

## **Somerset West and Taunton Volunteer Safeguarding Policy**

### **Introduction**

Safeguarding children and adults with care and support needs is everyone's responsibility; everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. This document provides guidelines on what you should do to keep children and adults with care and support needs safe from abuse and neglect.

As a volunteer you might observe signs of abuse or neglect, or changes in behaviour which may indicate they are being abused or neglected. It is important that you are aware of what to look for and what to do if you are concerned that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk.

### **The Council's Responsibilities**

The [insert volunteering project or opportunity here] are run by Somerset West and Taunton Council.

The Council believes that all children, young people and adults have the right to be safe, happy and healthy and deserve protection from abuse.

The Council is committed to safeguarding from harm all children, young people and adults with care and support needs using any council services and involved in any of their activities, and to treat them with respect during their dealings with the Council, which includes the [insert volunteering project or opportunity here].

It is important to note that it is not the responsibility of the Council to decide whether or not abuse has taken place.

### **Your Responsibilities**

All individuals within the Council, including volunteers, have a responsibility to take action by reporting their concerns in accordance with this Policy.

As a volunteer, you should:

- Complete all relevant training in relation to safeguarding
- Recognise, identify, and report signs of abuse, neglect, disclosures and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and adults with care and support needs.

- Be familiar with and understand the policies and procedures relating to your work with or in the vicinity of children and adults with care and support needs.
- Work with your Volunteer Manager to ensure that you feel confident in working within this environment and have the knowledge and skills to carry out your tasks in this context.
- Treat all those children and adults who you encounter equally and with respect.

## Reporting

If you have a safeguarding concern about a service user, another volunteer, or member of staff, you should discuss it with your Volunteer Manager. They will refer it to a Somerset West and Taunton council Safeguarding Representative, or the relevant Somerset County Council service, who will decide whether to refer the matter to the appropriate external organisation, according to Council policies.

It is NOT your responsibility to assess the accuracy of an allegation, but you must gather and pass on any information to your Volunteer Manager. Keep the information confidential between you and your Volunteer Manager. Somerset West and Taunton Council has a duty to record and report incidents.

If you are not able to contact your Volunteer Manager, then you can report a concern to Somerset County Council, they are the lead organisation for any concerns for the welfare of children and vulnerable adults in the Somerset area. If you are worried about a child, a young person under the age of 18, or a vulnerable adult you can contact Somerset County Council on 0300 123 2224. You must tell your Volunteer Manager that you have done this as soon as possible.

**You are not personally responsible for providing any form of protection or respite from an abusive or potentially abusive situation. Volunteers must not put themselves into a position of unnecessary risk.**

If you are emotionally challenged by something in your volunteering role or experiencing difficulties, you should discuss it with your Volunteer Manager who will provide you with appropriate support.

If you are directly involved in a safeguarding case, you will be offered extra support.

Failure to report a concern could result in you no longer being a volunteer at a [insert volunteer project or opportunity here] or for any council service.

## DBS Checks

Your role may require you have a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) disclosure. This will be explained to you clearly and must be in place before you can start the role. DBS checks are free to volunteers.

Your DBS is a certificate that shows cautions, warnings or convictions. It may show spent convictions and also unspent convictions and an enhanced check will also

show information that a police force deems relevant to disclose based on the nature of the role that you will be doing.

If your DBS shows any cautions, warning, convictions or other relevant information, the Council will use a positive DBS Disclosure Decision Sheet to make an assessment about your suitability to become a volunteer at a [insert volunteer project or volunteer opportunity here]. Having a criminal record does not automatically mean you cannot volunteer.

**Somerset West and Taunton's full Safeguarding Policy can be accessed via...**