



Policy

S.O.S Care Services will, through formal and informal procedures, monitor the care of people we support on a regular basis so as to ensure that individual care plans are implemented, maintained and updated and that care is delivered to the highest possible standard (this means that care and treatment must be planned and delivered in a way that enables all a person's needs to be met). All client files and recorded documents are audited 6-weekly.

It is the duty of all employees to report to the Registered Manager any witnessed or suspected incidents of abuse. Employees are assured that their jobs will not be threatened by reporting abusive behaviour by others (see **Whistleblowing Policy**). S.O.S Care Services will not tolerate abuse in any form (either of people we support, employees or anyone connected with the organisation) and where abuse is suspected, or witnessed, then immediate action will be taken, as outlined in the following procedure.

For the purposes of this policy abuse is defined as:

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, 'abuse' means:

- ***Any behaviour towards a person using services that is an offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003(a).***
- ***Ill-treatment of a person whether of a physical or psychological nature.***
- ***Theft, misuse or misappropriation of money or property belonging to a person using services, or***
- ***Neglect of a person using services.***

Any employee who is alleged to have abused a person we support will face disciplinary action which, after careful investigation and implementation of the S.O.S Care Services disciplinary procedure may include dismissal. If abuse has been proven, then the police and Care Quality Commission (CQC) will be informed.

Procedure

General duty on everyone employed by S.O.S Care Services

Everyone employed at S.O.S Care Services (including volunteers and agency staff) has a duty to report any concerns about the welfare or safety of any person we support, and in good faith, to one of the following:

- (i) The Registered Manager (Director of care); or, if this person cannot be contacted, Jayne Dainty (Managing Director). If still no-one can be contacted, one of the following, in order:
- (ii) A representative of the local authority Adult Safeguarding team;
- (iii) A representative of the Care Quality Commission (CQC);
- (iv) A Police officer.

Where allegations or suspicions of abuse concern the Registered Manager (Director of care) then staff should contact Jayne Dainty (Managing Director), or if not available, someone from (ii) to (iv) above. If the allegation or suspicions of abuse concern Jayne Dainty (Managing Director), staff should also contact someone from (ii) to (iv) above.

Prevention of abuse



S.O.S Care Services is committed to preventing the abuse of people we support. It will strive to achieve this by:

1. Promoting a strong and identifiable culture of respect and valuing people;
2. Ensuring that thorough and systematic recruitment practices are followed which ensure that references are taken up for all support workers, and use is made of all checking procedures, particularly the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure process;
3. Encouraging the role of the advocate for people we support. People we support who have no relatives or friends to act as advocates are encouraged to have an independent advocate who acts as spokesperson for the person and participates in care reviews as necessary;
4. Recognising the fundamental rights of people we support to privacy, dignity, maintenance of self-esteem and fulfilment, choice, recognition of diversity, individuality and independence, together with the maintenance of their rights as citizens;
5. Making relatives and advocates aware of S.O.S Care Services complaints procedure and encouraging them to comment upon the care received by people we support and to participate in reviews of care;
6. Committing to quality assurance (see **Quality Assurance** policy) and 6-weekly quality reviews;
7. Ensuring that training is provided on the forms and prevention of abuse and that such training is available to all employees;
8. Taking action whenever there is suspicion that abuse has occurred in any of the forms described below;
9. Utilising management systems which support and supervise employees in their work and facilitate good communications;
10. Encouraging an atmosphere where employees feel able to discuss and therefore prevent the development of potentially abusive situations;
11. Ensuring that induction procedures for employees include the prevention of abuse of people we support;
12. Giving people we support a copy of S.O.S Care Services complaints procedure when support commences and ensuring that they understand how to use the procedure;

Detection

- a. People we support should be assessed for signs of abuse as part of the initial assessment process on referral to S.O.S Care Services. Abuse may be occurring where the person appears withdrawn, depressed, frightened, with irregular sleep patterns, low self-esteem etc. Where abuse is suspected, then it must be recorded and reported without delay;
- b. Employees are encouraged to look for signs of abuse such as bruises that are said to be self-inflicted or the result of repeated accidents; unconvincing explanations should arouse suspicions. Signs of sexual abuse include pain or injury in the genital area, bloodstains or discharge on underwear or discomfort when walking or sitting. Employees should also be alert to signs of abuse of people we support by other people we support, particularly bullying and intimidation;



- c. Employees should observe how people we support react to different members of staff; abused people are likely to be nervous or possibly fearful when the abuser comes near, or to strike out to prevent an anticipated attack;
- d. People we support's appearance and reactions should be noted following visits or outings. Employees should be alert to the potential of abuse by other people outside of S.O.S Care Services. A person we support who is frightened of an abusing relative may ask a member of staff to stay with them when the relative visits;
- e. Employees should be alert to potential financial abuse, particularly when someone else is managing a person we support's finances.

Action in event of abuse occurring or suspected

If abuse of a person we support is **witnessed** and the situation is urgent, the person witnessing the abuse should:

1. Call 999 immediately;
2. Immediately challenge the person who is abusing the person we support and try to persuade him/her to stop. After dialling 999 for the Police, report the incident to the Registered Manager (Director of care) or person in charge immediately;
3. If the immediate risk to the person we support has passed the person witnessing the abuse should report it immediately to the Registered Manager (Director of care) or person in charge. The person reporting the incident should be offered the support of another person if they wish;
4. Any suspicions of abuse, (on reasonable grounds, and with the employee acting in good faith), of a person we support should be reported to the Registered Manager (Director of care) or person in charge immediately;
5. In the event that the person we support, friend or relative alleges the abuse, the matter should be dealt with according to S.O.S Care Services **Complaints Procedure**;
6. All incidents must be reported to the Registered Manager (Director of care), who will forward details to the Local Authority and CQC. Requests to "keep quiet" (even from the victim) will, ordinarily, have to be refused, although the circumstances surrounding the request must be discussed with the Registered Manager (Director of Care) as part of the investigation process.

Handling the incident

1. The Registered Manager (Director of Care) or person in charge must undertake an investigation and if necessary take action to protect the person we support. Confidentiality must be maintained;
2. The person we support should be interviewed, and where necessary (and with the consent of the person) the person's General Practitioner informed and a medical examination requested;

3. If the person we support is confused or unable to complain formally, an advocate may take up the complaint on behalf of them;
4. Statements should be taken from witnesses. Accurate written records of the ongoing situation should be kept, (dated and signed) in the person we support's records;
5. The Local Authority and CQC should always be informed. The report may include details of the incident and the investigations which are being undertaken;
6. The Department of Health state: "*individuals should be referred to, and included on, the POVA list if they have abused, neglected or otherwise harmed vulnerable adults in their care or placed vulnerable adults in their care at risk of harm*". If during investigation, or at the conclusion of an investigation there is reasonable cause to believe that any member of staff has caused harm to a person we support either through inappropriate action or neglect then that worker must be referred to the Local Authority Safeguarding Team and the Disclosure & Barring Service immediately and must be suspended, (if they have not already been suspended) with pay, pending final resolution of the employment situation. CQC will also be informed. The Registered Manager (Director of Care) will also review local Adult Protection Procedures to ensure full compliance with their requirements also;
7. If there are identified injuries or if fraud is suspected, the police must be informed.

Finally,

1. Any communications with outside agencies should be logged, with the date and time, and noted in the person we support's records;
2. If the alleged abuser is a member of staff, they will be dealt with according to S.O.S Care Services disciplinary procedure. Although each case should be determined on its merits, where abuse is alleged, or strongly suspected, then the employee will, in most cases, be immediately suspended, with pay, pending investigation, disciplinary proceedings and the final outcome. If the employee is not suspended, the Registered Manager (Director of Care) is required to record, in writing, the justification for this, and the steps taken to ensure no unsupervised contact with the alleged victim(s). Consistency in the application of this procedure is vital in ensuring that employees may feel that they are being treated fairly;
3. The abused person we support should be offered counselling and support, and reassured that if a Protection Plan is needed, it is in place and will provide adequate safeguards. The person we support should be consulted as to the content and the extent of the Plan;
4. Consideration and support should be offered to other people we support who may have witnessed the abuse;
5. If an employee or person we support makes an accusation of abuse, harassment etc against another person, and that accusation turns out to be untrue and malicious, then that person will be supported in accordance with S.O.S Care Services internal procedures. Employment/residency may be terminated in serious cases.



Examples of Abuse

Physical Abuse	This may range from hitting or slapping to rough handling or unnecessary physical force either deliberate or unintentional when caring for a person we support. The injuries caused by physical abuse may not always be visible although there may be bruises, broken skin, cuts, burns or broken bones. Restraining people we support so that they cannot move is also abusive, as is using furniture to stop them moving.
Verbal Abuse	Shouting and/or swearing at a person should be regarded as abusive behaviour. <u>Equally, speaking to a person we support in a quiet but threatening way so as to make the person fearful or feel ridiculed is abusive.</u>
Emotional/Psychological Abuse	Involves any behaviour, verbal or non verbal, that negatively impacts another person's psychological or emotional well-being. Typical examples may include ignoring feelings, ridiculing beliefs, withholding approval, appreciation or affection, refusal to socialise, shouting, frightening, swearing etc.
Abuse through the misapplication of drugs	The overuse and misuse of sedatives and other medication, to control or restrain a person we support is unacceptable unless medically required.
Financial Abuse	The illegal or improper use or control of, property, pension, bank account or other valuables, or the withholding of a person's money, and stealing, are all forms of abuse.
Racial or Ethnic Abuse	Victimising people, verbally insulting them and physically attacking them because of their racial or ethnic origin is abusive.
Sexual Abuse	Forcing someone to take part in sexual activity against his/her will is abuse and a criminal offence. The force may not always be physical. An individual may participate in behaviour he/she finds unacceptable following undue emotional or psychological pressure.
Neglect	Isolated from social interaction, left unattended for periods of time, withholding care and treatment when it is required, rejecting various types of appropriate support and depriving people we support of the essentials of everyday life, e.g. food, clothes and personal cleanliness, are all forms of abuse.
Institutional abuse	Institutional abuse may manifest itself in the following ways: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Lack of personal possessions, telephone, furniture etc.2. Employees giving people we support orders.3. People we support put to bed too early in the afternoon/evening, or awakened too early in the morning.4. Lack of choice about meals, and the timing of meals5. Lack of opportunity for obtaining drinks and snacks.6. Lack of attention to laundering, naming and mending people we support's personal clothing.7. Poor standards of cleanliness.8. Lack of toilet facilities.9. Lack of privacy.10. Poor management of medical conditions.11. Inappropriate administration of medication.

Local Authority Procedures and Reporting Abuse

Staffordshire County Council's Adult Safeguarding Procedures can be found at <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/health/reportabuse/reportabuse.aspx>

Referrals should be made via telephone on:

Staffordshire

0345 604 2719 Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 5pm, Fridays 8:30am to 4:30pm, excluding Bank Holidays

0345 604 2886 for out of hours emergencies.

SOS Care Services
Suite 2 Centre House
Court Parade, Aldridge, WS9 8LT



Walsall adult safeguarding contact details –
Adult Social Care Access Team 0300 555 2922
Our office hours are:

0300 555 2922 for out of hours emergencies

Wolverhampton Adult Safeguarding contact details –
Adult Social Care Team **01902 551199**

01902 552999 for out of hours emergencies

For online referral forms please click the link:

<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adult-social-care/protecting-adults-abuse/report-adult-abuse>

Birmingham city council Adult Safeguarding contact details –

- Email: ACAP@birmingham.gov.uk
- Telephone: 0121 303 1234
- Text Relay: dial 18001 followed by the full national phone number

Sandwell Adult Safeguarding contact details –
0121 569 2266 or 0121 569 2355 for out of hours emergencies
Email sandwell_enquiry@sandwell.gov.uk

For children referrals –

0121 569 3100 (this number is available out of hours too)

<https://www.sandwellcsp.org.uk/key-safeguarding-issues/report-a-concern/>

South Staffordshire adult Safeguarding contact details –

First Response Team (FRT) 0800 1313126 – Staffordshire children

Safeguarding Referral Team (SRT) 01782 235100 – Stoke-on-Trent children

Adults Referral Teams 0845 6042719 Staffordshire, 0800 5610015 Stoke-on-Trent

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