



**Swansea Asylum Seekers
Support**

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Safeguarding Policy

Adopted 22 June 2022.

Safeguarding Officer: Emilie Short (trustee).

To be reviewed by the Trustees annually.

SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

1. We define our understanding of safeguarding in the “Definitions of Safeguarding” in the section below.
2. We define safe practice in terms of policies which work to ensure that anyone involved in our activities has a safe experience and is not exposed to danger, abuse or aggression.
3. This policy deals with SASS as a whole and focuses on safeguarding and safe practice in our work with vulnerable adults and children, within our core community and drop-in work.
4. The first part of this policy has been written using advice from NACCOM, the national federation of projects working to ameliorate homelessness, isolation and despair among asylum seekers and refugees seeking sanctuary.

DEFINITIONS OF SAFEGUARDING

5. **The Care Act statutory guidance defines adult safeguarding as:** Protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
6. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.
7. ***In Wales, the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 describes an “adult at risk”***

as an adult who:

- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect
- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

8. This describes adults who would qualify for support from social services (whether they are getting it or not) due to a characteristic that is inherent to them, e.g.: being physically or learning disabled, severely mentally ill etc. ...) which makes them unable to wholly care for themselves.

9. Although most asylum seekers would not fall into this category, they are of course vulnerable. They have been/may have been traumatised by the dangers they have fled, and often by the journey they have endured to get to the UK. Once here, they are vulnerable not only to individual abuse but the challenges of the asylum system such as prolonged delays in decisions relating to their asylum case; poverty, racism, and for many, state-imposed destitution, and the ever-present fear of detention and deportation.

10. In order to keep our members and clients safe we need to focus on all these dangers.

11. SWANSEA ASYLUM SEEKERS SUPPORT GROUP (SASS), recognises that it is never acceptable for anyone to experience abuse of any kind and is committed to the safety of everyone involved in our organisation. This is everyone's responsibility.

12. SASS recognises that the welfare of our members and beneficiaries is paramount and that they have the right to equal protection from abuse regardless of age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender, or sexual orientation.

13. Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetrated by anyone.

14. Safeguarding is also about recognising that the Well Being of everyone within the SASS community is paramount.

15. This policy aims to protect all those involved - in what cannot always be an entirely risk-free process – against physical, emotional, legal and reputational risks. This requires good and honest communication, induction and training,

transparent arrangements, knowledge of the wider support network and legal information.

16. This policy must be upheld by all Trustees, volunteers and staff members working with SASS.

17. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES, VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF IN SASS

- To report suspected acts of abuse or any other risk factors as outlined below
- To be familiar with this policy;
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions that are not “protected” as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;
- To be aware of what abuse and neglect means; to be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect; to take any disclosures of abuse or neglect seriously and know how to respond to them. **(See Appendix I);**
- To act in line with the SASS Volunteer Policy, in particular the list of “rights and responsibilities” (Volunteer policy available on SASS website);
- To think about what they see and ask if it is acceptable practice.

18. Trustees have overall responsibility for Safeguarding. They must ensure that:

- all volunteers and employees are aware of the importance of safeguarding
- all volunteers and employees are shown and understand this policy.
- recruitment and selection of volunteers and employees is safe, effective and legal
- Guidance and training on Safeguarding is provided for volunteers and employees as appropriate as it is regularly updated.

Trustees must sign a declaration regarding their eligibility to act as trustees. They are also subject to the rules and regulations set out by the Charity Commission.

19. RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

This involves an informal interview, and the taking of two references, followed, where appropriate, by a period of shadowing/supervised volunteering as appropriate to the task. Satisfactory completion of this process results in confirmation of the person as a SASS volunteer. Volunteers are asked to sign a volunteer agreement and agree to DBS checks.

20. Staff recruitment. All involved in recruitment must follow our staff recruitment policy, (Internal document), which is designed to ensure that the overall character of applicants and their aptitude for the post is assessed in a fair way. Responsibility for following our safeguarding procedure should also be in the job description.

21. SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION AND TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

- All volunteers and staff are required to read this policy and recognise their responsibilities
- Safeguarding must be included in induction and ongoing training.
- Particular emphasis should be put on types of abuse, how to recognise it and how to respond sensitively to disclosures of abuse to ensure appropriate help and advice is sought.

SEE ALSO:

- [SASS Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [SASS Volunteer Policy, especially Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers](#)
Available from the [policy section](#) of our website: www.sass.wales/sass-policies/

Appendix I. Definitions of Abuse:

Abuse can include:

- **Physical assault** – includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, unlawful or inappropriate restraint, or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **Domestic abuse** – is “an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse... by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality (Home Office 2013).
- **Sexual abuse** – includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult at risk has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** -includes emotional abuse, threat of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercive harassment, verbal abuse, bullying and cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial and material abuse – includes theft, fraud, exploitation**, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** – includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Female genital mutilation (FGM)** – includes procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Procedures can cause severe bleeding and problems urinating and later cysts, infections, infertility as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of new-born deaths. It can occur in this country or the person’s country of origin.
- **Modern slavery** – includes human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use the means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhuman treatment.
- **“Honour”-based violence** – where someone is subjected to violence committed to protect or defend the “honour” of the family or a particular community.
- **Discriminatory abuse** – includes abuse based on a person’s race, sexuality, faith, sexual orientation, or age; other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment or hate crime/hate incident.

- **Organisational Abuse** – includes neglect and poor practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one-off within an organisation
- **Forced marriage** – a marriage that is formed under duress and without the full and informed consent or free will of both parties.
- **Spiritual or religious abuse** – Spiritual abuse is not covered by the statutory definitions but is of concern both within and outside faith communities. Aspects of spiritual abuse can be recognised under the four categories of abuse such as emotional abuse or physical abuse (e.g. forced healing rituals). Within faith communities, harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, obtrusive or forced healing and deliverance ministries or rituals, any of which may result in someone experiencing physical emotional or sexual harm.
- **Self-neglect** – covers a wide range of behaviours such as neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and include behaviours such as hoarding.