

Safeguarding Policy

Children, Young People and Adults

Co-author / Responsible	Sarah Smith, Head of Practice Development
Author / Accountable	Lorraine White, Director of Services and Practice
Review date (annual)	April 2026

NB. This Policy applies across all Spurgeons, & Dad.info branded services

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction 4
- 2.0 Who This Policy Applies To 4
- 3.0 Health or Development/Significant Harm 5
- 4.0 Types of Abuse and Neglect 5
- 5.0 Specific Safeguarding Issues 6
- 6.0 Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities 7
- 7.0 Safer Recruitment 12
- 8.0 Child Safeguarding Practice/Child Death/Domestic Homicide Reviews 12
- 9.0 Allegations against member of the workforce 13
- 10.0 Audit and Review of the Policy 13

Safeguarding Statement

Our vision is to transform the nation, one child at a time by ensuring every family has the support needed to flourish. To make that a reality, remaining child and person-centred and ensuring those we work with, and encounter are safeguarded, and their welfare promoted is the **number 1 priority** for all colleagues within Spurgeons.¹

Whilst neglect and the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children by adults is not new, we recognise from our service provision the broader and additional ways in which children can be at risk of maltreatment and impaired health or development, and require professional intervention to protect them from harm and support them, for example: *Sexual exploitation, impact of domestic abuse, impact of parental mental and physical health (including substance misuse), impact of parental imprisonment, risks with social networking (including through gaming, sexting), isolation/loneliness/self-harm, high 'screen-time'/sleep deprivation, age/development inappropriate activity (including online media content).*

The Safeguarding Policy sets out our overall position while the Child Protection Procedures and Appendices then set out its practical application and guide the workforce on the actions they must take in particular situations. Each takes into account the government guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#) and [Children's Social Care National Framework: Statutory Guidance on the purpose, principles for practice and expected outcomes of children's social care 2023](#) in relation to the nature and context of our service delivery.

Our organisational system of safeguarding comprises of more than policy and procedure. Safer recruitment, our code of conduct, induction process, supervision and training are integral to ensuring the workforce are suitable and have essential safeguarding knowledge and skills. The workforce has access to off-line and on-call specialist support and advice about safeguarding. Decision-making is monitored case-by-case, with corporate performance scrutinised at Board level each quarter to ensure joined up working across departments / functions, to hold those responsible for performing and controlling safeguarding work accountable, to maintain a reflective approach, ensure continuous improvement and appropriate internal communication.

Given the emphasis we place on the importance of safeguarding alongside all other business critical activities Spurgeons will ensure that robust arrangements and sufficient resources are available to enable the policy and procedures to be implemented throughout the organisation in a timely way to prioritise children's safety, and legal compliance - in keeping with our core values.

The Safeguarding Policy must be read and fully understood by all members of the workforce on appointment or engagement and **always** prior to undertaking direct work with children, young people, and families, and together we operate a safeguarding aware culture: **Respect and know your limits** – both of your ability to deal most appropriately with a situation and of your level of responsibility **If in doubt, you must ask**. We will consult with workforce representatives over changes to Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures to achieve appropriate workforce involvement. Both will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

Lorraine White (Director of Services and Practice)

¹ Throughout the statement, policy and procedures "workforce" refers to: volunteers, casual, agency, temporary and permanent staff.

1.0 Introduction

This policy framework sets out: who it applies to, outlines the relevance of 'health or development' and 'significant harm', provides definitions of the main types of abuse and neglect, lists other specific safeguarding issues, details the safeguarding responsibilities of everyone and those in specific roles, states our position on Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Child Death Reviews and allegations against members of the workforce, and confirms its audit and review arrangements.

The legal basis for responding to concerns regarding safeguarding of vulnerable adults is different from that of children and young people under 18. Spurgeons will bring to the attention of statutory agencies (the local authority and the police) any concerns in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults identified through any part of its work.

Spurgeons makes a positive contribution towards creating and maintaining strong and safe families and communities and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe. Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of children and young people wherever possible. Child protection is about responding to specific circumstances that arise.

In order to fulfil our responsibilities effectively Spurgeons works in accordance with the principles as set out in in [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#), [Children's Social Care National Framework: Statutory Guidance on the purpose, principles for practice and expected outcomes of children's social care 2023](#) and Section 10 and Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. Children and Families Act 2014, Care Act 2014 Children and Social Work Act 2017, Data Protection Act 2018, Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Statutory guidance July 2022 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2024, [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#) and [Care and Support statutory guidance March 2024](#).

This policy will be reviewed and updated as service delivery, through contracted, funded and discretionary work changes year-to-year in order to always reflect current activities and circumstances, thereby maintaining the relevance of the policy as an aid to appropriate and effective safeguarding practice for all service users and beneficiaries.

2.0 Who This Policy Applies To

Definition of a child: this policy applies to unborn children, all children, and young people up to the age of 18 years of age (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child), however our policies and procedures also support working with adults who are vulnerable. No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs. All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or beliefs.

Children may be service users in their own right or children cared for by adults who are receiving services via Spurgeons. It also covers other children in the wider community that come to the attention of staff in the course of their work e.g., children associated with a family group or connected in any way with a child or adult engaged with a Spurgeons' service provision.

Definition of an adult who is vulnerable: Anyone 18 or over with care and support need who is at risk of experiencing, abuse neglect (either from another person or from their own behaviour)

3.0 Health or Development/Significant Harm

All members of our children's workforce must be aware of local early help processes and understand their role in identifying emerging problems for children, young people, adults who are vulnerable, and families, and share information with relevant professionals to support early identification and support.

They must be aware of the local process for making referrals to children's social care for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989 that may follow, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments or in ensuring protection for a child at risk.

Under the Children Act 1989, the welfare of the child is paramount and local authorities are required to provide services for children in need within their area for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Local authorities undertake assessments of the needs of individual children to determine which services to provide and what action to take. This can include:

Section 17- A child in need is defined under section 17(10) of the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of **health or development**, or whose health or development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled.

Section 47- If the local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, **significant harm** they have a duty to make enquires under section 47 to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. This duty also applies if a child is subject to an emergency protection order (under section 44 of the Children Act 1989) or in police protective custody under section 46 of the Children Act 1989.

Where a member of the workforce believes that a child or young person is suffering, or likely to be suffering, significant harm, they **must** act in line with the Child Protection Procedures. A complete list of relevant legislation is provided within the Child Protection Procedure Appendices.

4.0 Types of Abuse and Neglect

Abuse, neglect, and safeguarding concerns are described by, but not limited to, the following definitions and in some instances multiple concerns will exist.

Abuse: A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear, or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or extra-familial contexts by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse: is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness of a child.

Spurgeons does not support **smacking**, albeit that parents / those in 'loco parentis' are currently allowed to use 'reasonable chastisement' (mild forms of physical punishment) when disciplining their children. There are positive ways to discipline children that are more effective.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only as far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it can occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (of the vagina, anus or mouth) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet / through social media). Sexual abuse is not exclusively perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers).
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- provide suitable education.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

5.0 Specific Safeguarding Issues

There is now better understanding in the UK – from experience, research, and experts – about the broader and additional ways in which children can be at risk of maltreatment and impaired health or development and require professional intervention to protect them from harm and support them. Government safeguarding guidance exists and can be accessed via the www.gov.uk website:

Domestic abuse:

Domestic abuse: the Domestic Abuse B Act 2021 definition is when both the perpetrator and victim are each aged 16yr or over, are personally connected to each other, and the abusive behaviour consists of any of the following: physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive

behaviour, economic abuse or psychological, emotional or other abuse, regardless of whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

Spurgeons recognises anyone can be amongst those affected by domestic abuse as:

- a survivor of domestic abuse.
- an individual living with domestic abuse.
- impacted upon by domestic abuse.
- a perpetrator of domestic abuse.

Spurgeons are committed to ensuring anyone of the who is experiencing domestic abuse, has the right to raise the issue with us in the knowledge that they will receive non-judgemental assistance.

Spurgeons understands the nature and risks associated within the complexities of domestic abuse and the impact it can have on the individual and their family. Domestic abuse can have a devastating impact on children when exposed to it. Under the statutory definition of domestic abuse, a child who sees, hears, or experiences the effects of domestic abuse, and who is related to the person being abused or the perpetrator, is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse. (Domestic Abuse Act 2021)

Preventing radicalisation

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of Spurgeon's safeguarding approach.

- **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- **Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, or ideological cause.

6.0 Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the workforce, regardless of role, are expected to undertake their work in a way that upholds the part we play as a voluntary sector provider in keeping children safe.

"3.10 Voluntary, charity, social enterprise (VCSE) and private sector organisations and agencies play an important role in safeguarding children through the services they deliver. Some of these will work with particular communities, with different races and faith communities, and deliver via health, adult social care, housing, and Prison and Probation Services. They may, as part of their work, provide a wide range of activities for children and have an important role in safeguarding children and supporting families and communities.

3.13 All practitioners working in these organisations and agencies who are working with children and their families are subject to the same safeguarding responsibilities, whether paid or a volunteer." From Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (pages 128-129).

All Members of the Workforce

Everyone has a role to play in fostering a positive attitude to create a culture of safeguarding children and young people. This policy is designed to support everyone in fulfilling their duties and to ensure all line managers take responsibility for the actions of their local workforce. Failure to respond to, or report concerns regarding the safety or welfare of children and young people could result in disciplinary action.

All members of the workforce are responsible for ensuring that they have read and understood this policy and the accompanying procedure and what their role specific responsibilities are, and to comply with both. Everyone shares the responsibility to respond to concerns regarding the safety or welfare of a child. However, it is not the responsibility of anyone within Spurgeons to investigate concerns, but to take action regarding their concerns and ensure statutory agencies fulfil their responsibilities.

Everyone has a responsibility to act on, and inform their immediate line manager about, any safeguarding or child protection concerns – which can and do arrive through very different routes (e.g., calls to reception, complaint e-mails, fundraising correspondence, and in-person disclosures). For that reason, all Spurgeons services and sites must have a nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will support staff with handling safeguarding concerns; accordingly, everyone must be aware who their DSL is. The DSL may be an experienced staff member, senior worker, or manager who is suitably trained. If the DSL is needed but unavailable the matter must be escalated through the management line and if necessary, the on-call manager contacted. For Central Teams the DSL is Head of Practice Development. All members of the workforce must ensure relevant statutory regulations and codes of practice are adhered to.

A complete list of all associated Spurgeons' policies and procedures which promote children's safety and welfare is provided within the Child Protection Procedure appendices on the [intranet](#).

Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring Spurgeons compliance with Charity Commission guidance ([Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees, 2021](#)) for ensuring relevant safeguarding and child protection legislation and guidance is followed and that there is an up to date Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures in place. Albeit the associated work is discharged by the executive and wider workforce, Trustees actively monitor safeguarding performance through the Standards and Outcomes Committee of the Board.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

- Spurgeons Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures are consistently applied throughout the organisation.
- Trustees are advised of resource issues which may impact on compliance with Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedural compliance within Spurgeons.
- Safeguarding and child protection issues are given equal importance to other business critical issues and funding of improvements is approved where practicable.
- A named senior manager provides strategic leadership on safeguarding and child protection and for ensuring sound day to day management of safeguarding.

Named senior manager Director of Services and Practice

- Competent safeguarding and child protection support and advice are readily available to the workforce to enable compliance with the policy and procedures.
- The promotion of learning and improvements in safeguarding and child protection and bringing to CEO / trustees attention any relevant new or changed legislation.
- That the Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures are available to the entire

workforce.

- Sufficient and appropriate supervision and training, including refresher training, to ensure competence through the level of workforce knowledge and skills.
- Attending safeguarding training and ensuring that this knowledge is refreshed and kept up to date.
- That the handling of safeguarding (including allegations against the workforce) is prompt and in accordance with local Safeguarding Partner Arrangements.
- Reporting safeguarding themes to trustees to Board

Head of Practice Development

- Chairing Safeguarding Panel, mandated to oversee the development of a safe organisation with good quality child-focused services.
- Attending safeguarding training and ensuring that this knowledge is refreshed and kept up to date.
- Reporting safeguarding themes to trustees to Standards and Outcomes Committee
- Provides leadership and management within the practice review and development related to safeguarding including writing and reviewing child protection procedures and quality assurance.
- Provide a responsive and collaborative approach to practice development specifically in relation to safeguarding with managers and teams to ensure the very best outcomes for children, young people, and their families.
- Strategic Lead for Communities of Practice.
- Quality and Practice Lead (Domestic Abuse Specialism)
- Provides leadership and practice review and development related to subject matter i.e. Domestic Abuse specialist safeguarding including writing and reviewing policies and procedures and quality assurance
- Provide a responsive and collaborative approach to practice development specifically in relation to subject matter working with managers and teams to ensure the very best outcomes for children, young people, and their families.
- To enhance and strengthen colleagues to work to high quality standards in their practice around specialist area.
- Attending safeguarding training and ensuring that this knowledge is refreshed and kept up to date.
- Strategic Lead for Communities of Practice of subject matter

Director of People and Culture

- Being the authority on safeguarding for staff and volunteer vetting, pre-employment checks and legislative compliance over the employment / engagement of ex-offenders.
- Leading on Safer Recruitment and ensuring that there is someone on appointment panels for staff / volunteers working with children / young people who have successfully completed safer recruitment training.
- Ensuring all members of the workforce directly working with children and families are checked by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) at an enhanced level before undertaking direct work and managing the positive DBS risk assessment process.
- The Director of People and Culture is the Responsible Officer for the maintenance and day-to-day operation of the Whistleblowing Policy, and one of the points of contact options. See [Whistleblowing Policy \(2022\)](#).
- Attend all Safeguarding Panels, if unable to attend to nominate a member of their team to attend.

Director of Digital Communications

- Designated Safeguarding Lead for Dad. Info, Spurgeons Website contact and referrals.
- Attending safeguarding training and ensuring that this knowledge is refreshed and kept up to date.
- Responsible for adhering to the UK Digital Resilience Framework

- All digital products and content are in line with our own safeguarding policy and child protection procedures, as well as the [Charity Commission Safeguarding Strategy](#)
- The direction of safeguarding and child protection management in their departments and that the policy and procedure is understood by the workforce.
- The implementation of the policy and procedures within their areas of responsibility and liaising with the Director of Services and Practice or CEO about concerns over, or changes required, with either.
- Attend all Safeguarding Panels, if unable to attend to nominate a member of their team to attend.
- Through recruitment, induction, supervision, training that all managers have sufficient experience, knowledge / skills to lead teams in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Through central reporting systems and reports generated, monitor, and ensure compliance in the day-to-day handling of safeguarding / child protection concerns.
- Through sampling of safeguarding undertaken in their departments, ensure work is compliant, corrective action taken if necessary and learning / good practice shared.

Director of Fundraising

- Ensure our Fundraising activities link with our own safeguarding policy and child protection procedures, as well as the [Code of Fundraising Practice](#)
- The direction of safeguarding and child protection management in their departments and that the policy and procedure is understood by the workforce.
- The implementation of the policy and procedures within their areas of responsibility and liaising with the Director of Services and Practice or CEO about concerns over, or changes required, with either.
- Attend all Safeguarding Panels, if unable to attend to nominate a member of their team to attend.
- Through recruitment, induction, supervision, training that all managers have sufficient experience, knowledge / skills to lead teams in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Through central reporting systems and reports generated, monitor, and ensure compliance in the day-to-day handling of safeguarding / child protection concerns.
- Through sampling of safeguarding undertaken in their departments, ensure work is compliant, corrective action taken if necessary and learning / good practice shared.

Head of Data, Insight and Evidence

- Ensuring robust data's collection of safeguarding incidents to gain insight into the effectiveness of Spurgeons safeguarding.
- Provide Power Bi reports of safeguarding trackers to all Heads of Service and Service Managers
- Provide specialist data analysis of safeguarding themes.
- Attend all Safeguarding Panels, if unable to attend to nominate a member of their team to attend.
- The direction of safeguarding and child protection management in their departments and that the policy and procedure is understood by the workforce.
- The implementation of the policy and procedures within their areas of responsibility and liaising with the Director of Services and Practice or CEO about concerns over, or changes required, with either.
- Attend all Safeguarding Panels, if unable to attend to nominate a member of their team to attend.
- Through recruitment, induction, supervision, training that all managers have sufficient experience, knowledge / skills to lead teams in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Through central reporting systems and reports generated, monitor, and ensure compliance in the day-to-day handling of safeguarding / child protection concerns.
- Through sampling of safeguarding undertaken in their departments, ensure work is compliant, corrective action taken if necessary and learning / good practice shared.

All Directors and Heads of Central Teams

- The direction of safeguarding and child protection management in their departments and that the policy and procedure is understood by the workforce.
- The implementation of the policy and procedures within their areas of responsibility and liaising with the Director of Services and Practice or CEO about concerns over, or changes required, with either.
- Attend all Safeguarding Panels, if unable to attend to nominate a member of their team to attend.
- Through recruitment, induction, supervision, training that all managers have sufficient experience, knowledge / skills to lead teams in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Through central reporting systems and reports generated, monitor, and ensure compliance in the day-to-day handling of safeguarding / child protection concerns.
- Through sampling of safeguarding undertaken in their departments, ensure work is compliant, corrective action taken if necessary and learning / good practice shared.

Heads of Service

- The Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring adequate DSL cover locally and/or providing it themselves when necessary.
- Provide a Head of Service Quarterly report across their portfolio to Safeguarding Panel
- Attend all Safeguarding Panels, if unable to attend to nominate a member of their team to attend.
- Accountable for ensuring safeguarding audits are completed within services (under their line management), flagging significant issues or concerns to the Head of Practice Development.
- Are responsible for producing a report that collates information from all audits in their portfolio, drawing out examples of good practice, identifying themes and any issues that need addressing at an organisational level.
- Attending safeguarding training and ensuring that this knowledge is refreshed and kept up to date.
- That they seek advice and guidance on matters beyond their experience, knowledge or confidence (e.g. complex cases) from Head of Practice Development, Domestic Abuse Lead and Director of Services and Practice.

Service Managers

Each service/site must have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who oversees the handling of safeguarding and child protection concerns, provides advice and guidance on making referrals to other agencies, and holds knowledge about the local children's social care referral process and support services available. The DSL is responsible for ensuring:

- That the local workforce has access to their contact details, those of other managers within the reporting line, and those providing national on-call (out of hours/weekend).
- That the local workforce is confident and competent in their knowledge of safeguarding and child protection including practice reporting and escalating concerns.
- Attending safeguarding training and ensuring that this knowledge is refreshed and kept up to date.
- Ensure Spurgeons Safeguarding Tracker is completed (in line child protection procedures)
- That staff have adequate resources / support to comply with procedures and escalate to their manager concerns about resources or staffing impacting on safe practice.
- That the Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures are available to the entire local workforce including those who don't have ready access to a computer.
- That every Spurgeons workplace has a safeguarding notice board clearly displaying as a minimum the safeguarding flowchart, 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' advice for practitioners', Top Ten MUST dos, and the list of local safeguarding personnel.

- That children, young people and parents are informed in an age and developmentally appropriate way of the existence of this policy and our Child Protection Procedures.
- Quarterly monitoring and analysis of safeguarding themes across their services using the quality assurance monitoring form.
- Responsible for completing the audit and substantiating the evidence for the audit and for their service/s and for ensuring that actions identified in the action plan are addressed within the timeframe. The audit should be undertaken as a team exercise and 'owned' by the team.
- That they seek advice and guidance on matters beyond their experience, knowledge or confidence (e.g. complex cases) from Heads of Service/ Head of Practice Development or Domestic Abuse Lead.

7.0 Safer Recruitment

Spurgeons carries out safer recruitment checks on everyone who works for us. All roles at Spurgeons require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and references before the individual joins us and begins any work. See Safer Recruitment Policy (2022).

8.0 Child Safeguarding Practice/Child Death/Domestic Homicide Reviews

Given the nature and level of the services Spurgeons provide we will on occasions have active or have had past involvement in cases that then become subject to Child Safeguarding Practice, Child Death or Domestic Homicide Reviews led by Local Safeguarding Partner arrangements Safeguarding Adults Board, Child Death Review or Domestic Homicide Review teams due to concerns about the way in which an authority, their partners and other agencies worked together to safeguard children or vulnerable adults. As well as being held to account we actively seek to learn and improve alongside all professionals in the sector.

All statutory information requests, correspondence and communication from those bodies over these matters (including at the earliest point when information is being gathered in order to arrive at the decision to progress) should be addressed to the CEO or Director of Services and Practice if notified through another route **must** be brought to their attention the **same day**. The Director of Services and Practice or CEO will then decide on how communication is handled, take steps to ensure the relevant hard copy and electronic records are secured, ensure local staff are supported, and commission any Internal or Individual Management Review (or equivalent) then required.

Harm to the charity's work, beneficiaries or reputation is deemed a 'serious incident' as defined by the Charity Commission. Whenever the charity's work has become subject to independent scrutiny (as part of a statutory review processes) the senior leadership team will assess an analysis of any shortcomings and learning from the case and agree actions necessary to remedy them are being taken and bring both to the attention of Trustees.

Cases that become subject to review which involve the voluntary sector frequently fall into the category of being highly complex, often with long-standing problems where multiple agencies are providing services to a family. The key issues for voluntary agencies in past serious case reviews nationally mainly relate to adult focused services, a lack of clarity around referral criteria, confusion around different agency involvement, and wrongly prioritising good relationships with adult clients over the safety and welfare of children.

Based on our own experience and learning as well as from the expertise and the most recent national

overview of child safeguarding practice reviews involving voluntary and community sector organisations that the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) undertook in 2019, the following are relevant **key learning points**:

- i.* Voluntary agencies should gather and record detailed information about family arrangements to inform multi-agency risk assessments.
- ii.* This includes where children live and information about any men visiting, staying, or living in the home.
- iii.* Voluntary agencies should feel confident reporting concerns about case management to other agencies involved in child protection cases; including following up referrals if it seems that no action has been taken.
- iv.* Information about safeguarding concerns should be shared with relevant agencies even if service users do not consent to this.
- v.* Whilst telephone and face to face conversations can be more immediate, they should always be followed up with formalised referrals of concerns to relevant services.
- vi.* Voluntary agencies providing services to adults who are parents must consider the impact of a parent's problems on their ability to care for and safeguard their children and share concerns with relevant agencies.
- vii.* Robust and timely assessments should be undertaken, and progress and developments recorded.
- viii.* Voluntary organisations should inform the agency who referred a person to use their service if the service user is not engaging with the service (including refusing to attend or missing appointments).
- ix.* Organisations should consider how to overcome barriers to service user engagement, such as people not having the bus fare to get to the service.

9.0 Allegations against member of the workforce

Given the scale of the workforce, and what is known from experience and research, we may receive allegations of abuse against present or past members of the workforce (in relation to current or non-recent abuse). In the event that we do, we will ensure that any concerns raised, and allegations made are taken seriously. In the course of following the detailed procedures on the subject both the Director of People and Culture and the Director Services and Practice (must be notified on the same day and will then take charge of the matter including making or ensuring a referral to the independent Local Authority Designated Officer or team of officers, is made when the threshold is met. Notwithstanding our duty of care to employees and volunteers, our priority is to deal with allegations quickly in a fair and consistent way that first provides effective protection for children whilst at the same time separately supporting the person subject to the allegation. A beneficiary alleging to have suffered serious harm or an allegation that a member of the workforce has assaulted or neglected a beneficiary whilst under the charity's care is deemed a reportable 'serious incident' by the Charity Commission.

10.0 Audit and Review of the Policy

Each year services will be audited on compliance with this Safeguarding Policy and the Child Protection Procedures with the results reported to, and monitored by, the Safeguarding Panel. That will primarily be a self-audit with checking and remedial action undertaken by, or under the supervision of, second line managers but may also include direct intervention from the Head of Practice Development and Domestic Abuse Lead- who undertake a thematic analysis, reporting and implementation of organisational learning.

We will consult with the workforce representative members of the Safeguarding Panel over significant changes to the Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures to ensure appropriate workforce involvement. Both will be reviewed and refreshed annually and updated more frequently if necessary.