for all children.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Somerford ARC Community Centre acknowledges that safeguarding children and young people is a primary responsibility of all trustees, employees, and volunteers involved in its activities. Protecting the safety and well-being of children is crucial to creating a secure and supportive environment.
- 1.2. In addition to meeting the legal safeguarding requirements, Somerford ARC Community Centre is committed to implementing comprehensive measures that address the specific needs of all children and young people using our services. This includes not only ensuring their protection but also taking proactive steps to support their rights, emotional health, and overall well-being.
- 1.3. Our organisation is not Ofsted registered and does not provide formal childcare services. Therefore, it is essential that any child or young person participating in any of our events or activities be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times.
- 1.4. The Centre is committed to providing an inclusive environment where the safety, respect, and dignity of every child are upheld. We believe that safeguarding is a shared responsibility and encourage open communication with parents and guardians to ensure a collaborative approach in supporting the well-being of all children.

2. Legal Framework

- 2.1. This policy has been drawn up based on law and guidance and seeks to protect children and young people:
 - Children Act 1989
 - United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
 - Data Protection ACT 2018
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Sexual Offences Act 2003
 - Children ACT 2004
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
 - Children and Families Act 2014

3. Understanding Child Abuse

- 3.1. The NSPCC identifies child abuse as a multifaceted issue that can happen to any child, in any setting, or even online. Abuse often occurs over time, rather than as a one-time incident, and can have lasting negative impacts on a child's development and on society as a whole.
- 3.2. The NSPCC lists various forms of abuse that may affect children:

Term	Definition
Bullying and Cyberbullying	Targeted, repetitive harm, in person or online, that can lead to emotional distress and isolation.
Sexual Exploitation	Manipulation or coercion of a child into sexual activities, often for another's gain.
Child Trafficking	Illegal transportation or recruitment of children for exploitation, frequently in labour or sexual contexts.
Criminal Exploitation and Gangs	Involvement of children in criminal activities, often through coercion or manipulation by gangs.
Domestic Abuse	Exposure to abuse within the home environment, which can cause psychological and emotional harm.
Emotional Abuse	Persistent actions or words that damage a child's emotional well-being and self-esteem.
Female Genital Mutilation	Forced physical alteration of female genitalia for non-medical reasons, with severe health consequences.
Grooming	Building an emotional connection with a child to manipulate them for later exploitation.
Neglect	Failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional, or educational needs.
Non-recent Abuse	Past abuse that is reported after a period of time has passed, often requiring support for ongoing effects.
Online Abuse	Exploitation or harm inflicted on children through digital platforms.
Physical Abuse	Intentional infliction of physical harm, such as hitting or shaking.
Sexual Abuse	Engaging a child in sexual acts or exposing them to sexual content.

5. Signs of Abuse

5.1. The presence of certain signs does not necessarily mean that a child is being abused, as there may be other factors in their life affecting their behaviour. However, these signs may indicate that there is something concerning happening, and it is important to assess the situation carefully. Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, or a result of neglect, and the signs may vary depending on the type of abuse. Some common signs that a child may be experiencing distress or harm include, but not exhaustive to:

- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- Unexplained bruising, injuries, burns or fractures in places accidents are unlikely.
- Fear of specific individuals.
- Regressive behaviours.
- Excessive attachment.
- Becoming withdrawn or isolated
- Depression.
- Self-harm.

- Withdrawal from social activities.
- Seeming anxious or fearful
- Displaying uncharacteristic aggression
- Having poor social skills and very few, if any, friends
- Showing a poor bond or relationship with a parent or caregiver
- Demonstrating knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- Running away or going missing
- Consistently wearing clothes that cover their body, even in warm weather

5.2. Concern may also arise from noticing certain behaviours in adults who have children in their care. If these behaviours raise concerns about a child's safety or well-being, it is important to take them seriously and seek guidance or support as necessary.

5.3. If any of these signs are observed, it is crucial to follow the appropriate procedures for reporting concerns, including notifying the designated safeguarding lead or relevant authority.

6. Responsibilities

6.1. Trustees hold the overall responsibility for promoting a safe and supportive environment at Somerford ARC Community Centre, ensuring that appropriate measures are in place for all children and young people who engage with the centre. The trustees key responsibilities include:

- Ensuring the organisation has a comprehensive safeguarding policy that is reviewed regularly and reviewing the safeguarding arrangements and ensuring they are effective.
- Overseeing the implementation of safeguarding procedures and ensuring they are followed by all trustees, employees, volunteers, hirers and visitors.
- Ensuring that adequate training is provided to all employees and volunteers on safeguarding matters.
- and reviewing the safeguarding arrangements and ensuring they are effective.
- Ensuring that any safeguarding concerns or incidents are recorded and internal investigations are fully documented and dealt with in line with the Centre's disciplinary procedures.

6.2. The office manager has a key role in ensuring that safeguarding is integrated into the daily operations of the Centre. Their responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that all safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices are effectively implemented and maintained across all activities.
- Providing training materials and support for the Safeguarding Lead, staff, and volunteers to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of safeguarding measures and taking corrective actions when necessary.
- Organising employee and volunteer training to ensure they are knowledgeable and up to date on safeguarding matters.
- Addressing any issues or challenges related to safeguarding that arise within the centre.
- Ensuring that any safeguarding concerns or incidents are recorded and reported by safeguarding leads using the Safeguarding disclosure form **APPENDIX 1**.
- Reporting any internal safeguarding concerns to the trustees to facilitate a full investigation, adhering to relevant disciplinary procedures where necessary.

6.3. Employees and volunteers are essential in maintaining a safe environment for all children and young people. Their responsibilities include:

- Familiarising themselves with the centres safeguarding policy and procedures and adhering to them at all times.
- Being alert to signs of abuse or neglect and reporting any concerns immediately to the designated safeguarding lead.
- Creating and maintaining a safe and supportive environment for children and young people.
- Completing safeguarding training and keeping up to date with best practices.

6.4. The safeguarding lead and volunteer coordinator plays a central role in our organisations safeguarding efforts. Responsibilities include:

- Ensuring the safeguarding policy is implemented effectively across the organisation.
- Being the first point of contact for any safeguarding concerns or disclosures.
- Providing advice, support, and guidance to employees and volunteers on safeguarding matters.
- Ensuring that any safeguarding concerns or incidents are recorded using the Safeguarding disclosure forms and submitted to the office manager **APPENDIX 1**.
- Coordinating courses for their volunteers, including delivering six monthly refresher toolbox talks to maintain awareness and adherence to safeguarding protocols.

6.5. Hirers, including external groups or individuals who use the Centre's facilities, are fully responsible for the safety and well-being of any children or young people under their care while at the Centre. Their responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that they have appropriate safeguarding procedures in place if they are working with children or young people.
- Familiarising themselves with the Centre's safeguarding policy and ensuring they comply with it during their time at the Centre.
- Ensuring that all staff working with children have valid DBS certificates, and providing a copy of these certificates to Somerford ARC Community Centre.

7. **Safeguarding Children and young People Procedure**

7.1. All allegations or suspicions of abuse must be treated seriously. Abuse is never acceptable, and certain types of abuse are criminal offenses that require immediate reporting to the police.

7.2. If you have any concerns about a child or young person's welfare, immediately contact the Somerford ARC Community Centre Children's safeguarding lead within 24hours of the concern being raised, to ensure a timely response.

7.3. When responding to a safeguarding concern, the safeguarding lead must ensure the following guidelines are followed:

DO

- Ensure the individual is safe.
- Assess whether emergency services need to be contacted.
- Listen attentively and remain calm.

- Reassure the individual that disclosing the information was the right decision and they are not to blame.
- Explain that you must take steps to ensure the safety of the child or young person involved.
- Be careful not to suggest or prompt answers, only ask questions when necessary.
- Inform the individual about the next steps and who else will be involved.
- Allow the individual to share their story fully.
- Ensure you understand the facts clearly and establish what has been disclosed.
- Record all information immediately and ensure the report is comprehensive and accurate.

DON'T

- Promise Confidentiality.
- Confront the alleged abuser.
- Express your personal opinions or feelings.
- Investigate or interview beyond what is necessary to gather basic facts.
- "Quiz" the individual or pressure them for more details.
- Destroy or disturb any potential evidence.
- Ask leading questions or make assumptions.
- Make any promises you cannot keep.
- Ignore the allegation or minimise its importance.
- Add personal interpretations to the notes- stick strictly to what was disclosed.
- Panic or act impulsively.

7.4. If abuse is suspected, our organisation will make a referral to the appropriate authorities:

- Bournemouth and Poole MASH (Multi- agency safeguarding hub): 01202 735046
- Children's social care out of hours: 01202 738256
- In an emergency call 999

7.5. If the individual is in immediate danger or in need of urgent medical attention:

- If you are with the individual remain with them and contact Emergency Services immediately.
- If the individual is elsewhere contact Emergency Services and clearly explain the situation.
- If medical attention is required, call an ambulance and notify the first aider on duty. Only qualified first aiders should administer medical treatment unless instructed otherwise by an emergency services operator.
- If appropriate the safeguarding lead will contact the Local Authority or the individual's next of kin. Emergency services, health services, or children's services may need to be involved to make a decision.
- Always prioritise the welfare of the young person.

7.6. If a disclosure is made regarding the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person and the individual requests that the information be kept secret, it is important to explain sensitively that the information will need to be shared with appropriate agencies for their protection and safety and the matter will be disclosed only to those who need to know.

7.7. Where possible, consent must be obtained from the individual making the disclosure before sharing information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be

neither possible or advisable as the safety and welfare of the child or young person must take priority.

7.8. Safeguarding leads must make their position clear regarding their role and must assure the individual that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and the reasons behind these actions. The feelings and wishes of the individual should be considered as much as possible.

8. Writing a Report

8.1. All disclosures must be documented using the Somerford ARC Community Centre Safeguarding Disclosure form **APPENDIX 1**.

8.2. When recording a disclosure, the person writing the report must:

- Accurately record the information using the safeguarding disclosure form, detailing exactly what the individual has shared.
- Only include facts as disclosed, do not insert personal opinions or interpretations.
- Use the individual's exact words and phrases.
- Ensure the date, time, location is recorded.
- Note any circumstances surrounding the disclosure, including any concerning behaviours or actions observed.
- Record who was present during the disclosure.
- Sign and date the report, printing your name under your signature.

8.3. The report must be written within 24 hours of the disclosure, ensuring timely documentation.

9. Investigation

9.1. It is not the roles of Somerford ARC Community Centre to determine if an individual is at risk or experiencing abuse. If there is a concern that a child or young person is at risk of abuse, or if actual abuse or severe neglect is suspected, it is our duty to take the appropriate steps to protect that individual.

9.2. In cases where a safeguarding concern involves an employee, trustee, or volunteer of Somerford ARC Community Centre, the trustees will undertake an internal investigation. This will be conducted in line with the organisation's disciplinary procedures, ensuring fairness, confidentiality, and adherence to safeguarding standards to establish the facts and determine whether any actions or steps need to be taken to protect children and young people, as well as to address any potential misconduct or procedural breaches by the individual involved.

9.3. During the investigation, the trustee board may:

- Temporarily suspend the individual from their role to ensure the integrity of the investigation and to prioritise the safety of children and young people.
- Seek guidance or collaboration from external agencies, such as local authorities or law enforcement, if required.
- Communicate transparently with all parties involved, providing updates while maintaining confidentiality where necessary.

9.4. The trustees are responsible for ensuring that the investigation and outcomes are fully documented and that any necessary actions are implemented promptly.

9.5. Any concerns or incidents involving an employee, trustee, or volunteer that indicate potential criminal behaviour or serious misconduct will be referred to the appropriate authorities immediately, in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

10. Confidentiality

- 10.1. All trustees, employees, and volunteers of Somerford ARC Community Centre have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children and young people with other professionals when necessary.
- 10.2. Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all employees, trustees, and volunteers to ensure they understand when information must be shared to safeguard children and young people.
- 10.3. All Trustees, employees, and volunteers are to act in accordance to the Somerford ARC Community Centre confidentiality policy.
- 10.4. All safeguarding concerns and reports must be stored securely on an encrypted system in accordance with data protection principles, and retained for as long as necessary to comply with legal and safeguarding requirements.
- 10.5. Information may need to be shared with external agencies, such as police, social services, or other safeguarding bodies, for the protection of the child. In these cases, consent will be obtained (depending on their age and understanding) for sharing their personal information with third parties, unless it is not feasible or advisable due to safety concerns.

11. Photography and use of images

- 11.1. Photography and video recording are sometimes used at Somerford ARC Community Centre for promotional purposes, training, or documenting events. However, it is important to respect the privacy of all individuals, particularly children and young people. Our organisation takes the following steps to ensure the protection of all children using our facilities:
 - Before any photograph or video is taken, consent will be obtained from the parent, guardian, or responsible adult of the child, as well as the child (if appropriate) in line with their age and understanding.
 - No photographs will be posted or shared on social media platforms without prior written consent.
 - If images are to be shared with external agencies (e.g., media, partner organizations), further consent will be obtained.
 - Consent will be recorded in writing using the Somerford ARC Community Centre “consent to hold information form”. and held on file. **APPENDIX 2**
 - Individuals have the right to withdraw consent at any time.
 - Images will never include personal identifying information without consent.
- 11.2. All photographs are stored securely in a password-protected system and used only for the intended purpose.

12. Training

- 12.1. All Trustees, employees, and volunteers of Somerford ARC Community Centre must read and fully understand the contents of this Policy and ensure they are familiar with its procedures.
- 12.2. Any new volunteers receive a full induction, including their role within safeguarding, and are provided with a volunteer handbook, further ensuring understanding of their role.

12.3. All Trustees, employees, and volunteers working with children and young people in our centre will be required to complete the following training.

- Safeguarding children (Advanced) Level 2 training course.
- Participate in six monthly toolbox talks to refresh their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding procedures.

12.4. All training records will be maintained and monitored to ensure compliance.

Roles	Appointed person	Certificate expiry
Safeguarding lead children	Lauren Biggs	08-02-2025

Associated Policies
Confidentiality Policy
Data protection Policy

Created by	
Print Name	Lauren Biggs
Role	Office Manager
Date	20-06-2022

Review History	Reviewed by	Validated by
21-02-2023	Lauren Biggs	Unvalidated
13-11-2024	Lauren Biggs	Unvalidated
13-05-2025	Lauren Biggs	

Next review date	13-05-2027
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APPENDIX 1

Safeguarding Disclosure Form

Date of disclosure	
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Details of the person making the disclosure

Full Name	
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Address	
Postcode	
Mobile number	
Landline	
Email	

Person of concern

Name	
Date of birth	

Is the person you are concerned about under 18?

Yes
No

Is the person you are concerned about aware of this disclosure?

Yes
No

If yes what did they say? (please state the exact words used. Do not include opinions or interpretations)

Nature of concern

Physical abuse
Sexual abuse
Neglect
Psychological abuse

Financial or material abuse

Discrimination

Other

(please specify)

Immediate risk

Do you believe the person is in immediate danger?

Yes
No

If yes, contact emergency services (999) and record the incident number below:

Safeguarding concern involving ARC personnel

Does your concern involve any trustee, employee, or volunteer of Somerford ARC Community Centre?

Yes
No

If yes, please provide details (e.g. name and role):

This information ensures a fair, confidential investigation in accordance with safeguarding policies).

Incident Details

Date of incident	
Time of incident	

Record what happened using factual information. Include, who, what, where, and how. *(if recording a verbal disclosure, use the persons exact words. Do not interpret or add opinion).*

Use additional paper if necessary. All extra pages must be signed and dated at the bottom.

Additional information

Use additional paper if necessary. All extra pages must be signed and dated at the bottom.

Witnesses

Where there any witnesses

Yes
No

If yes, please provide details below:

Name	
Contact details	

Name	
Contact details	

Name	
Contact details	

Declaration

I confirm the information provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of person making the disclosure:

Print name:

Date:

Office use only

Name	
Role	

Were external services notified (e.g., social services, Police)?

Yes
No

If yes, provide details of the service contacted and any outcomes or reference numbers?

Internal review process

Time	
Date	

Safeguarding concern Submitted to Trustees

Time	
Date	

Acknowledged by the Trustees

Time	
Date	

Investigation

Was an internal investigation necessary?

Yes
No

If yes, what action was taken? (include key steps and people involved, and refer to policies where relevant)

Outcome communicated to the reporting party

Time	
Date	

Investigation closed

Signed	
Date	

APPENDIX 2

Consent to hold information

Under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018 you have a right to privacy and confidentiality. This means your information will be handled securely, and you have control over how it is collected, stored and shared.

As an organisation we only collect and store information relevant to the purpose for which it is needed. You have the right to control the personal information we hold about you and must give explicit consent for it to be used.

Information we hold

We only store the following details:

- Your telephone number
- Your email address
- Your address

Your information will not be shared with any third-party organisations without your consent, except in circumstances involving serious safeguarding concerns or risks to your health and safety. If such a situation arises, we will inform you accordingly.

You have the right to access, amend, or withdraw your consent regarding the storage and sharing of your information at any time.

Data Retention and Accuracy

Your information will be reviewed annually, to ensure it is accurate and up-to-date. We will securely retain your data for no longer than two years after your involvement with our organisation has ended. This is to meet your legal obligations and to make it easier for you to reconnect with us in the future, should you choose to do so. After this period, your information will be securely destroyed.

All personal data is stored in accordance with the Somerford ARC Community Centre Confidentiality Policy and Data Protection Policy. Access to your information is strictly limited to authorised trustees and employees to ensure security and compliance with privacy standards.

In the event of any data breach involving your personal information, we will notify you immediately and take all necessary steps to mitigate any potential risks.

Organisational Details

This is an agreement between yourselves and Somerford ARC Community Centre:

Registered Charity No. 1156427

Authorised Persons: Chair: Paul Hilliard, Office Manager: Lauren Biggs

Address: 20 Southeby Road, Christchurch, BH23 3EH

Telephone No. 01202 470770

Declaration

The information you provide on this form will only be used to contact you in relation to our organisational communications or services. It will not be shared with any other organisation without your permission and will not be stored for longer than two years after your involvement with us ends.

Signature:

Print name:

Date:

Data protection: The information you provide on this form will only be used to contact you in relation to our organisational communications or services. It will not be shared with any other organisation without your permission and will not be stored for longer than two years after your involvement with us ends.

